



Cleanliness is Next to Godliness

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The leader of the (Georgeist) Justice Party here rebuts attacks on Denmark's first Land-Value Taxation Government—a coalition formed last June of 9 Social Democrats, 4 Radical Liberals and 3 Justice Party members—and surveys recent and proposed measures. The Conservatives and Moderate Liberals ("Venstre"), now in opposition, held office from 1950-53. They were succeeded by a minority Social Democrat Government led by the present Prime Minister, Mr. H. C. Hansen, which held office until the last General Election.

THE two Opposition parties do not like the Justice Party, because it is against monopolies. It is a Party with principles based on justice. We claim that values created by honest work should belong to the man who created them, and that values not created by any single individual—the community-created land values—should belong to the society which created them. Consequently, in the name of righteousness, the Justice Party has always first of all demanded a land-value taxation.

The Justice Party is a liberal party, and land-value taxation is a liberal measure, the very foundation of liberty. Liberty is a human right within the limits of what is consistent with other persons' equally justified liberty. We are free-traders, against protection and restrictions and against taxation on production and consumption.

We have only 9 members in a parliament of 179 and consequently cannot expect to have all our wishes fulfilled and only these. Some idealists demand all or nothing. We cannot do without those idealists, but we cannot do with them exclusively. We have to face the responsibility that now we are able to take a very big step forward for the benefit of the whole Nation by accepting and voting for minor drawbacks which would have occurred anyway.

The Opposition is of the opinion that the Justice Party ought to have rendered them the service of rejecting participation in the new government. If we had done that they would have attacked us saying: For more than 30 years the Justice Party has claimed a land-value taxation. Now, when they have the opportunity of getting it, they dare not take the responsibility. What hopeless cranks!

The election of May 14, 1957, gave the Justice Party 50 per cent more mandates and 60 per cent more votes, than it had before. That created such a stir in the duck pond that many people got goose-flesh. The newspapers were in a dither because they had been so busy foretelling future events by means of Gallup polls and coffee grounds. Actually on the very day of election they had lickerishly distributed the Justice Party mandates, which they confidently expected to be wiped out, to the privileged old parties, but suddenly their applegart was upset, and things turned out quite differently.

But still greater excitement was in store. The air fairly quivered when the Justice Party joined the Social Democrats and the Radical Liberals in a tripartite coalition government, a land-value taxation government. The

Moderate Liberals and the Conservatives have not yet recuperated from the disappointment. In blissful anticipation of forming a small, restricted liberalisation-government—whatever they might mean by "liberalisation"—they had already been licking their lips—and almost each other's also. But few things are more difficult than forming a liberal government of non-liberal elements.

They had been so certain that it would be impossible to form a land-tax government that they had even induced the readers of their newspapers to believe it. Disappointment is painted on the faces of the opposition leaders, and now they paint the devil on the wall! They accuse and abuse the Justice Party in their newspapers, which is easy and safe, because the Justice Party has not got one single daily newspaper.

The Conservatives have never been liberal. They are protectionists and monopolists. They were not among the victors on election day, and they cannot demand any share in any liberalisation government. The Moderate Liberals are more liberal, but not enough. Twice after the war they have tried to double the tariff rates, and twice the Justice Party has prevented it. The new government is not a free-trade government, but it has promised to try a reduction of tariffs and restrictions.

It is true that the Justice Party is against taxes on production, consumption and savings, and I do not break any government secret by stating that the Justice Party did not join the government in order to accomplish a legislation of the sort enacted during the June session of Parliament. However, the worst thing is not the actual laws, but the fact that the other parties had made them necessary, because they—including the opposition—had given so many loans and subsidies that it was necessary to cover the Treasury deficit. The Justice Party voted against the laws of Housing Subsidy and People's Pension, and is not responsible for the fact that it was necessary to meet the expenses, but we take our part of the responsibility of putting things right, which causes hoot and crow from the guilty parties.

100 million kroner in extra tax on beer and tobacco is an unpleasant lot of money, but a small amount compared with the unpleasantness caused by the two opposition parties during their tenure from 1950 to 1953, when taxes and excises were increased by Kr. 300 million annually. All things considered taxes were increased by 1,100 millions and public expenditures by 1,300 millions.