

## LAND VALUES

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### "OUR POLICY"

"We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community—the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community; leave sacredly to the individual all that belongs to the individual."—*Henry George.*

## THE GENESIS OF THE WAR

With the outbreak of the War has come upon us an avalanche of books on "German Culture," &c., &c. With few exceptions the writers wax very eloquent upon the superiority of our British conception of Justice and sense of duty. Our enemies, we are told, are the exponents of a pernicious ethic which maintains that "Might is Right"; that the "weakly are those who cannot withstand the exactions of nature, and ought to be cut off rather than cared for, they are the vessels of disease and corruption, and are a menace to the strong." That the dominant philosophers of military Germany have expressed these views is undeniable. They are in strict accordance with the views held by the so-called "Biological Sociologists" who not only influenced Germany but were ever ready to support any intellectual reaction in this country.

Herbert Spencer, Professor Huxley, and others, interpreting in a narrow and vicious sense the conception of the struggle for existence which was introduced into biology by Darwin and Wallace, proclaimed that the struggle of each against all is the leading principle of nature, and of all human societies as well. The result of their efforts was to raise the "pitiless" struggle for personal advantages to the height of a biological principle, thus soothing the feelings of monopolists and others with the belief that physical science had given its verdict in favour of violence and against the doctrine of social equality. The advocates of this new theory of life were amongst the greatest thinkers in England and of world-wide reputation; their works influenced the trend of thought in every great seat of learning, and were a decided stimulus to the Treitschke-Bernhardi school in Germany.

The theory that progress is dependent upon a conflict between individuals in which the fittest survive was met and answered by PROGRESS AND POVERTY. The poor and the weakly, George held, were not in existence simply because of inherent weaknesses in certain types, but that poverty and all the weaknesses which poverty

breeds in society were the direct results of maintaining for the few certain privileges which encroached upon the natural or moral rights of the many; that the only way to eliminate poverty and thereby resuscitate the race was to secure to each individual the right to live, and all that that right implies in the free and equal use of natural opportunities. How different is the remedy of the socio-biologists! Their basic doctrine being that human progress depends upon those forces which condition all biological evolution, they set out to declare war upon those who were weak and easily beaten in the struggle for life. They ignored the fact that millions are reduced to impotence and poverty not by "those forces which condition all biological evolution," but by *those forces which condition the perpetuation of Privilege and Monopoly.*

Nor has the futility of their methods for eliminating the "unfit" ever occurred to them. Granting that it were possible to remove all the weaklings from society here and now, will not those economic conditions still remain which would again produce another army of weaklings? As Henry George pointed out, the influence of heredity, which it was their (the socio-biologists') fashion to rate so highly, is as nothing compared with the influences which mould the man after he comes into the world. Thus the doctrines of Henry George involved a radical reform in our land laws, which have ever been the strongholds of privilege, and to that extent his ideas were bound to be unpopular in high places; the conceptions of the pseudo-evolutionists endowed the prevailing state of things with a halo of authoritative sanctity and enduring ennoblement.

When we turn to Germany we may trace the fatal results of carrying the so-called biological ideas into the legislative and economic sphere.

After the overthrow of the Napoleonic tyranny the philosopher Hegel (1770-1831) stood out as the idealist of the Omnipotent State. The ideals of the eighteenth century were of a rationalistic liberalism for which he had no sympathy. The rights of the individual were secondary to those of the State. This ideal of the great State became popular among the Prussian school of historians, and by 1870 the "Peter the Hermit" of Hegelianism, a young and eloquent professor of history, Heinrich von Treitschke, was firing the mind of Prussia, and suggesting the policy she must pursue in her divinely appointed mission of "world dominion": Prussia must arise from an impotent and chaotic state, assume control of all the neighbouring States, displace their petty rulers, and, marshalling all their military power under one flag, she must set out upon a world conquest. Mommsen, the historian of the Roman Empire, vainly appealed to his fellow-countrymen to "have a care lest in this State the intelligence should vanish, and nothing but the pure military State remain." But even though this should come to pass, was not "biological evolution" on the side of the ever-conquering and warlike? "Progress comes about through a conflict in which the fittest survives!" "War," cried Treitschke, "cannot be thought or wished out of the world; therein lies the majesty of war, that the petty individual altogether vanishes before the great thoughts of the State: war shall always recur as a terrible medicine for humanity." This is but the German version of Huxley's "Hobbesian war of each against all" as the condition of progress.

