

5217

03611

NATURE'S OWN PLAN FOR MAN'S SOCIAL SECURITY

THE PLATFORM OF THE "PIONEERS OF PEACE" AND THE PRINCIPLES THEY UPHOLD

(AN EDITORIAL IN THE BECKWITH PAPERS, SEPTEMBER, 1939)

The teaching of The Pioneers of Peace boils down to this:

Just as men have, by the mastery of the shop sciences, developed good automobiles, airplanes, and radios, without waiting to improve their own morals; so can men by the mastery of the science of economics have wholesome civic conditions, honest politics, industrial justice, racial harmony, and international peace without waiting for men to improve their morals.

ARGUMENT No. 1

- a. Our sciences have been brought in, like our oil wells, one by one.
- b. Each time a new science has been discovered, a realm that formerly seemed chaotic proved to be orderly and subject to dependable laws.
- c. Each time that has happened men have found that, by utilizing these newly-found laws, they could do things that before seemed impossible.
- d. But, so far as the general public is concerned, the science of economics has not yet been "brought in."
- e. Men continue to look upon economic problems as problems in morality to be referred either to the consciences of men, or to the police.

ARGUMENT No. 2

- a. Either there are in nature, or there not, laws of economic cause and effect, as independent of human control and as definite and dependable as the laws of cause and effect in physics and chemistry.
- b. If there are no such laws, no one can know what will be the effect of any economic cause, or what is the cause of any economic effect; and it is futile for men to seek a solution of their economic ills.
- c. But, if such laws exist, men must do in economics what they have to do in other sciences--study Nature's laws and learn to use them.

ARGUMENT No. 3

- a. Scientists have found, so far, no exception to the rule that Nature reserves to herself the control of things on which all men depend.
- b. The processes of Nature are under the exclusive control of Nature; and they work for all alike, regardless of men's morality.
- c. While it is true that men may influence the conditions under which they live, Nature permits men to do this only when they conform to her processes and proceed in conformity with a procedure she dictates.
- d. This means that man's freedom of action is limited to matters affecting only their individual interests and the interests of those who are more or less closely involved with them.
- e. By this system of dual control--that is, by having all matters upon which all mankind depend controlled by natural law and so limiting men's freedom to their individual interests and then holding men responsible under the moral law for that freedom, it is possible to give men freedom of the will without endangering the welfare of the race.

ARGUMENT No. 4

- a. If the realm of economics is not left to Chaos, but is governed by dependable law, that law must be either the moral law or natural law.
- b. But, like the weather, economic conditions affect all men; and it has

2-174

NATURE'S OWN PLAN FOR MAN'S SOCIAL SECURITY

yet to be proved that there is in nature any exception to the rule that such matters are reserved to the exclusive control of Nature herself.

- c. Therefore, unless economics is an exception to this rule, economic problems are problems, not in morals, but in natural law.

ARGUMENT No. 5

- a. The moral law applies only to those who at the time mentioned in the indictment had knowledge of, and some measure of control over, the matter under judgment.
- b. But all feeling, thinking, and all action, is individual; every thing felt, thought, or done, is felt, thought, or done, by an individual.
- c. Society does not feel, think, nor act; nor do governments.
- d. A government decision is the result of numerous individual decisions; and every thing done to carry out that decision is done by individuals.
- e. Mob psychology, national fervor, "folkgeist," and "weltgeist," are not examples of group thinking; they are merely illustrations of thinking in which each individual is influenced by the same set of conditions.
- f. As neither society, nor a government, can do any thing for which it could be judged, the moral law cannot apply to them.
- g. From this it follows that the problems of men's public relations can not be problems in morality, but must be problems in natural law.

ARGUMENT No. 6

- a. It can be consistently argued that depressions and other economic ills, all of which afflict babes in arms as well as the responsible leaders of public opinion, result from man's ignorance of natural law.
- b. But it cannot be consistently argued that economic ills are penalties incurred under moral law; for, unlike natural law, moral law imposes no penalties on the innocent—did it do so, it would be immoral.
- c. In cases where, for example, the violations of the moral law involve abuses of the body and the consequences are "visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation," it is the natural laws of physiology (not the moral law) that fixes the penalty.

