

MORAL JUSTICE AND WORLD PEACE

By Dr. S. Vere Pearson

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Moral justice cannot reign so long as private property in land is countenanced. Man cannot be true to his neighbours unless there is full recognition of God's impartiality. Nature would provide all with equal opportunities of enjoying her resources. But man errs and suffers. Primitive peoples acknowledge the natural law and act upon it. They conceive that land, like air and water, is God-given, and that every individual has a right to share in its bounties. But more developed races lose sight of the truth. Experience is often bitter and the notions of those who desire peace are often obtuse, and sometimes stupid. Peace can never be assured by wishing it. Nor is it a change of heart that is wanted, but rather an understanding of the cause of war. Banish fear, and warfare will disappear, and that can be done once everyone finds his opportunities for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness secured to him. Life itself cannot be secure to all so long as ownership of mother earth, from whence comes the means of life, is claimed by the few. Let the strongest, most advanced nations set the example by collecting the land-rent of their own domain for the public services and by abolishing taxation. Their site values have risen to fabulous heights and their influence on others will be wide when they show they have learned to respect their own rights of property.

While high sounding phrases about establishing peace are uttered many leaders of men are actually fostering suspicions, planning robbery, and setting up rivalries between individuals and nations by building tariff walls to hinder freedom of exchange and by sanctioning the private appropriation of the natural riches of the earth. Denmark, or any other enlightened nation, can abolish armaments without palaver when her people have established Free Trade and have accepted the principles of Henry Georgeism thoroughly instead of in a small way.

A League of Nations has been built upon the vindictive peace of so-called victory. It has accomplished some good. But it cannot do much for peace unless

it does first things first. Let its predecessors be remembered: the noble professions of former diplomats assembled as Holy Alliances, or a Concert of Europe turned to bitter mockery because financial groups were allowed to exploit the riches of foreign lands without paying just rents to the inhabitants so as to abolish all taxes. Robbery, slavery and wholesale murders were perpetrated as a consequence, in Africa for example, as has been so clearly pointed out in E. D. Morel's *The Black Man's Burden*. Such organizations can be and still are used as the tools of those who acquire the natural resources of the earth solely for their private gain, often under the guise of carrying out a "sacred trust." It is stupid to be blinded by a name or the colour of a flag. Often the name of a country is used, such as France, Spain, or England as if all the people of that country were acquiring the coal, oil, iron, gold or what not from some foreign land, when all that is happening is that the diplomats are arranging for a few persons to acquire monopolistic concessions.

Take the case of Palestine, for example. The British, while seeing the light to a small extent and consequently instituting improvement in the land tithe taxes, have just granted a concession for 70 years for water power to a monopolist, who is to make no direct payment for his rights. Such a scheme has already produced a big crop of troubles. Take the case of Albania, where the League of Nations has been really helpful. How much more good could it have done had it taught the Albanians how to collect more thoroughly than they do the economic rent of their domains, and how that would enable them to increase the education of the people and undertake the land drainage schemes and the building of the roads and light railways which are so sorely needed in Albania. Woe betide them if foreign intervention introduces them to the civilizing effect of acquiring a National Debt, or if Italian financial groups start exploiting their natural resources! Again, examine into what natural riches exist in Morocco and how these are connected with the turmoil and bloodshed of recent war there, and international quarrels in Europe. But that is a long story. Banish fear and poverty, set peoples free, and make clear that the commonweal is based on mutual aid by abolishing private ownership of land in the simple way Henry George has taught; then will moral justice reign and warfares cease. That is the only way.

Members of the Henry George Club, London, will regret to learn of the death of Mr. George Goodwin in July last, due to heart failure after influenza. Mr. Goodwin was earnestly attached to the work of the Club, and could interest others. His genial, good nature could not be denied and he knew how to put a piece of explanation to literature to good service. We extend our sincerest sympathy to Mrs. Goodwin and her family circle.

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