These ideas inspired Bismarck and are the essentials in the "Credo" of Friedrich von Bernhardi. "War," he tells us, "is a *biological necessity* of the first importance, a regulative element in the life of mankind which cannot be dispensed with, since without it an unhealthy development will follow which excludes every advancement of the race. . . . When the State renounces all extension of power and recoils from every war which is necessary for its expansion, then its citizens become stunted." From Hegel's Omnipotent State to Bernhardi's "war as a biological necessity" is a logical sequence, and one which has obsessed the minds of the leading men in all cultured circles in Germany. Professors of political economy like Adolf Wagner and Schmoller, and the historian Hans Delbrück, are notoriously "Pan-German": their one wish, says Professor Wagner, is to see "the grand apotheosis of the German idea, which is one of the great forces in the modern world." When we realise that the "Herr Professor" is, as M. Bourdon remarks, the keeper and regulator of the German conscience, and carries more sway over the convictions of the German people, who are not less submissive to intellectual than to official authority, than anyone else, we may have some idea of the attitude and temper of the lay mind of Germany. The startling growth of the German Empire during the past hundred years is openly attributed to the warlike virtues and unquestionable military efficiency of the people, and the power of their arms is the medium through which the Almighty is remorselessly working for the higher development of mankind.

Is it any wonder that to-day Germany's soul has become possessed of a military Calvinism?

Listen to the words of Herr Alfred Kerr, the influential editor and publicist:—

"Nothing has any power against the destiny of History. The German has arrived with his red corpuscles, and I believe his hour has come. *The law of life ordains that the least strong shall be eliminated, and the real conquerors are the famished, that is to say, we Germans.*"

In this statement we have the bloodthirsty philosophy which is begotten of an entirely erroneous and vicious conception of science. How strongly it verifies the analysis which Henry George made of this theory thirty-five years ago in *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*!

"The practical outcome of this theory [the so-called biological theory of progress] is a sort of hopeful fatalism. In this view, progress is the result of forces which worked slowly, steadily, and remorselessly for the elevation of man. War, slavery, tyranny, superstition, famine, and pestilence, the want and misery which fester in modern civilisation, are the impelling causes which drive men on, by eliminating poorer types and extending the higher. . . . Philosophers may teach that this does not lessen the duty of endeavouring to reform abuses, just as the theologians who taught predestinarianism insisted on the duty of all to struggle for salvation; but, as generally apprehended, the result was fatalism—'Do what we may, the mills of the gods grind on regardless either of our aid or our hindrance.'"

Thus have the "intellectuals" of Germany created an atmosphere of arrogant militarism which not only threatens the civilised world but subjects the entire interests of German democracy to those of the "Great State" promoters. It is the function of these "promoters" to "consciously reconstruct" society along lines indicated by the scientific expert. To the German mind life seems to be conceived as organised in a number of departments under a hierarchy of expert officials

whose duty it is to dissect, analyse, and classify. These experts have produced cartloads of "facts" which have smothered the humanities and produced a science of society entirely destitute of large or generous ideas. All things, including the moral rights of the individual, are secondary and subordinate to the mechanical efficiency of the State. These intellectuals seem to have entirely ignored the weighty evidence of their greatest historian, Mommsen, who says:—

"The smallest organism infinitely surpasses the most artistic machine; every constitution, however defective, which gives play to the self-determination of a majority of *citizens* infinitely surpasses the most brilliant and humane absolutism: for the former is capable of development and therefore living, the latter is what it is and therefore dead."

But in Germany the spontaneity of the individuals composing the State is stifled by the scientifically trained and experienced expert of the State—a custom which of late is becoming dangerously fashionable here in Britain. In his great work of 1857 the historian Buckle, recording this German tendency, says:—

"Even the best of German Governments are constantly interfering with the people; never leaving them to themselves, always looking after their interest, and meddling in the commonest affairs of daily life."

. . . The consequence is, that there is no nation in Europe in which we find so wide an interval between the highest and the lowest minds. The German philosophers possess a learning, and a reach of thought, which places them at the head of the civilised world. The German people are more superstitious, more prejudiced, and, notwithstanding the care which the Government takes of their education, more really ignorant, and more unfit to guide themselves, than are the inhabitants either of France or England."

Obviously, where the mass of the people are impoverished, the results of such a form of government must be disastrous.

With that vanity which is common to all authoritative coteries who are allowed to encroach upon the liberties of others, these State experts begin to explain their existence in terms of a great divine plan; for there is no imposition more successful than that which assumes the sanctity of religion, and in the infallibility of a holy origin lies the power of acting with impunity. "The State cannot do wrong," says Treitschke, "for the State is the highest thing in the external society of man; above it there is nothing at all in the history of the World." Thus have the disinherited people of Germany been indoctrinated in the philosophy of the "Almighty State."

Hence to-day all civilisation is witnessing the "Grand apotheosis of the German idea"!

The apotheosis of the idea, that the motor of human progress is the howitzer; that poverty is due to inherent physical weakness in types; that "Warfare is God's medicine for the human race"; that small nations like individuals must succumb to the great military state; that greatness is synonymous with terror.

It is with a view to teaching a decadent world this philosophy that Prussian Junkers have led their hordes into other lands.

How futile then to rummage "White Papers" or in the speeches of blundering diplomats for the cause of this war! The roots of this trouble run much deeper than any of these.



The thoroughness and magnificence of design—if such a phrase is permissible in this connection—already exhibited in the details of this German campaign disposes of the notion that this war was the outcome of the rash impetuosity of a few statesmen. Detail and efficiency are the evidences of forethought.