ARGUMENT No. 7

- a. The Church teaches that this world and all that is in it is the creation of an omnipotent, omniscient, loving Creator who has provided the productive processes of Nature by which the products of the field and shop are made possible.
- b. But producers are not really served by these productive processes if, after the wealth is produced, there is no dependable way by which that wealth is properly apportioned to those who produced it.
- c. To be consistent, those who believe the Creator has provided the productive processes to serve mankind must believe that He has also provided a dependable means whereby the product is justly apportioned to those who have contributed to its production.
- d. Those who accept Nature's consistent protection of the processes of production as evidence of her purposefulness must, to be consistent, believe that she has also provided dependable natural laws which will, if we conform to them, protect the producer's right to his product.

ARGUMENT No. 8

- a. There are only three ways known to the economist by which men can obtain wealth.
- b. These are to get it (1) as wages (in return for labor, which includes management, as labor is any human effort); (2) as interest as a return on wealth devoted, not to consumption, but to the enrichment of the owner; (3) as rent, sometimes called "ground rent."

ARGUMENT No. 9

- a. A man working alone, and unaided, in the wilderness far from civilization, can receive wages for his labor (in the berries he picks), and receive interest in the form of fruit, or a calf, as a return on capital in the form of a tree or a cow.
- b. But no man working alone, and unaided and far from civilization, can receive rent; for rent is not the product of individual effort.
- c. Rent is a community product—the public's wages and interest.

NATURE'S OWN PLAN FOR MAN'S SOCIAL SECURITY

- d. The rent paid on a site on solid rock in a metropolis is greater than that paid for a site on the richest soil in the wilderness.
- e. And the rent on any site changes with the surroundings, even though there be no change in the lot or acre on which it is said to be paid.
- f. Moreover, if rent were paid for the bounty of Nature in any of its many forms, rent would be highest where these gifts of Nature are virgin; and when men crowd in and impair this bounty, it would fall.
- g. But rent does not fall under these conditions; instead, of this, rent rises where men crowd in, even though they mar the gifts of Nature.
- h. The evidence is conclusive that rent is compensation for contributions made by people around and about, far and near, to the security, comfort, convenience, and enjoyment, of those who occupy the sites.

ARGUMENT No. 10

- a. No matter how good a country may be, or who made it what it is, or how this was done, one must be there to enjoy its advantages.
- b. To be there one must pay for that privilege what the market demands.
- c. This charge (rent or purchase price) is all the privilege is worth.
- d. Rent is, therefore, equal to the market value of the social and governmental services (including stand-by services) available to the occupant of the sites in question.

ARGUMENT No. 11

- a. What is known as land value is the capitalized value of the net rent; this changes with the net rent, even though nothing else changes.
- b. Land value (so called) is not the value of land; it is the capitalized value of the net rent, the value of the landholder's title—that is, the value of his right to collect the rent accruing there.
- c. Since neither the rent, nor the "land value," are in any way related to the land, they do not belong to the landowner. (See 9g)
- d. As the rent is the public's wages and interest, it should be collected into the public treasury and used to pay the public's bills.
- e. Landowners would still have their land and all they have produced.
- g. All they would lose would be the opportunity to appropriate to their own use a portion of other people's wages and interest (the rent).

ARGUMENT No. 12

- a. Wages and interest are direct returns on investments of labor and capital, respectively, made by persons, or firms, or corporations.
- b. The amounts of these investments, and the results, are known.
- c. Rent, on the other hand, is the return on innumerable investments in numberless projects, by countless persons, firms, and corporations, the amounts and the results of which it is impossible to know. (9g)
- d. The only way it is possible to make payment of these returns to these investors is to have the rent collected into the public treasury and then to use it for the benefit of the public.
- e. This would result in a just distribution, because each man would decide how much service he would pay for, and each would pay rent for the service received and receive service in proportion to his rent.

