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## The Challenge of World Problems

By FRANK A. W. LUCAS

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*Shortly before his death in a Johannesburg hospital in April Mr. Lucas completed and sent to our offices the text as follows of the Address he had hoped to deliver this month in Hanover at the Union's tenth International Conference.*

THAT the peoples of the world are today living in a state of tension and fear of a new world war is clear to everyone. It should be equally clear, therefore, that it is the duty of each one of us to say and do whatever lies in our power to end that state of affairs and to lead the world out of it and into a state of confidence, trust, and real peace. We are not justified in taking up the attitude: "What can one man do?" It should be rather: "Say not the struggle naught availeth". No good work any of us, however humble our station, may do can be lost or wasted. And the need for our work is urgent.

Within the limits of a paper such as this, in which one must touch on the major problems facing the world today, it is not possible to do more than mention briefly and with little comment a number of the relevant facts and the principles to be applied to them. There is much literature about those principles, explaining them and their practical application and describing how they have in fact been applied in whole or in part in several countries.

We have been told many times that because of those problems this is a good time to be alive. It is good to believe so but nonetheless, for those who can see no solution to them, the present era is one of anxiety and fear. We know there is a solution. Yet it is likely that much ruin and tribulation will come to the earth before its peoples will have the vision to apply it. "Where there is no vision the people perish."

The world's problems today assume many forms, but they can all be reduced to difficulties arising from injustice, from disregard of the dignity and of the inherent natural rights of the individual. The law of human progress is the moral law. Anyone professing a belief in God should support and accept that principle.

We find throughout the world totalitarianism, overt and covert, and it is growing in extent. We see it at its worst today in the communist countries but it exists also in varying degrees of intensity in the so-called free lands. In no country do we find real freedom for the individual. The greatest inroad on that freedom is made by our present land system. It places the landless at the mercy of the landlords who, because of that system, have the power to determine the conditions on which the former may obtain permission to live and work. There are many other encroachments on our freedom, such as customs tariffs, currency manipulation, restraints on travel, monopolies, and cartels, to mention only a few.

It is not licence that we want, but freedom, the freedom which will permit each to do what he wants to do which is not morally wrong and which does not interfere with an equal right in every one else. Anything that encroaches on that freedom is manifestly unjust. Yet we endure it every day; usually without any protest. But the resentment is growing.

We see injustice showing itself in the assumed superiority of the white races as against the no-whites. So deeply ingrained in the whites is that sense of superiority and so deeply is it resented by the other races that there appears here to be a completely irreconcilable conflict. The emergent Asian and African peoples are showing with rapidly increasing fervour and firmness their hatred and resentment of that assumption of superiority. They will not accept it and in this fact lies grave danger of war. The non-white peoples are daily growing stronger and more vocal and more alive to their rights as human beings. It is a vain dream of the whites that they can forever lord it over the other races. It is unfortunately a dream from which it

seems they cannot be awakened.

Scientists who have investigated the subject are satisfied that there is no inherent mental or intellectual superiority in one race over another. The coloured races know this and they are determined to claim and get their share of the good things of life.

#### *THE WEST DIVIDED*

A more immediate danger of world conflict lies in the struggle between East and West, between what are known as the communist countries and those which claim to be free and democratic. The peoples of the latter are themselves sharply divided. Leaving out of account those who are apathetic, in themselves a large section, the remainder may be separated into those who see in the Russian system a danger to their monopolies of landowning, industry, and commerce, and those who wish for the reign of freedom and justice and an end to totalitarianism, poverty, and frustration.

The supposed interests of the monopolists and the aims of the freedom lovers are poles apart, but as both classes detest the Soviet system they are for the present united in opposing it. But this unity can be maintained only at the expense of justice and with an ever increasing loss of freedom. Every year more and more restrictive and oppressive measures are introduced in the "democracies", in what is claimed to be the interest and necessary defence of democracy. In this way defence against totalitarianism leads to the growth of totalitarianism also in the non-communist countries.