When we review the evolution of thought in Germany during the past century side by side with the economic condition of the people, we are convinced that this great test of organised strength was inevitable. This war is but the culmination of the "Super-State" ideal.

To future generations this conflict of nations will be the grimmest tragedy that has ever marked the pages of human history, and that because official Germany with her "incomparable knowledge of facts was incomparably ignorant of human nature." She failed in her appreciation of the true meaning of history, and was ever ready to assimilate those so-called scientific theories which gratified her vanity and gave enforcement to her preconceived prejudices. Basing her actions upon the calculations of fanatical militarists—who are as unworthy of Goethe and Kepler as the British Jingo and the Yellow Press gang are unworthy of Shakespeare and Darwin—she has thrown the fruits of half a century of wonderful industrial development into the lap of Moloch—a sacrifice often repeated in history, and one which is inevitable where the saving and tempering voice of democracy is inarticulate. All appeals for the "rights of man" and democratic government she scorned as the mere pretexts of incompetent weaklings.

In all of this Germany has fallen into the error against which Henry George and others have successively warned us—namely, the subjecting of an entire community with its varied aspirations and propensities to the rule of specialised schools of scientific experiment. Humanity is thus reduced to the level of the ape and the protozoa. It does not shape its own fate. The greatest schemes, the highest ideals of men are produced by physical causes which can be ascertained by science and predicted by biological writers on human society who, it is assumed, hold a clear and distinct conception of our destiny. It is taken for granted that fitness to survive, irrespective of all moral concepts and social conditions, is an evidence of superiority in every other respect. It is under this pretext that socio-biologists seek to excuse the transgressions of the powerful State upon the rights of the individual, and in this lies the secret of their success. Like many other schools of sociological science, they do not seek to remove the established state of things, but rather to give them a local habitation and a name.

"Poverty is due to inherent weaknesses in certain types. The strong and the powerful are nature's finest selection. In order to survive as a strong caste of individuals or state it is essential that weaker individuals and states be subjected by all the powers of force."

These are the honeyed phrases that delight the ear of privilege and monopoly. To come forward with the doctrine of social equality as embodied in the doctrines of Henry George was to court the ostracism of established powers. But to-day, as the powers of vested interests are seeking the consummation of their ignoble desires and the regimented millions are suffering untold misery and death, the moral consciousness of the civilised world is being awakened to a truer conception of social justice.

ANDREW McLAREN.

## THE NEW TAXATION

The Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced his War Budget on November 18th. The war is costing nearly £1,000,000 a day, and there has been a serious decrease in the ordinary revenue. A large part of the revenue necessary to make up this deficit and to meet the cost of the war must be obtained from loans, but the Cabinet has decided to follow the traditional policy of raising a portion of this expenditure by an immediate increase of taxation. The new taxes, which are estimated to yield £15,500,000 this year and £65,000,000 next year, are an increase of 3d. per lb. on tea, an increase in the tax on beer equivalent to 1d. per glass, and a doubling of the rates of Income Tax.

To raise such an enormous amount by new taxation is an extraordinarily difficult project, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer whose task it is to do so may well demand sympathy. Yet he has himself laid down two principles by which it is legitimate to judge him—that it is desirable to call upon every individual to make some contribution, and that it is undesirable to impose any burden on the productive industries of the country. The first of these principles is open to the objection that it is undesirable to impose any burden upon individuals until the natural communally created revenue of the State is exhausted; but, leaving this aside as "abstract and idealistic," the solid fact remains that the poor are already paying in indirect taxation an immensely disproportionate share of the revenue. If the new taxation had been put exclusively on the rich—and could have been made to stay there—something would have been done to redress the balance; but in fact a great part of it is being raised by an increase of indirect taxation, and the injustice is greater than ever. We are drifting far away from the Newcastle programme and the Liberal ideal of equity in taxation.

It is ridiculous under any circumstances that our Government should continue to tax wages and industry and allow monopoly to escape scot free. But it is intolerable under the present circumstances, when the poor are making such enormous sacrifices and having their industry and their wages so much curtailed, that they should be subjected to the penal taxation now imposed. The Chancellor of the Exchequer seems to view with a light heart the havoc he is making. Perhaps he is unable to see it, for he seems to forget all that he has ever said about making community created values pay for the cost of government and to be quite enthusiastically in favour of making the workers pay out of that little portion of their hard-earned wages which is left them by the exactions of monopoly. If he could only devise a plan he would like to put a direct tax on wages instead of taxing them indirectly, and here he has the support of Mr. Arthur Henderson, the Chairman of the Labour Party.

It may be the desire and the intention of Mr. Lloyd George and his Labour-Socialist colleague at Westminster to put a tax on the workers' wages, but we have a well-founded notion that the workers as voters embraced in both the Liberal and Labour ranks will have something to say on the subject. The Government are pledged to the hilt to tax land values—a pledge, too, which calls loudly these days for fulfilment—but where is the group of Liberals or even Labour men who are prepared to accept a direct tax on wages? The day that this suggested tax on wages is seriously proposed by a Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer will mark the