

in our powdered wig, barn-door breeches and shad-belly coat, at the public Bar.

Respectfully sheweth your petitioner:—

(1) We deny the allegation of Editor Adams of the *New York Times* Book Review, that man's "collapsed conscience" has resulted from the teachings of Karl Marx. We affirm that Marxism is an effect and not a cause—that it is "the unscientific protest of the dissatisfied."

(2) We allege and affirm that the so-called "collapsed conscience" comes from a demoralization of homes, factories and farms by our iniquitous system of taxing industry whilst sanctioning the private pocketing of public land-values.

(3) We deny each and every allegation that our tax system is founded in logic, by logicians, for a logical form of government.

(4) We deny that leaders of old were of sound and disposing mind when they disposed of publicly-created site-values to private persons, and that all precedents flowing from this act are null and void and of no effect other than chaotic.

Our newly discovered evidence relates to count No. 4, in this petition, and we offer as our first witness Dr. Alexis Carrel who now gives expert testimony, relating to the brain and other organs of man, to the effect that each organ dies at its own rate. The brain dies in a matter of minutes; the kidneys die during hours; the hair of the head continues to grow for weeks; etc, etc.

Wherefore your petitioner alleges and affirms that the old-timers' brains were dead when they inaugurated our system of taxation whereby the laborer was taxed upon his products whilst the lord of the land appropriated land-values which he did not create—which were created by all his fellowmen in the community.

Wherefore your petitioner prays that the annual private awards of public values be set aside and that the same be caused to be paid into the public treasury. Your petitioner further prays that the taxes upon industry be declared illegal, unjust, null and void and without warrant, because of having been originated by persons *non compos mentis*.

And your petitioner further prays that, inasmuch as nature does not recognize man-made laws, where there is a conflict between those of man and those of Nature the laws of Nature shall prevail because they will anyway; and your petitioner, still praying, asks that man-made laws—particularly those relating to land, labor, capital, taxes, *et. al.*, be conformable, warp and weft, to the laws of Nature.

And your petitioner respectfully requesteth a ruling that all the gurgle and buzz, rant, cant and crow, set forth in the declaration in support of "ability to pay," be stricken from the defendants' answer as to why industry has been taxed into bankruptcy whilst the exploiters of land-values have waxed wealthy.—THOMAS N. ASHTON.

The Main Obstacle to Peace

BY JOHN PAUL

The following is an Editorial from Land and Liberty, January 1919, of London, England

THE fighting men had gone out in defense of the land, but when the fighting ended they were to return as they had left, landless. If they aspired to a patch of ground and to a decent house fixed on an idle half-acre where there was light and sunshine, the same old monopoly price had to be paid. Before our volunteer Army and our conscripts set out to meet the foe they were shown by the Government a striking picture of a soldier taking leave of a home with a garden bearing the inscription: "Is This Worth Fighting For?" To millions of sailors and soldiers from the over-crowded slums this was at once a piece of grim humour and a dream to be realized. This fetching poster was the work of our politicians, and now they talk and plan as if they were determined that the dream shall not become the realization. . . .

Let us look at the one grand hope that arises out of the ashes of the great devastation, the League of Nations. What is it but an inspiration set in the clouds, where it must remain so long as the existing economic dispensation prevails? We search in vain through the writings and the speeches of the leaders of this new crusade for any recognition of this fundamental truth.

Behind the longings and aspirations for the great Peace lies the problem of getting a living. No question is settled until this is settled. It is the bottom question. The land, the storehouse that "Nature owes to man for the daily supply of his wants," has been parcelled out by Kings, Emperors and Parliaments, and sold for a price at the public auction rooms like so much private property. Robbed of their natural right to the use of this storehouse, the opportunity for peaceful industry, men gather at the gates of any kind of factory open to them. Millions in a Europe so conditioned get their living in the making of armaments, and in its dependent industries.

