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## CHURCHILL ON *Our Mother Monopoly*

*Introduction by J. Rupert Mason*

RARELY is a seasoned politician fully frank with his people. Supposedly "smart" politicians are accustomed to sound out public opinion, to keep abreast of it as nearly as party leaders will permit, but never to lead the thought parade or to declare themselves on really revolutionary fundamental issues.

Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of Great Britain, appears to be an exception to this rule. While still on the lower rungs of the ladder of political success and struggling for an opportunity to influence the course of the nation, Churchill repeatedly lashed out against the social and economic injustices of his time. And he warned his constituents, in no uncertain language, that great dangers were in store for the nation unless the trend to monopoly in Britain was changed.

Churchill boldly predicted that international and domestic calamity would follow continued disregard of the need for improvement in social conditions. He declared that no nation can long endure if its natural resources are exploited only for the benefit of a favored few and access to these resources is denied to the many.

Perhaps no greater tribute can be paid to the genius of this great British leader, and no more potent suggestion given to our own political representatives, than to quote from a speech by Mr. Churchill which appeared in the June, 1940, issue of *Land and Liberty* (London).

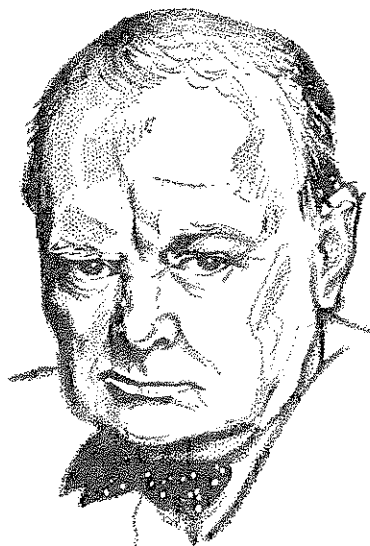
IT IS quite true that the land monopoly is not the only monopoly which exists, but it is by far the greatest of monopolies—it is a perpetual monopoly, and it is the mother of all other forms of monopoly. It is quite true that unearned increments in land are not the only form of unearned or undeserved profit which individuals are able to secure; but it is the prin-

cipal form of unearned increment which is derived from processes which are not merely not beneficial but which are positively detrimental to the general public.

Land, which is a necessity of human existence, which is the original source of all wealth, which is strictly limited in extent, which is fixed in geographical position—land, I say, differs from

all other forms of property in these primary and fundamental conditions. Nothing is more amusing than to watch the efforts of our monopolist opponents to prove that other forms of property and increment are exactly the same and are similar in all respects to the unearned increment in land. They talk to us of the increased profits of a doctor or a lawyer from the growth of population in the towns in which they live. They talk to us of the profits of a railway through a greater degree of wealth and activity in the districts through which it runs. They tell us of the profits which are derived from a rise in stocks and shares, and even of those which are sometimes derived from the sale of pictures and works of art, and they ask us—as if it were the only complaint—"Ought not all these other forms to be taxed, too?"

But see how misleading and false all these analogies are. The windfalls which people with artistic gifts are able from time to time to derive from the sale of a picture—from a Vandyke or a Holbein—may here and there be very considerable. But pictures do not get in anybody's way. They do not lay a toll on anybody's labour; they do not touch enterprise and production at any points; they do not affect any of those creative processes upon which the material well-being of millions depends; and if a rise in stocks and shares confers profits on the fortunate holders far beyond what they expected or indeed deserved, nevertheless, that profit has not been



Can Churchill resist the pressure of privilege at the Peace table?

reaped by withholding from the community the land which it needs, but on the contrary, apart from mere gambling, it has been reaped by supplying industry with the capital without which it could not be carried on.

If the railway makes greater profits, it is usually because it carries more goods and more passengers. If a doctor or a lawyer enjoys a better practice, it is because the doctor attends more patients and more exacting patients, and because the lawyer pleads more suits in the courts and more important suits. At every stage the doctor or the lawyer is giving service in return for his fees, and if the service is too poor or the fees are too high, other doctors and other lawyers can

come freely into competition.

Fancy comparing these healthy processes with the enrichment which comes to the landlord who happens to own a plot of land on the outskirts or at the center of one of our great cities, who watches the busy population around him making the city larger, richer, more convenient, more famous every day, and all the while sits still and does nothing. Roads are made, streets are made, railway services are improved, electric light turns night into day, electric trams glide swiftly to and fro, water is brought from reservoirs a hundred miles off in the mountains—and all the while the landlord sits still.

To not one of those improvements does the land monopolist as a land monopolist contribute, and yet by every one of them the value of his land is sensibly enhanced. He renders no service to the community, he contributes nothing to the general welfare; he contributes nothing even to the process from which his own enrichment is derived.

It is monopoly which is the keynote, and where monopoly prevails, the greater the injury to society the greater the reward of the monopolist will be. See how all this evil process strikes at every form of industrial activity. The municipality, wishing

for broader streets, better houses, more healthy, decent, scientifically planned towns, is made to pay, and is made to pay in exact proportion or to a very great extent in proportion as it has exerted itself in the past to make improvements. The more it has improved the town, the more it has increased the land value, the more it will have to pay for any land it may wish to acquire. The manufacturer proposing to start a new industry, proposing to erect a great factory, offering employment to thousands of hands, is made to pay such a price for his land that the purchase price hangs round the neck of his whole business, hampering his competitive power in every market, clogging him far more than any foreign tariff in his export competition, and the land values strike down through the profits of the manufacturer on to the wages of the workman.

It is not the individual I attack, it is the system. It is not the man who is bad, it is the law which is bad. It is not the man who is blameworthy for doing what the law allows and what other men do; it is the State which would be blameworthy were it not to endeavor to reform the law and correct the practice. We do not want to punish the landlord. We want to alter the law.

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» A teacher told one of her pupils to read a sentence and tell her what the mark was at the end. (It was a question mark.)

This is what he read: "Where are you going, little buttonhook?"

*Our Paper*