Thus the freedom lovers are all the time losing ground. We are on a slippery slope on which we cannot stay our further descent and begin to mount the heights again without a genuine return to just and moral principles. We are losing our civilisation. Though we may be gaining the whole world materially we are losing our soul. It is not material riches and progress that represent civilisation but our respect for moral principles, for the rights and dignity of the individual.

Many civilisations have come and gone. I believe Henry George was right when he wrote: "What has destroyed every previous civilisation has been the tendency to the unequal distribution of wealth and power." By that test we can see the essential problem facing the world. The rise of totalitarianism, the danger of war, widespread want and woe, recessions and depressions, are but facets of that general problem.

#### *POVERTY A POTENT DANGER*

Before everything else people must have their material needs of food, clothing, and shelter met. If they cannot have those, or if they live in dread of not being able to get them, they will listen eagerly to anyone who promises to supply them. That is how and why our modern dictators rose to power. The poverty and the feeling of frustration of the masses in their countries made them care little or nothing for liberty or the vote as long as they were starving and cold.

It is idle to claim that any Western country has eliminated poverty or unemployment. Even in the rich United States there is much want and lack and considerable unemployment. In 1955, an economic study group of Congress reported that 10 per cent of the families in that country had incomes of less than \$1,000 (£350) a year, which there means poverty, another 12 per cent had less than \$2,000, which certainly meant a poor living standard. In Britain the welfare state has done something to level up or down the standard of living, but that it has not removed discontent is shown by the large number of costly and wasteful strikes in that country in the last few years.

Among the peoples of Asia and Africa the poverty of the masses is appalling. With the rapid increase of the population there the poverty and want are likely to grow worse.

It is in this state of affairs that Soviet communism makes its appeal. It asserts its aim to be to end poverty, exploitation, imperialism, and colonialism, and to establish a society in which those evils will have disappeared. This appeal has great force with peoples who are suffering lack and hunger and are resentful at the flaunting of wealth by the Western races.

So far the Soviets have not established their promise to end poverty, even for their own people, but that they have made progress cannot be gainsaid. Now we find Mr. Krushchev saying that by 1975 they will have raised the standard of living of the Russian people to that of the people of the United States. If that claim is fulfilled, a moral appeal to the peoples of the East to fight for liberty and justice, while they remain poor, will fare hardly against the example of the material success of the totalitarianism of the Soviets. It will be thought worthwhile to give up liberty for bread. Under existing conditions there is not much likelihood of many countries in the West achieving as high a standard of living as that in the United States.

#### *FREEDOM, NOT CHARITY*

The United States has been very generous in giving material aid to poor and backward countries. Vast sums of money have been poured into them. This generosity has often missed its mark and has seldom been appreciated. What has been called "the law of ingratitude" seems to operate in them. That "law" asserts that the more an advanced community assists a less advanced community to develop educationally and economically, the more it is resented by the latter. Unfortunately in many of the countries which have received such aid the effect of the gifts has been to enrich landlords and to enable them to raise rents and even intensify the harsh conditions in which their tenants exist. As it is the poor who are in the majority, American aid has not succeeded in stemming the widespread discontent in those countries. At the same time American aims can be, and are being, misrepresented as an attempt to introduce imperialism and colonialism. No solution to our problems lies that way.

## THE GREAT WRONG IN SOCIETY

The position illustrates the fact that it is not charity or even material aid that these countries want. They demand independence. Charity is not enough. Unfortunately independence will not necessarily bring with it justice and freedom for the individual. There are many independent countries where there is little or no justice and where poverty and gross inequality of riches and power exists.

The rise of nationalism with the demand for self-government in Asia and Africa has been rapid and is now irresistible. Already several countries in those continents have gained their independence. Riots, unrest, or rebellion in the Belgian Congo, Nyasaland, Cyprus, and Algeria, are proof of the struggle for it. In all those countries, both those which have succeeded and those which are still struggling, there is intense poverty. It is in this fact, using the word poverty in a wide sense to include a sense of frustration, that the cause of the great struggles in the world can be found.