ARGUMENT No. 13

- a. Rent is paid for two classes of service:
 - Service rendered at the expense of the public treasury.
 - Service rendered at the expense of private purses.
- b. The rent paid for service of Class 1 would finance the service rendered by the government—that is, it would finance the government.
- d. The rent paid for the service in Class 2 would not be needed to finance the government and would accumulate in the treasury.
- e. This surplus accumulating from the collection of rent paid for service in Class 2, such as that of the theaters, churches, shops, and other private enterprises, is the natural source of the funds needed for new capital investments in additional highways, public buildings, etc.

ARGUMENT No. 14

- a. Wages and interest can be got (as wages and interest) only by making a corresponding investment of labor or capital—that is, by being useful. Neither wages nor interest can be got at the expense of others.

NATURE'S OWN PLAN FOR MAN'S SOCIAL SECURITY

- b. If the rent were collected instead of taxes, men would be limited to wages and interest; then no man could exploit another.
- c. Then, men selfishly interested in getting more wealth would be selfishly eager to be agreeable and to make themselves useful.
- d. Then selfishness would be on the side of peace and harmony—for the same reason that it keeps merchants from quarrelling with customers.

ARGUMENT No. 15

- a. When men are permitted to keep (in addition to the interest due them on investments in improvements), any part of the rent they collect, they are tempted to meddle in public affairs to control conditions in ways that will raise rent where they do the collecting.
- b. The way to make money by the control of government is to collect rent paid because of conditions resulting from government policies.
- c. If men were denied rent, no one could profit at the expense of others by the control of government; that would end crooked politics.

ARGUMENT No. 16

- a. All creatures have impulses, commonly called instincts, which serve them as a means of defense.
- b. These impulses are, without exception, a defense to the species.
- c. It is admitted that man instinctively lives in communities—that is, that he is instinctively social—being gregarious, like the bees.
- d. It is admitted that, in times of danger, men rally instinctively to the defense of the tribe, community, or of the species—that is, of society.
- e. These admissions mean that men are endowed with impulses which, regardless of the morality of men, may be depended upon to serve society.
- f. This not only disproves the popular assumption that man's so-called selfish impulses are anti-social, but proves that a system of social security set up in conformity with these impulses would be far more dependable than one based upon the uncertain morality of men.

ARGUMENT No. 17

- a. The police are not concerned about the secret life of the citizen.
- b. They are satisfied if people act as though they were honest.
- c. Were the rent collected instead of taxes and men limited to wages and interest so that they could get wealth only by making themselves useful and agreeable, the world would be good from the point of view of the State and the police.
- d. That is, we would have wholesome civic conditions, honest politics, industrial justice, racial harmony, and world peace at once—just as we have good automobiles now, regardless of the virtue of men.
- e. The collection of the rent instead of taxes would make it impossible for any one to profit selfishly by interfering either negatively or positively with the places of residence of the races. (See 14e)
- f. That, together with the fact that land would have no selling price, would enable the members of each race to live by themselves, thus solving the problem of the races.
- g. If no one could get any of the rent, no one could profit by maintaining dens of vice; there would then be no protected districts. (15c,d)
- h. If men were denied rent, no one could profit selfishly from war, in which case no selfish man would vote for war. That would end war.

The Pioneers of Peace is an informal, loosely organized group of persons interested in promoting the circulation of the Beckwith papers as a means of blazing the trail to economic freedom indicated by the seventeen arguments outlined above.

THE FORUM (a weekly recognized in California courts as a legal medium) is \$2.50 per year; NO TAXES (a bi-weekly) is \$3.00 for two years. Each is a four-page, seven-column newspaper.

Sample copies of these papers sent free upon request.

L. D. Beckwith, Publisher of THE FORUM and NO TAXES
1325 E. Poplar St., Tel. 2-0526 Stockton, California