



LAND & LIBERTY

Published by THE UNITED COMMITTEE FOR THE
TAXATION OF LAND VALUES.

Thirty-third Year. Established June, 1894.

3d. Monthly. By Post 4s. per annum.

United States and Canada, 1 Dollar,

Editorial Offices:

11, TOTHILL STREET, LONDON, S.W.1.

All communications to be addressed to the Editor.

Telegrams: "Eulav, Parl., London." Telephone: Victoria 7325.

Postage on this issue is One Half-Penny.

PEACE IN INDUSTRY

Here, it seems to me, is the gist and meaning of the great social problems of our time: More is given to us than to any people at any time before us; and, therefore, more is required of us. We have made, and still are making, enormous advances on material lines. It is necessary that we commensurately advance on moral lines. Civilization, as it progresses, requires a higher conscience, a keener sense of justice, a warmer brotherhood, a wider, loftier, truer public spirit. Failing these, civilization must pass into destruction. It cannot be maintained on the ethics of savagery. For civilization knits men more and more closely together, and constantly tends to subordinate the individual to the whole, and to make more and more important social conditions.

The social and political problems that confront us are darker than they realize who have not given thought to them; yet their solution is a mere matter of the proper adjustment of social forces. Man masters material nature by studying her laws, and in conditions and powers that seemed most forbidding, has already found his richest storehouses and most powerful servants. Although we have but begun to systematize our knowledge of physical nature, it is evident she will refuse us no desire if we but seek its gratification in accordance with her laws.

The domain of law is not confined to physical nature. It just as certainly embraces the mental and moral universe, and social growth and social life have their laws as fixed as those of matter and of motion. Would we make social life healthy and happy, we must discover those laws, and seek our ends in accordance with them.—Henry George in *Social Problems*, Chap. XXII.

The new year has brought the usual review of the preceding twelve months, and the voices speak of more than usual mistakes and regrets. The general strike sent a shiver through society, and the miners' "lock-out" tells how industry has lagged behind the march of invention. Ill-will and discontent have overshadowed every effort made to better the con-

dition of labour. Debt and despair is the legacy we inherit from 1926, and the cry is heard for a change of heart, if the social structure is not to go to pieces. This may appear to some as the language of exaggeration, but it does look at times as if we were rapidly going down the stream with the flood, clinging in lasting fellowship to the broken fragments of a sham democracy.

A year ago we had the London Conference of enemies in the great war, discoursing on the past wicked behaviour of their several countries, and in sackcloth and ashes vowing to make a new departure. The sentiment was that a community of fate binds the nations together, and that unless this was observed and hands were joined in general co-operation, the Locarno spirit would be as dust in the balance. The Conference was of the nature of a grand revival meeting, that seemed to be the beginning of the end of war. It was so in the newspapers; the pity is that it could not find a more tangible expression in the conduct of the governments concerned.

What has happened since is that the nations have been labouring under the old time habit of keeping the peace by developing and improving the machinery of war. The League of Nations is offered as an assurance that peace will ultimately prevail but outside its portals the men who support it are just those who decline to reduce expenditure on armaments. Sir Austen Chamberlain in his Rectorial address to the Glasgow University at the close of the year stressed the claims of the League on his audience and called for the moral support of society at large to maintain and defend it. At the same time the daily Press told us that the Press of Japan were in a rage over the Singapore Naval Base. On the Continent the tyranny of the Hohenzollern has given place to that of Mussolini, who talks to the rest of the world with an arrogance that quite equals his fanatical contempt for the League of Nations and all its works.

There are other cases for review, each and all indicating that the war has taught the Nations nothing that is likely to inspire any man or woman capable of consecutive thought with hope for the future. Verily the policy of 1926 is on a par with 1914, and unless good intention is translated into good action 1927 will go one better on the road to ruin. The opinion held by many that given goodwill in industry and politics, all things are possible is the latest great illusion. The idea springs from a stubborn refusal to face without prejudice any economic analysis of the underlying causes of wealth and want.

In a society like ours with its millions of unemployed and its millions of workers on the verge of starvation without hope of relief, politics comes more and more to mean one thing, the political management of industry. Those who endure the hardship, and their name is legion, have voting power, and their aim is to make a parliament that will do their bidding. They have learned the lesson from the possessing classes, and they mean to better the occasion. The Conservative Party, with its crave for tariffs, is helping to popularize the false doctrine that it is the business of the State to

interfere with and control industry.

Mr Winston Churchill cannot have it both ways; he cannot denounce Socialists and Communists for their predatory instincts, or upbraid them for their declared intention to nationalize or communize industry and at the same time put into practice the principles they seek to teach. If the Socialists would organize industry by the State as the cure for poverty, and the Communists would distribute wealth without regard to the earnings of the producer what is to be said of those who by tariffs rig the market in favour of a section of the community? Are they not blazing the path for a wider distribution of the plunder they want for their own friends? In essence there is nothing to choose between the tariff reformer and the communist, except that the latter is more thoroughgoing and more confident as to the road they both desire to travel. The difference between these two would-be antagonists is in degree and not in kind.