It is officially stated that in 1914, Britain, Russia, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary and Italy spent among them £390,330,361 on armaments. The mass of men who get their living in and through this huge industry have none other to turn to for employment; very many have been specially trained by the Schools to fit them for the higher-grade positions in the great arsenals and ship-building centres. This is where the opinion that supports and maintains the Balance of Power policy is to be found. This is what stands athwart the League of Nations and reduces the idea even in the hands of its most competent votaries to a meaningless formula. Even now, at the very birth of the idea championed by the greatest democratic leader in sight, the passionate cry is heard from all quarters of the globe that it is a lost

cause. Blame for this is hurled as usual at the heads of men who stand or who seem to stand for the opposing principle. Not a word nor a single sign to indicate that the cause of the failure is to be found at the bedrock on which society itself rests.

In some quarters optimism turns to pessimism, and human nature, poor, misunderstood and much maligned human nature, stands charged with a due share of the failure to rise to the great occasion. Amid all this grief and lamentation the plain truth is before us. The problem is mainly economic and not altogether a question of politics. The getting of a living is the dominating factor, and so long as it exists will provide the atmosphere and the opinion which petrifies and circumvents those who strive so diligently for a sound and enduring Peace system. Our well-intentioned peacemakers are up against a hard stern fact born of human needs. Men with bodies to feed and clothe cannot freely step into the hell of unemployment to satisfy the cravings of their higher nature or respond much to an appeal for any high purpose. If that were not so, war and the lust for war would have been banished long ago. If we would have peace we must first have justice.

Let us give human nature a chance; let us emancipate man from the bondage of economic slavery and then look with assurance for the opinion that will abolish the armament industry. So long as men must regard work as an end in itself instead of as a means to the higher life, and natural avenues to alternative employment are shut in the face of those who must find work or starve, we shall preach in vain about the urgency of a League of Nations. The fundamental question of the restoration of the land to the people must first be dealt with. The unequal distribution of wealth which property in land determines will hold men firmly to the lower levels of thought.

What is wrong with the world can still be named: ignorance, contempt and neglect of human rights. Let Nature's wide field for human progress be set free; let wages rise to full earnings point; let the workers feel they are not any longer on the verge of starvation, that they need take no thought for the morrow; let the just claims to a fuller life be recognized; let the slogan of liberalism, equality of opportunity, remain no longer the cold abstraction it is; let the pace be set for the co-operative commonwealth. This is the way we must travel if we would have the great Peace League in our day and generation.

MANIFESTLY, work is not an end, but a means; manifestly, there can be no real scarcity of work, which is but the means of satisfying material wants, until human wants are all satisfied.

"Social Problems," by HENRY GEORGE.

Allons Monsieur le Professeur!

LATE in January the *New York Times* magazine ran an article by L. H. Robbins under the heading, "Sprague Points to a Broad Path to Recovery." The impression one received in reading the article was that Professor Sprague realizes the importance of stimulating industrial production at this time. He emphasizes his point by adding "extraordinary expansion in some line always attends recovery from a major depression." He does not add though that, according to our present system (of taxation)—and this goes for other countries as well—a major recovery is always followed by a major depression.

The point is, do we want a recovery that will shift the pain of our present economic ailments from the present to some future generation or do we desire a recovery of a permanent nature to be enjoyed by our children and their children as well? It no longer appears to be just a question of wanting a lasting recovery inasmuch as our civilization seems to have taken all the shocks it can absorb under our present way of doing things. The rebound must be enduring if our civilization is to stop in its current slow process of disintegrating and reverse the trend towards a fuller development of the personality of man.

The recent economic report rendered to the British and French governments by the Belgian economist, Mr. Van Zeeland, contained a remark which, undoubtedly, was intended for sceptics. Said Mr. Van Zeeland, "No effort is ever completely lost if it does not succeed all at once." To return to Professor Sprague, it should be pointed out that in order to have an extraordinary expansion we must have something out of the ordinary. This is not economics; it is plain English. Now it certainly would be extraordinary to witness the abolition of all taxes which fetter production, foster bureaucracy and short-change the consumer, and the substitution in their place of a Single Tax on the economic rent of land. The approach to the problem can only be through educational channels such as those with which Professor Sprague is already identified. For the doubting Thomases let Mr. Van Zeeland's words be repeated, "No effort is ever completely lost if it does not succeed all at once." In this instance the efforts would be negligible in comparison to the ultimate results. Why not give the matter some serious thought, Professor Sprague, either blast the idea out of existence or throw your support to the Single Tax? Allons Monsieur le Professeur!

R. JOSEPH MANFRINI.

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