

A CHINESE SAGE

(From *The Book of Mencius*, abridged, translated from the Chinese by Lionel Giles, John Murray, 3s. 6d.)

MENCIUS SAID: If a prince honours the wise and employs the able, so that men of light and leading are in power, then the scholars of the Empire will be pleased, and anxious to attend his Court. If he levies ground-rent on the stalls in the market place but refrains from taxing goods, or if he contents himself with keeping order and levies no ground-rent, then the traders of the Empire will all be pleased, and anxious to stall their goods in his market-place. If at his frontier stations merchandise is only examined and not burdened with duties, then the bagmen of the Empire will all be pleased, and anxious to frequent his highways. If the ploughmen have to help on the public fields* but are not otherwise taxed, then the farmers of the Empire will all be pleased, and anxious to cultivate his waste lands. If from the tradespeople he does not exact individual or village contributions, then all the inhabitants of the Empire will be pleased, and anxious to become his subjects. If he is truly able to walk in these five ways, the people of neighbouring kingdoms will look up to him as to a father and mother. (Pages 48-9.)

Tai Ying-chih said to Mencius: Just at present I am able to do away with frontier and market dues, and to restrict myself to the levying of a tithe: but I propose to lighten these taxes, and in the coming year I will abolish them altogether. What say you?—Mencius replied: There was once a man who stole one of his neighbour's fowls every day. Some one remonstrated with him, saying, "This conduct does not befit a gentleman." "Very well," said he, "I will reduce the number and take only one fowl a month until next year, when I will put a stop to it." If you know a thing to be wrong, you should stop doing it at once, and not wait till next year. (Pages 66-7.)

*This refers to the nine-square system, which Mencius describes elsewhere: "A square *li* is divided into nine smaller squares, containing nine hundred roods in all. The central square is public land, and is cultivated by eight families, each of which has a hundred roods of its own." Mencius was born in 372 B.C.

SKY-HIGH IN AFRICA

THE CAPE *Argus*, November 16, reported the stiff increase in the price of land in South Africa, which had gone up by 58 per cent. during the last two years; thus in the first six months of 1942, the price of 4,877,000 morgen sold was £11,433,000, whereas in the first six months of 1944 the price of 4,967,000 morgen sold was £18,503,000. A graver problem is that of acquiring building sites in the suburbs and near the city. This is almost impossible. The prices of the few sites available are sky-high. "People who own

land to-day," one property agent commented, "are clinging to it. I suppose they feel that a solid piece of earth is a more substantial nest-egg than a wad of problematical paper pounds." Another authority who agreed that the reluctance of people to part with sites was stifling the expansion of Cape Town residentially, said this raised an ethical question. While some people were crying out for land and houses, was it socially just that others with money should be able to "lock up" sites they did not need for their own use? "I believe," he said, "that there should be some system whereby such unoccupied land could be expropriated and made available to the man who wants to build his own home."

Obviously the ethical question is that the land belongs to the people and the landholders should pay rent for it to the people. It is the value of the land that should be "expropriated" by the levy of rates and taxes upon it, exempting whatever improvement has been placed on the land. South Africa is ripe for that policy, like our own country and elsewhere throughout the world.

LIBERAL LIBERTY LEAGUE

A distinguished woman Liberal, who holds an official position in the Party, in a letter to Mr. T. Atholl Robertson, Vice-President of the Liberal Liberty League, writes: "It is of course the Beveridge Full Employment plan that has made the Party wobble in its official resolutions. What even Beveridge does not seem to realise is that there can be no full employment for this country without Free Trade, unless we each fully employ ourselves by digging graves for the others, into which we can all tumble when we die of starvation."

Correspondence accumulates expressing grave concern with the trend of opinion in the counsels of the Liberal Party, as one writer says "the political and economic principles of Cobden, Peel, Gladstone, Harcourt, Morley, Campbell Bannerman and Asquith are being jettisoned and the immorality of opportunism is poisoning the body politic of Liberalism." A recent example is contained in a report of the sub-committee of the Party dealing with inland transport which advocates the Nationalisation of Road, Rail and Air Transport, Ports and Canals; the chairman is Mr. B. Seeborn Rowntree. Support for this has been given in public speeches by Lady Rhys Williams, Lord Samuel, Sir William Beveridge, and Tom Horabin, M.P., who at a recent discussion group meeting in London advocated the national ownership of power, coal, and land, also a "planned economy." It is pertinent to remind these people that in 1937 that the reason given officially why Liberals could not join in the formation of the "Popular Front" with the Labour Party was, "that Liberals stand for the diffusion of private enterprise and ownership which Socialists would abolish and they are passionately opposed to the suppression of liberty which 'the nationalisation of all the means of production distribution and exchange' would involve." What has come over them?

At a recent meeting of the Cobden Club the following resolution was carried unanimously: "The Executive of the Cobden Club impressed by the evil consequences of our Protective Tariff and restrictions on imports together with the suppression of free markets at home and industrial conscription, records its con-

viction that Great Britain after the war should revert to the policy of Free Trade and the Open Door which was the foundation of our prosperity, and is the only means by which it can be restored. Thus we shall consult our own interests, promote peaceful commerce and set an example to other nations. It is equally important that the costly and vexatious controls over home manufacturers, merchants and retailers should be removed with all possible expedition."

This is excellent but I would add that no resolution on Free Trade is complete without it calls for the abolition of land monopoly, the greatest restrictive factor to the functioning of the free market. Opinions and news are invited from members.

S. Martin (L.L.L. Press Secretary).

AT BERWICK-ON-TWEED

Both the *Berwick Journal* and the *Berwick Advertiser*, of March 22, gave extensive reports, in one case a whole column, to the public meeting which the Yorkshire Land Values League held in the Town Hall, Berwick. Capt. A. R. McDougal, Blythe, presided, and the speakers were Messrs. Ashley Mitchell, A. W. Madsen and Wilfrid Harrison. CAPT. McDOUGAL cited a number of local illustrations of how the present land tenure and taxation system works. If anyone wanted to build a house he was punished by a heavy fine in the way of rates, which was not much encouragement to build. Instead of land being de-rated, houses ought to be de-rated. Higher prices for land did not mean prosperity for farmer or farm worker; they meant higher rent. No social problem would be settled until this question of land value taxation was taken into consideration. MR. MITCHELL said that in the Berwick constituency they had a Member of Parliament who had recently published a scheme for dealing with unemployment and in it there was no reference to the importance of the land question. After explaining how land values arose and pointing out that the rent of land was what the community itself created, he said that by our tax system owners were encouraged to withhold land speculatively and yet people wondered why there should be unemployment. They were fighting a war for freedom and he did not think any one wanted "security" at the price of liberty. MR. MADSEN urged Berwick people to tell their M.P., Sir William Beveridge, to take up this land values question and the freedom of trade and drop all the nonsense about the spending of public money in the way he suggested with its imposition of all sorts of restrictions and regimentation, which would eventually take us in the direction of what we were trying to get away from—the totalitarian State. MR. HARRISON said that slogan about "full employment in a free society" should be watched and examined very carefully. He had read the "Mein Kampf" of Sir William Beveridge and he saw nothing which was so comparable to the programme put forward by the Nazis as there was in that book. At the finish one could almost see the Gestapo forcing the controls which were suggested and insisted upon. It might be acceptable if there was some reasonable hope of it solving the unemployment problem; in his opinion it was a false hope.

At last! A Free Church that preaches the application of the Gospel—the truth in Land. Please help us to help the Land Values Movement. Donations gratefully received.

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