

JUSTICE AND NATURAL LAW—By Dr. Viggo Starcke

SOCIETY is original, all-embracing and enduring. The individual has only a fleeting existence, but society, the people, the race has lived before us and will continue to live after us.

The individual and his personality are a reality. Without individuals society cannot exist, but neither can the single individual exist without society, not, at any rate, for more than a short time since we all die soon and the single individual cannot reproduce himself.

The way the human brain has been formed by the hands of Nature shows that we are meant to live in a community. Only one-tenth of the brain is for individual reactions. The other nine-tenths of our brain are made for social reactions. Thus it is obvious that the individual is not only created as a man but as a fellow man.

Justice has its spring in society. The object of justice is to secure the life and functions of society. All that earlier generations have stored up from past experience and acquired in knowledge, skill, art, history and religion are things the individual is born to and receives as a gift, greater and richer than he can ever repay by the work of his whole lifetime. From these arise social background and national duty.

In the most primitive society the individual is very much bound by habit and custom, superstitions, ceremonies and taboos. He has very little freedom and very few rights. Rights and freedom develop first in society as the division of labour is introduced. Rights and freedom are not only a result of the division of labour but are also necessary for the further development of the division of labour. Therefore, rights and freedom are things we must guard and fight for, otherwise life and society are in danger of becoming rigid and calcified. It is the free society and the just state which are the goal.

In the individual there lives the voice of conscience which tells him what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad. But rights do not spring from the individual. They are a power that stands over him, binding him with duties and lifting him to a fuller life, greater, nobler and more valuable than he can find only in himself.

Everlasting Nature, with her strength and her wealth, is the primeval cause determining all mankind's existence. All that humanity has done by working and inventing rests on this foundation. Therefore the relation between mankind and Nature is the most important of all. This relation is eternally vital for mankind. Man cannot create Nature, he can only transform and adapt her.

The earth is our home. On this green planet whirling through space is the soil of our fatherland, the spot we call our own. We feel attached to it because it is the perpetual foundation for the life of our race, generation after generation. None of us have created it . . . it is everlasting.

All that men produce, such as houses, machinery and goods are perishable. Mould and rust devour them. But we can build new houses, construct better machines and produce new goods.

It is natural that society should say that that which no one has created and which is the foundation for the continuance of the life of our race rightly belongs to society. To whom else should it belong? On the other hand, it is natural that a man should say that what he has made with

his own hands and the work of his brain is his. Whose else should it be?

There is a sharp line of separation here which is both important and practical. If the word "justice" is to have any substance and meaning then it is this, that what no single person has made belongs to the people and that which the individual man has made with his own labour is his.

Within this clear and all-embracing principle there are a great many minor questions which are not without importance. But they are all immaterial compared with the fundamental question. We take our stand on the broad principle, which is more important than the details. It is this that gives our movement such strength and such significance for the future of the people.

Now Justice stands forth in its true light and all the unimportant details must not be allowed to veil the mighty voice of Righteousness. It is here that Morality has her primary and most important function. Practical life is also faced with a problem that lies at the bottom of all the phenomena of living. The national problem is internally first and foremost a question of the people's ownership of the soil of their fatherland. And, looked at from a religious point of view, it is a question whether all who hunger and thirst after righteousness will ever be satisfied until the meek inherit the earth. The common people have had to toil and moil under service to powerful exploiters and under the burden of heavy taxation in a world which God, in the morning of the creation, gave them—the common people—as a gift, as a workshop, as a home, but which the vested interests have changed into a concentration camp.

The practical solution is the orderly society which the Danish people, in their greatest and best periods, have realized through Grundskyld (literally, the "ground-due" or land revenue), a system under which the people gather that value which the earth has received from the hands of Nature and from the growth and activity of society. On the other hand, it is practical that the individual as such should have complete control over what he has produced, to exchange it freely or to give it away.

The solution is just, beneficent and practical and more cannot be expected. It is of primary importance that freedom should be able to expand since the great significance of freedom is that it is the only thing that can give opportunity to all to utilize the tremendous creative forces which are found in the human soul—inventiveness, courage, determination and strength of character.

When all these are given free play many of the problems of daily life will be solved, and existence will become living and practical and good. The resources of nature are so great that they will prove to be more than enough for all. The need the people have for homes; fuel, food and clothing we can satisfy now with present productive powers and technique.

Justice is not an end but a means. But it is a principle without which everything is complicated and uncertain. Justice exists for the sake of life. That is why it is so important and why there are so many to be found who will give their work their knowledge and, if necessary, their lives so that it can be realized and so that others may build their lives fearlessly upon it.

*Translation from "Vejen Frem" by
Misses Edit Andersen and Elizabeth Riley.*