

Democracy

In this article the author of "Recent History" (THE FREEMAN, November, 1942), "Labor Union and Strikes" (THE FREEMAN, June, 1942), "Some Reminiscences of Henry George" (THE FREEMAN, December, 1940), and other articles and books too numerous to list, gives us a penetrating study in democracy and government.

Few contributors to the current day literature of Georgism can boast as long and active association with the founder's principles as HENRY WARE ALLEN of Wichita, Kansas.

It was on a misty Sunday morning in the spring of 1890 that Henry George and Mrs. George, pausing for a brief stop in Kansas City on their way to Australia and thence around the world, were greeted at the old Union Station and conducted to the Midland Hotel for breakfast by young Henry Allen, bustling with the importance of being the committee of one designated by the Single Tax Club of Kansas City to meet the distinguished visitors. Mr. Allen's subsequent contacts with Henry George, both in the mid-west and in New York were frequent, and it was not long before he had established a reputation as one of the outstanding writers in the Georgist movement, a reputation which, as his friends and readers well know, has endured to this day and grows with the passing of the years.

In the most recent issue of The Kansas Magazine, published annually in December, Mr. Allen has an article on "Jerry Simpson of Kansas." Like Mr. Allen, Jerry Simpson, Kansas Congressman in the nineties, was a devoted Single Taxer. Both men were attracted to the movement by reading copies of Henry George's "Standard."

★ AMERICAN DEMOCRACY, divested of the despotism and tyranny of Europe that was left behind when our fathers emigrated here, is based upon the natural right of man to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

Ideal democracy is government by the people themselves in harmony with natural law which precludes

any interference with that freedom, and consequent prosperity of the individual citizen which is his birth-right.

American democracy is the result of more than four centuries of devotion of our people to the spirit of liberty and freedom animated by the tyranny of the old world.

This democracy is based upon the proposition that all men are created equal in so far as political and economic rights are concerned and that, therefore, the rule, "Equal rights for all and special privileges to none," becomes mandatory.

Our democracy has never been free from imperfections and from time to time has been more or less seriously injured by undemocratic accretions. These are in the nature of parasites and must be removed lest they overcome and destroy democracy itself.

This democracy, therefore, is an ideal to be realized as a result of constant vigilance and untiring effort. The right method of procedure is to eliminate those factors in our government, national or local, which are at variance with true democracy and therefore injurious to its life and persistency. For, as was so well stated by Henry George, "Unless its foundations be laid in justice the social structure cannot stand."

Our democracy must, therefore, be constantly subjected to the process of elimination of all that is deleterious. Just as weeds in a garden must be destroyed in order that the desired crop may grow in lusty strength, in like manner the economic weeds which are to be found so persistent with democracy must be killed, in order to preserve its strength.

Our democracy is endangered by alliance between politicians and Labor Unions and other pressure groups. Legislation for favored groups provides legal tyranny over legitimate business, government support of Labor Unions and regulations which violate democratic principles at every turn.

Our democracy must be provided with unrestricted, international free trade in place of the existing protective tariff. The tariff tax is incompatible with democratic principles because it taxes the whole people for the benefit of a few industries and increases by artificially high prices the cost of living to all. Incidentally, tariff walls constitute the primary cause of international warfare. The tariff tax is most undemocratic and its repeal would mark a great stride toward a perfected democracy for the benefit of all concerned.

Our democracy owes a debt of gratitude to the framers of our Constitution who provided that there should be no tariffs between any of the states of the Union. Free trade would simplify government and greatly reduce its cost. The advantage of free trade across the vast extent of the continent has thoroughly demonstrated the wisdom of the founders of the Constitution for this pro-

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vision. But in recent years by various kinds of subterfuge, restrictions have been established between the states and large revenues collected from those who sought to conduct their business over state lines. For example there are 60 Ports of Entry at the borders of the state of Kansas. This is an innovation that should be resented by every liberty-loving American. If our democracy is to endure, these penalties must be abolished.

Our democracy is threatened more than by any other one thing by the existing system of taxation which favors land monopoly and landlordism for the benefit of a comparatively few at the expense of the whole people. This system has the effect of penalizing thrift and industry while rewarding monopoly. It involves the failure of government to collect its natural revenue from the rental value of land and to surrender this enormous wealth to those who happen to own particularly valuable locations at the centers of population, and those who hold title to rich natural resources. Repeal of this system of taxation and substitution for it of collection for the government of economic rent by a tax on land values would make vastly more perfect our existing democracy.

It may be said that eternal vigilance is the price of democracy. This vigilance has evidently been lacking in many halls of learning where state socialism has found favor and is being nurtured. It should be kept in mind at all times that these two forms of government are antipodal and can no more be combined than can oil and water. To speak of democratic socialism is like referring to frigid heat or warm ice.

Jefferson is to be credited with being the founder of American democracy, while Henry George may with equal justice be credited with being the perfecter of that philosophy. Jeffersonian democracy has made a good name for itself while the philosophy of Henry George will be appreciated for its great benefit to mankind as soon as it has been given full opportunity to operate. What the great religious founders have been in the realm of religion, Henry George is destined to be in the realm of economic welfare.