We have discovered how to split the atom, how to make bombs or poison gas which can destroy life on the earth, we can send rockets beyond the moon and place new planets into orbit round the sun. Are we still so impotent that we cannot solve this problem of poverty and inequality of riches and power? The Russians claim that they can solve it, but after more than forty years of absolute power they have not succeeded in doing so. Even if they were to succeed in ending poverty and want in the countries they control it would be at the fearful cost of the destruction of individual liberty.

### JUSTICE AND LIBERTY —OR CATASTROPHE

Actually, of course, we do know the cause of poverty and inequality, but powerful interests, apathy, and long-held beliefs have prevented the adoption of the remedy. The world has now reached a stage, however, when it can no longer delay in adopting that remedy if catastrophe is to be avoided.

All the evils and dangers which I have enumerated are a result of injustice and the denial of individual liberty. In this lies a direct and immediate threat to western civilisation, a fundamental principle of which is a due respect for the dignity of the individual and the maintenance of justice and liberty. Justice and liberty are inseparable. They cannot exist apart. Charity cannot take the place of either. Several colonial powers have been generous to their colonies but every one of these has in the past resented or is now resenting the control of those powers. They wish to be independent, even if poor, rather than subservient and dependent on outside aid.

Justice and liberty, then, are the essential elements for world peace. Can we have them? Our answer is a decided "Yes".

Having now seen *what* is wrong it is necessary for us to ask *how* we can redress it.

The great injustice through long ages among so-called civilised peoples has been the system which treats land as a chattel, to be bought and sold, as if both were made by human labour. Land, excluding improvements made on it, has been provided by the Creator and cannot be made or increased by man. All life depends upon access to it or to the water on it. Chattels or goods, the subjects of commerce, are made from materials obtained from it. Given access to land man can multiply indefinitely the number of goods he requires. Land he cannot increase. Land and the chattels of commerce, therefore, are essentially different in nature and origin. Ownership of land thus confers a monopoly power; ownership of chattels does not.

Man naturally claims the right to own what he has made or produced. That is in fact the true basis of ownership. That is why ownership of land is not natural. It has not been recognised by primitive peoples. "The earth is the Lord's" and "The land shall not be sold forever", is the teaching of the Bible. The ownership of land as we know it cannot be reconciled with the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

All human beings must live on and from the land. The ownership of land enables the owners to hold it out of use and thus prevent the production of the goods needed to sustain life. It also confers the power to demand a price or rent for permission to work or produce those goods. It, therefore, places the non-owner at the mercy of the owner.

As no owner ever made his land, his ownership of it must derive from a seizure of it. It cannot be claimed as a gift from God. If it were so, the implication would be that God had favourites on whom He had bestowed the land and the power that confers on them to exploit their fellow human beings. No one then who genuinely believes in the Fatherhood of God, as the adherents of most religions profess to do, can honestly defend our present system of the ownership of land.

### SECURITY FOR PRODUCERS

That system creates the fundamental injustice from which proceed the injustices and dangers under which the peoples of the world now suffer. It destroys the liberty of the individual. He is not free to work for his living without permission from a landowner to do so. For that permission the charge is a ransom price or a rack rent.

For industry and initiative to flourish, the power to make that charge must be broken. There must always be complete security of tenure for the man using the land. Only then will he care for the land and improve it. As has been said, a man given secure possession of a rock will turn it into a garden while without such security he would make a desert of the Garden of Eden. Thus the worker or producer must be assured that any improvements he makes or goods he produces will remain his property to be used or disposed of as he pleases.

## THE CHALLENGE OF WORLD PROBLEMS—Continued

The remedy we propose would achieve all that. It is that the community take for itself for public purposes the rent of land, the ground rent, as distinct from the improvements on it. The equivalent term in use in Denmark is "ground duty". That rent represents the desirability attaching to the land as a result of the presence and activities of the population living on it. In equity, therefore, it should belong to the community producing it. There can be no valid denial of that proposition. If everyone had to pay that rent to the community he could not afford long to hold his land out of use nor would he be able to find anyone to pay him more than that rent for the use of the land. All land that was not actually being used would then become available for occupation by those who now find difficulty in getting land except at an exorbitant price or rent. Industry and agriculture would be set free and poverty and frustration ended.

