

GOVERNMENT FOR THE PEOPLE

The Seeds of War

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By DR. HENRY GEORGE III
Part 17

It is unthinkable that in this day and age when our police are equipped with radio cars, when the courts dispense justice with the fall of the gavel, when the citizen is more enlightened than any citizen that has ever walked the earth, when our poorest boast advantages of which Richard the Lion Hearted never dreamt, even in this day and age, yes, right here in the broad light of day, on the very main street of my city one of our leading citizens, Howard Smith, is publically set upon and robbed, and while he knows and names his robbers, he can get no redress.

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What kind of a civilization are our young men fighting for when members of our society are plundered of everything save enough to get the next meals?

In the old days, when Justice was too long in coming the Vigilantes would lend a hand.

But those were the old days and we have had it drummed into us that in this new age that is dawning on a bloody horizon things will be different.

Different!

Possibly, but let's face the facts. If things are to be different it will be because you and I have become the Vigilantes of our age. Howard Smith was robbed today and it is up to you and me to see that he gets redress.

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Howard Smith is labor, is every man who works, whether in a potter's apron behind a glass topped desk or on a power line. He is the worker who, while bringing home his earnings, is set upon by a series of dangerous robbers. While we may drive off some abuses, while we may even drive off the thief of protective tariff who has dally frisked him, we may as well leave him to their mercies as long as we don't drive off the biggest thug of them all—the thug that takes all that is left—PRIVATE PROPERTY IN LAND. Our improvements, advances and reforms cannot help the great masses of our people, who, deprived of the right to the use of the material elements, have only their individual power to labor. They are as helpless as a car without gasoline, as a housewife without ration points.

If we would strike at the biggest robber that today robs Howard Smith—the robber that makes wars between peoples inevitable—we must understand the power of land monopoly, we must bring this boss of the underworld out into the open.

Let those who dare to champion him face the public and the truth, for when he is exposed he and his kind will be shunned by men of good faith, for our arch robber is a bringer of slavery, and slavery brings war. Before our Civil War we had chattel slavery, which for years was accepted by our churches and finest families, although England, tyrannous England, disapproved of our practice.

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We had chattel slavery because only by the chain and collar could the exploited be kept on the master's land and be compelled to work in order to be exploited. But even after our Civil War, when the slaves were freed, when the respected frowned upon the concept of indenture, we continued a more subtle and cruel form of slavery. The slavery which consisted of making property of men was ruled unconstitutional, but still we have, with the press of population upon nature, established slavery by making private property of land. For with the growth of population, and the demand for the use of land by non-land owners, it obviate the necessity of making private property of the bodies of men or of staking them out on plantations where they may be exploited without a return. Before the lash compelled them. Today competition brings them out more quickly than did the viper-filled pits of Rome. Today they beg and compete, they sell themselves for the privilege of being permitted a spot on which to live and beget their kind.

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What slave-owner would not prefer this voluntary serfdom where men and women, boys and girls come forward humbly begging the privilege of giving the greatest share of their earnings for the privilege of occupying a part of what he inherited. The receiver need not worry about their welfare. He does not need to call a doctor when they are sick; he does not need to educate them or to care for them when they are old and feeble.

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Today this great robber exacts the last ounce of blood, and neither labor unions nor industrial reforms, nor legislatures nor the

church can materially lessen the suffering of the tens of millions of our substrata who continually try to climb out of that quagmire of social agony.

On this important point Henry George, the American philosopher had this to say: "It is true that all valuable things have the quality of enabling their owner to obtain labor or the product of labor in return for them or for their use. But with things that are themselves the product of labor such transactions involve an exchange—the giving of an equivalent of labor-produce in return for labor or its produce. Land, however, is not the product of labor; it existed before man was, and, therefore, when the ownership of land can command labor or the products of labor, the transaction, though in form it may be an exchange, is in reality an appropriation. THE POWER WHICH THE OWNERSHIP OF VALUABLE LAND GIVES IS THAT OF GETTING HUMAN SERVICE WITHOUT GIVING HUMAN SERVICE? A POWER ESSENTIALLY THE SAME AS THAT POWER OF APPROPRIATION WHICH RESIDES IN THE OWNERSHIP OF SLAVES. IT IS NOT A POWER OF EXCHANGE, BUT A POWER OF BLACKMAIL, SUCH AS WOULD BE ASSERTED WERE SOME MEN COMPELLED TO PAY OTHER MEN FOR THE USE OF THE OCEAN, THE AIR OR THE SUNLIGHT."

If we would stop the robbing of Howard Smith, if we would stop wars, let us stop the deprivations of our greatest malefactor—private property in land.

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