The *Westminster Gazette* has laboured hard in recent months to bring order out of chaos and impending disaster to the nation. It has earnestly striven to force the pace for peace in industry, and succeeded last month in bringing together a luncheon party representative of employers and employed. In the report of the proceedings we read of much goodwill and plain speaking. In the *W. G.*'s own words the keynote was that "confidence, humanity, and statesmanship alone can create the will to peace and that this, again, was the burden of the speeches." Industry we were told with emphasis wants no outside interference and that "industry has 'put it up to itself' to solve its and the nation's great problem." But the speeches in the main and altogether fell short of any solution. They were, without exception, but an exercise in metaphorical talk entirely unrelated to the working of economic law harnessed to monopoly, or free in any degree from its baneful influence.

The two questions put by the Chairman of the meeting to the various speakers were:—

1. "Do you consider some expert organization embodying the spirit of the League of Nations is desirable for British industry?"

2. "If so, should the Government of the day institute steps to bring the parties together?"

The questions were apparently framed to hurt nobody's feelings and at the same time keep the discussion from taking a violent plunge into the sea on any real difficulty such as the burden of rates and taxes, or unemployment.

A well-known employer of labour (Sir Hugh Bell) was the first speaker. He answered "no" to both questions and urged that the relations between employer and employed as represented through the trades unions was the burning question of the day. A trade union leader (Mr T. C. Cramp) followed, saying "no," also, to the two questions. Mr Cramp appeared to hold contradictory views. He did not agree with the formation of any new expert association as between employers and employed; in his opinion there were too many organizations in existence; yet at the close of his remarks he said he believed that a body should be set up invested with powers by Parliament to carry on a peace campaign

with poverty as the enemy. Mr Cramp has since said that he wants to see established an industrial Parliament, in which science might co-operate with industry both from the employers' and the workers' point of view. But science and industry are in leading strings to monopoly, and while this unnatural connection exists the better understanding and the closer co-operation is but a will o' the wisp. Science and industry can produce their miracles but they cannot usurp the place of economic justice. In the circumstances the deeper becomes the hell of poverty with its menacing strife and chaos.

Another speaker (Sir John Simon) put in a word for conciliation which, he said, was in the nature of things and could not be put into an Act of Parliament. But, he added, the Government in appropriate cases can secure that a dispute is considered without bias before industrial war breaks out. The answer to this legal-looking aspect of the matter is that the war has already broken out, and that conciliation is offered in Acts of Parliament, in ministerial departments and in the municipal life of the country. In the nature of things the standing dispute between honest industry and land monopoly is what counts. As Emerson has it: "Nature is always very much in earnest; her great gifts have something serious and stern; we can never surprise her in a corner."

We are given seriously to understand that a period of prosperity awaits British industry—provided that it has peace. We would transpose the sentence and say: that a period of peace awaits British industry—provided it has better times. The problem is one of work and wages and the attempt to bring employer and employed together in terms of a better understanding is but to say that they themselves are solely to blame for all the mischief. The contention is not true and no amount of "goodwill" however defined can make it true.

Throughout the argument it is somehow overlooked that the vast majority of workers are in small shops and that their employers in tens of thousands of cases do not stand apart as directors or organizers. And as George Bernard Shaw has just reminded us, quite a number of them are so hard driven that they look forward to the Christmas expenditure of the neighbourhood to enable them to pay the rent, to say nothing of the ever-increasing tax burdens.

In an article in the *Engineering and Commercial Supplement* of the *Glasgow Herald*, 30th December, Mr Walter Runciman, M.P., President of the Chamber of Shipping in the United Kingdom, observes: "It is a trite saying that if there are ten too many ships in the world the freight markets will be depressed, and that if there are ten too few there will be a little boom." In like manner, if there are ten men too many at the work gates, wages will fall, and if there are ten too few wages will rise. As Mr Runciman remarks in regard to his shipping illustration: How near we may be to this is impossible to say. We do not feel justified in being too optimistic.

The trade unionist inside the gate has been taught to consider the man outside, but in an altogether false light. He has accepted the view that the

work to be done is limited by the amount of capital available, and that wages are governed by a niggardly provision for the daily supplies of his daily needs. He has been taught that private enterprise is responsible for the scarcity and that nationalization of industry is the one and only remedy for industrial and social regeneration.

It is this false teaching that is at the bottom of the dispute. Employment is conditioned by the "reservoirs of external nature" and not by anything else. If there is lack of opportunities to labour the restriction is artificial and can be removed at will. Wages, the return to labour, are not governed by efficiency; if that were true invention and progress would have long ago brought labour into its own. Wages are fixed by the number of labourers seeking employment in relation to the number of available opportunities. Ten men too many at the factory gate means low wages to those inside, whatever the trade unions may think about it; and ten men less than are required means higher wages, with or without the consent of the powers that be.

Manifestly the problem cannot be settled without reference to the bounty of nature. It is out of new production that the labourer may hope for a higher standard of comfort. Land monopoly is the prime cause of unemployment and until this is remedied there can be no peace in industry. The Taxation of Land Values properly applied will open the opportunities that are now denied to labour and this will stimulate all trade and commerce. Purchasing power like the bargaining power of the trade unions are words without meaning so long as industry is kept in bondage to monopoly.

J. P.