All this could be done with a title as secure as freehold. In countries where municipal revenue is raised from a rate or tax on the site value of land there is clearly no interference with the security of the freehold title although such tax takes for the local authority a fraction, sometimes a fourth or more, of the full ground rent of the land. Nor would there be any more interference with the security of tenure if the community were to take the whole of that rent.

It is not necessary to say much about the feasibility of the proposal. Land can be, and every day is, easily valued and the ground rent can equally easily be ascertained. Every buyer and seller of land today has to do it. When we speak of the taxation of land values we mean a charge calculated according to the market value of the land. Another mode of achieving the same result would be to require payment to the community of the ground rent. This latter method of levying the charge is probably preferable to the other but to the public at large the phrase "taxation of land values" is the better known.

### AN AMPLE FUND

That the yield from that source would be immense is clear. In his book, "Ground Rent, Not Taxes", Mr. John C. Lincoln estimates that in the United States the ground rent would be ninety billion dollars or £32,000 million. That sum, he says, should be "ample to support a reasonable government in all its activities." Some years ago I made an estimate, though on a different basis, for South Africa and arrived at a similar conclusion for that country.

The proceeds from the ground rent could be used to replace revenue obtained from the present methods of taxation, all of which are destructive and harmful to the welfare of the community. Those forms of taxation should all be abolished. There would then result a great reduction in the cost of living. That, in addition to the sharp stimulus to industry and initiative which this policy would provide, would mean an immense growth in

material prosperity. It is only necessary to look at the effects of useful public works to see that they create greater increases in land values than their cost. That can be taken in fact as an invariable rule.

The Reverend Father McGlynn of New York, writing at the end of the last century, said: "By a bountiful providence, that may be truly called Divine, since it is founded upon the nature of man of which God is the creator, a fund constantly increasing with the capacities and needs of society, is produced by the very growth of society itself, namely, the rental value and the duty of appropriating the fund to public uses is apparent, in that it takes nothing from the private property of individuals, except what they will pay willingly as an equivalent for a value produced by the community, and which they are permitted to enjoy."

It must here be emphasised that what we aim at with our policy is not merely an improved system of taxation but the use of it as a means of bringing about a just land system under which all will share in a joint heritage and in the fundamental justice which that would insure for all.

It remains then to consider how our policy would solve the world's problems or at any rate make a solution possible.

### DANGER OF WAR

We cannot, of course, prevent madmen from plunging the world into war as long as there are dictators controlling powerful countries. But we can cut some of the ground from under their feet by setting an example which would appeal to large numbers among their peoples. If we were to end the primary injustice of land monopoly we could soon say to the communists: "Do your worst!" Our people would have no anxiety about the necessities of life. There would be unlimited scope for initiative and the development by each individual of all his faculties and ability together with real freedom. Communism would make no appeal to such people and any attempt by communists to use force to compel them to exchange such conditions for communism would be met by fierce and united resistance. There would be no fifth column.

Such strong defence, however, would not be our only gain. Our example would cause cracks in the structure of the administration of the dictator countries. The example of countries where prosperity was universal and shared by all, while each and everyone enjoyed freedom with its absence of irksome and oppressive restrictions, would inevitably begin to arouse demands for similar freedom for the peoples in what are now communist totalitarian countries. The cause of freedom there would be furthered and the danger of war lessened until it disappeared altogether. In no other way than by freeing people from the great injustice of our present land system can we hope for real and lasting and positive peace.

This would not mean that no problem would remain to be solved, but a solution for all of them would be

possible as and when they arose, Today, in the presence of that injustice, none of our problems is ever really solved. Our efforts to solve them have in the past merely served to change their form or place. In a mood of sympathy and generosity a public body may decide to provide sub-economic housing for slum dwellers. The results of this may be, as happened in several towns, that those who have been moved suffer, because of increased expenses for transport and rent, from malnutrition and resulting ill health, while the new areas in time themselves tend to become slums.

