



Man in the Atom Age

Most of us have seen movies of the Atom-bomb in action, heard of its horror over the radio, and read of its irresistible power in our magazines and newspapers. We should be scared stiff! But we're not! Perhaps we are not sufficiently frightened because, in the backs of our minds, we think of the A-bomb is just another murderous weapon. Although we know it is man's crowning achievement in destruction, we realize that a man killed by a spear at the battle of Jericho, 1451 B. C., was no less dead than the Japanese who were slaughtered by the Atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima August 1945.

Yesterday's weapons could do no more than kill people and destroy buildings and other improvements. But the A-bomb can do that and destroy the land besides. Where the A-bomb hits, radioactivity can make the oil and coal deposits unsafe to handle and the soil unfit for use for a long time. The poisonous radioactivity left behind makes Labor on the land impossible. And therein lies the weakness of the A-bomb as a weapon of conquest: for no invader, in his right mind would destroy the land he hopes to conquer. That would be like a thief burning the money in the pocket of the man he is about to rob.

For it must not be forgotten that conquering a nation is not the ultimate goal of the invader! The flag, language, and traditions of a defeated people are never disturbed; and land titles very rarely. The all important thing to the invader is to win the right to drain the wealth of the conquered just as fast as it is produced. It is reparations, taxes, oil concessions and tariff privileges that make the expense of conquest worth while. Who shall steal how much of what Wealth for how long has been

the subject of every peace treaty recorded in history!

To destroy the land and to annihilate the people on it is to stop the production of Wealth, because all Wealth--without exception--comes from land. No conqueror has ever discovered a way to steal Wealth that didn't exist. No one can produce Wealth on, or collect rents from, land that cannot be used. When an A-bomb hits, the land becomes unproductive, and Labor cannot be put to work on it because of the dangerous, if not fatal, radioactivity that remains for a long time after.

After the scientific slaughter at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the land values in those cities fell to nothing; because the poisoned land could not be used. On the other hand, when German bombs destroyed every building in Coventry, land values skyrocketed and are still going up! After fire destroyed most of Chicago in 1871, land values jumped from \$126 million to \$575 million. Thus it seems that the destruction of buildings--by fire, flood or bomb increases land values; while the destruction of land decreases the value.

It would seem that anyone who owned land should have good reason to fear the Atom bomb. But 125-million people in the U. S. own no land whatsoever. It's all owned by less than 12% of our population. Perhaps this fact may explain why the movies, radio, and press are finding it so difficult to teach Americans to fear the A-bomb. Those who have nothing more than their lives to lose see little difference between being dissolved by an A-bomb, being blown apart by a T.N.T.-bomb, or being crushed to death beneath the hooves of the horses pulling Caesar's chariots. If anything, the A-bomb is more modern.

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