#### COMFORT AND HARMONY

Our policy, with its incentive to industry and self help, would introduce a process by which before long slums would disappear without the need for expensive housing schemes. Suitable land for housing would no longer be too dear for people to provide their own homes and their opportunity to earn a satisfactory income would enable them to do so with scope for the expression and development of individual artistic sense.

People would no longer be compelled either to live close together in congested areas or to go far afield, at long distances from their fellows, because of high prices or rents for land. The wasted cost of providing public services to scattered communities would be much reduced. Farmers and other rural workers could be near and enjoy the social amenities of urban areas which, as a result, would cease to lure country folk away from the dullness which is commonly thought to be inherent in farming, because farming areas are cut off from easy access to those amenities.

Even the danger of conflict between the white and the non-white races as a result of the white man's assertion of superiority over the non-whites and their resentment of that attitude would be lessened and probably finally removed through the ending of the injustice of the land system. When that comes about, not only will the non-whites be able to make immense advances in their own material wellbeing but also the white man's increased prosperity in his own areas will lessen the urge in him to exploit his weaker fellow beings, white and non-white. Though there would be scope for healthy rivalry there would no longer be any reason for the whites to fear that they may be overwhelmed by the greater numbers of the non-whites or deprived of their jobs, a fear which today stimulates and bolsters up their often aggressive and offensive attitude to the non-whites.

#### PEACE THROUGH FREE TRADE

The best way to induce friendship between nations is to let them trade freely and the surest way to cause friction between them is to place obstacles in the way of their doing so. Yet it seems to be the aim of nearly all governments to make a free exchange of goods as difficult as possible.

Freedom of trade is usually considered from the aspect solely of exchange of goods whereas it should also include

## An Appreciation

FRANK A. W. LUCAS, Q.C.

Miss V. G. Peterson, executive secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, writes: My close association with him while he was in the United States, October through December, 1955, gave me much insight into his personality. He was a man of great culture, the product of one of the finest colleges in the world, Oxford. As a judge he moved in high circles. Yet despite these advantages, he never lost touch with the milkman, the corner grocer, or the man who shined his shoes. It was such as these, the little men of the world, in whom he was most interested and he understood them well.

While Judge Lucas was with us he lectured in many important colleges and universities on the subject of apartheid and the land question which underlies it and many other social evils in this world. Our files are rich with letters telling us how well his talks were received and applauding his courageous attacks on the unjust practices of his own government.

The death of Judge Lucas is a great loss to the Henry George movement, and in his passing I feel deeply the loss of a close and valued friend.

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freedom to produce. By ending the injustice of our land system we should ensure freedom to produce. The resulting creation of an unlimited scope for employment and demand for goods would cut away the chief prop of protection by tariffs, embargoes, or other restrictions on trade, namely that they create jobs for the local inhabitants.

Such restrictions on trade can benefit only a relatively small proportion of the total population of any country and are a detriment to the remainder. It can be shown clearly that in some if not all protected industries it would be more economical for the country to repeal the tariff and pension off every worker in the industry concerned at his full wages for life.

The removal of customs tariffs would represent a weighty contribution to the cause of world peace. All countries would be free to sell to a country which had abolished trade restrictions any goods its people wished to import and none would have any cause of complaint on the ground of favouritism or preferential treatment being shown to competitors.

The prosperity which the suggested change would bring about in such a country would soon stimulate other countries to take the same course. This process would be encouraged by the fact that the country which did away with such restrictions would be able to produce much more cheaply than could countries which imposed tariffs and so would enjoy a great advantage over the others in the export market.

So far what I have said would seem to apply more particularly to the more developed industrial countries. As to those which are less advanced, such as those in

Asia and Africa, similarly great benefits would accrue from our policy. In the first place, aid such as that now being given by the United States would help to advance the welfare of the recipient country as a whole and not merely the landlords in it, as is now frequently happening.

*FOR "BACKWARD" AREAS*

As to their own steps to development, these countries would gain greatly from our policy. They are crying out for capital to enable them to undertake large works such as irrigation schemes, dams, power plants and engineering works. Egypt is eager to build a larger Aswan dam. Ghana wants its Volta dam and aluminium plant. French Equatorial Africa wants similar schemes. India has great needs and so, too, have other Asian countries. Both West and East are unable or unwilling to finance those schemes.

Our policy would enable those countries to help themselves and, over a not very long period, to embark on the works they need. In these countries few of their people have security of tenure of the land on which they live and work. This is one cause of their backwardness and poverty. There is no incentive to improve the land because they do not have security of tenure. Until that is afforded it is idle to hope for any great advance there.

Possession of the freehold is not essential to improvement of land. The long leases which have been the vogue in many highly progressive and prosperous communities is convincing proof of that. Actually, however, it is easily possible to provide a title with all the security of freehold under our policy, while retaining for the community all the value conferred on the land by the presence and activities of the community.

The application of that policy might have to vary in details according to whether the country is highly industrialised or is still in the tribal state, but in essentials it will be the same.

*NIGERIAN PROCLAMATION  
A MODEL TO COPY*

A method of applying it in an undeveloped country was described by C. L. Temple, C.M.G., one time Lieutenant-Governor of the Northern Provinces, Nigeria in his book, "Native Races and Their Rulers", unfortunately now out of print. This book was published in 1918. It explains the scheme of land tenure introduced by the "Land and Native Rights Proclamation" of Northern Nigeria, 1910. It shows how the policy we advocate can be grafted on to tribal custom, can confer complete security of tenure and can avoid exploitation of workers and land speculation.

That book shows how the tin mining industry fared under the Proclamation. The large tin deposits of Northern Nigeria "needed European brains and capital to make full use of them in the interest of natives and Europeans alike. Leases were granted of a nature to enable the holders to develop the deposits, but limiting their use of the surface strictly to that purpose . . . No difficulties were put in the

way of the companies in their efforts to recruit or attract labour. As a result, the companies have obtained, not all the labour they wanted or such cheap labour (for their requirements always partake of the nature of a bottomless pit, which can never be filled) but sufficient labour and at a price which enabled the workings to be carried on . . . The capital expenditure in the country and the paying out of large sums to the natives in the form of wages have greatly assisted the native community generally. The Public Funds have benefited by the payment of rents and royalties and railway freights. In short the development of the tin industry has been of great advantage to Northern Nigeria and has not damaged the interests of a single native alive today or of a future generation. This excellent result may be traced to the absence of 'the institution of freehold in land' and the fact that the Government would have nothing to do with supplying labour".

That statement dealt with the application of our policy to a mining industry in what was a backward country and showed how it could be conducted with profit to the organisers, the State, and the workers. The workers were able to protect themselves against exploitation and being compelled to accept too low wages by the fact that they had the alternative of access to land on which they could work for themselves. This enabled them to demand and obtain a reasonable wage.

*COMMON RIGHTS AND  
INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS*

Among primitive peoples the true nature of land as the heritage of the whole community from generation to generation and not the private property of any individual was clearly recognised. As a result, the land was truly "national". It existed for the benefit of all the people all the time. It was to secure the continuance of that principle but with protected individual tenure, that the Government of Northern Nigeria introduced the "Land and Native Rights Proclamation" as being in line with native law and custom. Such modifications as were made were to permit of development on modern lines.

That Proclamation "clearly laid down that the Government constitutes itself trustee for the native inheritance in land of the native community of Northern Nigeria generally." The land was to be leased at "the full economic rent obtainable, that is to say, the ground rent charged by the Government must be the greatest possible obtainable in the market". Rents had to be revised at intervals of not more than seven years. In this way the interests of the community were "safeguarded against predatory action on the part of the individual". Provisions were also inserted in the law to protect the individual against arbitrary action by the authorities and to prevent his being penalised for improving his land as so many of our taxing laws do. If at any time the rent were raised on revision beyond what the occupier was prepared to pay he could claim to be compensated for the value of any unexhausted improvements on the land.

## SELF-FINANCING SERVICES

As I have pointed out earlier, the value of land rises directly as a result of the presence of the community and its activities. In fact, that increase in value arising from a useful public service is usually more and often much more than the cost of providing the service. Thus at the time when the first Aswan dam was built, at a cost of £10 million it was said that the value of the land served by it rose by £200 million. Many other comparable examples in other parts of the world could be cited. Thus one public service may be used to help to finance another, a process that might be carried on as long as desired. In this way the underdeveloped countries could be advised and encouraged to embark on the works they wish to carry out.

The peoples of the newly independent countries of Asia and Africa have open to them in this way a means of attaining in not too long a time the capital works they need. It is necessary to persuade them to adopt the policy set out in the Northern Nigeria Proclamation and take for their communities the ground rent of their land. By such means they would soon get a fund with which on an ever growing scale they could begin to build the works they need. By taking this course they would be under no feeling of obligation to foreigners.

What can be achieved by enthusiasm and determination, with protection against private landlordism, has been proved by Israel, which despite hostility from neighbouring states and adverse climatic conditions and arid land, has persevered with great success in absorbing large numbers of immigrants. So, too have the Chinese shown what can be accomplished in the way of public works just by manual labour unaided by mechanical equipment, when no landlords stand in the way.

Our policy affords the only practicable method by which the underdeveloped countries of the world may break away from their limitations and obtain the amenities and advantages of a free and comfortable life.

Thus not only would the advanced peoples of the world begin to free themselves from the present tension and fear of war among themselves, but they would cease to appear to the non-white races as oppressors and enemies. No longer would communism, with its totalitarianism, appear attractive to them as they could now have freedom with prosperity and plenty. Instead of race hostility we should move to friendship and co-operation.

With the growth of real freedom and justice would disappear colour discrimination and the bitterness it has generated.

Thus we could go forward with courage and confidence to a real and positive world peace.

### NOTES OF THE MONTH

## THE WORD GOES ROUND

### *"Rate Reform Is Urgent!"*

**P**ROTESTS against the absurd and vicious rating system are being raised in many parts of Britain. A West Kent Mercury editorial declares: "Ratepayers are being bled to death." In Essex, the Ilford Recorder suggests editorially: "It is surely not beyond modern ingenuity to devise something more equitable than we now have."

In the Sutton and Cheam Advertiser (Surrey) 'Kingtonian' writes: "Several attempts have been made to remedy the many defects of the present system. But tinkering with the machine is not enough."

The opening sentence of a long article in the South Wales Echo reads: "Ask the average man what he thinks of rates and you are almost bound to get an unprintable answer."

Says the Leicester Evening Mail: "There is a growing realisation that our present system of raising the necessary funds for local government is out-dated, illogical and in many respects unfair—and heartening signs from several quarters of a movement to replace it with something better, or at least to revise it. And high time too."

A note of urgency and alarm is sounded in the South-West: "Unless the public takes note in time of a plain warning, it will have only itself to blame for a coming shock," says the Western Evening Herald, in a recent editorial:

"The Plymouth and South Devon Valuation Panel gave the warning in its annual report. It concerns the next revaluation due to operate in 1963. When this happens, the report says, 'an increase in the total rate liability of house-holders by nearly 50 per cent appears inescapable.' That does not refer to increase in assessments, but to the actual proportion of rates payable. The assessments for houses are due to go up by about 2½ times. This report proves, obviously, the enormous complexity of the system of collecting local money by the antique rating system . . ."

At Pitlochry, Scotland, the annual conference of the National Federation of Property Owners instructed its national executive to investigate possible alternative sources of local revenue. It turned down the Derby association's demand for a Royal Commission to investigate the "archaic rating system".

Socialist members of Middlesex County Council supported Sir Archer Hoare, Conservative, when he moved a motion (passed by 66 votes to 12) which condemned the present incidence of local rates as unfair. This called for an immediate increase in government grants in aid of rates so as to reduce the burden on ratepayers, and recommended the Government to "give careful examination to the present position".