

Good for Mussolini

IT will hardly be suspected that we approve of the policies or methods of the man who has made himself the absolute ruler of Italy, when we assert that he has condensed into twenty words the soundest principle of statesmanship that has been heard in Europe since the war. Advocating the enactment of his "law against idleness," providing that all adult males must work at some vocation, he declared: "The existence of privileged individuals, for whom life's sole enjoyment is to profit by the work of others, is inadmissible."

Brave words. True words. Words that apply to all people in all parts of the world. Words that should be printed and shouted to all corners of the earth. If accepted and faithfully applied they would solve all economic and social problems. They are the beginning and end of the solution for the evils that afflict society today.

But will Mussolini have the courage and resolution to carry into full effect what his words imply? Will he attack the Italian land system, that in so many regions enables one set of men, the landlords, to live at the expense of the workers? Will he be wise enough and fearless enough, to see that if he is to prevent some men profiting by the work of others, he must radically change the Italian system of land ownership? He professes to despise logic, and to abhor abstract principles. Yet if he is to be at all consistent he must push the prohibition against privileged individuals to its logical end. If he does this he will prove that he is a great statesman, as well as a natural leader of men.

Overheard at the Moron Club

"THAT fellow Mussolini is a wonder. Kicked out the Socialist crowd, and got a law passed making it a crime for the working classes to strike. We need a man like that for President."

"Hell; No! Didn't you see that he's got another law that every adult male Italian must work at some useful vocation. What would become of our aristocracy if we had a law like that?"

Not So Low As That

"WHERE'S Bob Whiteway, the sport who cut such a splurge in the Quail Club?"

"Last I heard of Bob he was a puller-in for a gambling club in Florida."

"How is it he didn't get into the real estate game down there?"

"Well, Bob got pretty far down—blew in all his wife's money—sold the piano to bet on the slow horses—stuck all his friends with bad checks—but he's got a little self

respect left. He couldn't associate with that land-boom bunch."

Organizer Robinson at Work in Missouri

THE Commonwealth Land Party of Missouri has placed in nomination for United States Senators Charles Lischer, of St. Louis, and Charles A. Green, of Hannibal, the latter to fill the unexpired term of Seldon P. Spencer, deceased. Petitions are being circulated for these two nominations.

Both of these gentlemen are well known Georgeites in Missouri. They are convinced party men. The group of active "partyites" who have put their shoulders to the wheel to bring our principles to public notice through the medium of party action are such men as Priesmeyer, Boeck, Webster, Steel and others, who will supply the funds for the securing of signatures and, when these are obtained, for the active prosecution of the campaign.

Organizer Robinson is on the ground and we can depend upon the campaign being well taken care of. Before leaving his home in Los Angeles he engaged in public debate with Mr. A. Plottkin, secretary of the Cloak Makers' Union, the subject being "Resolved that the Single Tax is unprogressive." About 300 were present. It was held under the auspices of the American Civil Liberties Union, Dr. Taft presiding. Before leaving Sawtelle, Mr. Robinson was apprised of his election as Vice President of the Sawtelle Improvement Association.

Where Henry George Wrote Progress and Poverty

HIGH on the hills of south central California, overlooking the beautiful Pajaro Valley, near Watsonville, stands the ranch formerly owned by Judge William V. Gaffey, and now occupied by his sons. Thither, in October, 1925, Dr. C. K. Hale of Santa Cruz and the writer wandered, lured by rumors that here might be found historical information of interest to disciples of Henry George.

After much inquiry as to the way, we finally found ourselves at the Gaffey Ranch. We inquired of the Gaffey brothers as to the rumors. "Oh, yes," said they, "when we were boys, it must have been about 1878 or 1879, Henry George used to be here a great deal. He sat on this porch, overlooking the valley, in this very arm-chair, and wrote and wrote all day."

"Do you know whether he worked on 'Progress and Poverty' here?"

"No. We were too young; but we can clearly remember him sitting in the chair and writing."

Our knowledge as to the time of writing "Progress and Poverty" leads us to the conclusion that the "writing"

must have been that work, yet we were loath to give full credence to a statement nowhere else mentioned, so far as we knew. None the less, we gave ourselves the thrill of sitting in the arm-chair, trying to reproduce within ourselves the urge which permeated that great philosopher and friend of mankind.

What a setting for contemplation and introspection! The beautiful sunlight, the clear atmosphere, the balmy air, the fertile valley spread out below, then probably, as now, partially withheld from productive use by speculative landlords! An ideal spot for the evolution of a programme calculated to free the human race from bondage.

Subsequent search in Watsonville for corroboration led us at length to Mr. Joseph G. Piratsky, long-time editor of the *Evening Pajaronian*. Without hesitation he informed us that Judge Gaffey, for years his close friend, had told him "more than a hundred times" that Henry George did most of the writing of "Progress and Poverty" at his ranch. Two considerations brought him there. The friendly entertainment, in a period of financial stringency, was extremely helpful, while the peaceful surroundings were conducive to undisturbed study. Moreover, Henry George found in Judge Gaffey's humorous conversation a delightful foil in moments of relaxation.

It seems particularly opportune that, just at this time, when interest is being aroused for the collection of Henry George memorabilia, this apparently well-authenticated but hitherto unrecorded chapter in his life should be added to the list.—GEORGE H. DUNCAN.

State Housing

I READ the editorial in a recent number of *Labor* on the housing bill signed by Governor Smith of New York. In the editorial it said:

"So far as *Labor* is aware, this is the first public housing effort in America. On the other side such efforts are common."

It is true that on the "other side" efforts at public housing are common, and, you could have added, futile. I speak with knowledge gained on the spot and from literature constantly received from the "other side." Reports of royal commissions uniformly testify to the failure of such housing schemes to aid the workers.

But suppose you did succeed in *building down to the poverty line*. Is that a commendable thing? Instead of trying to construct houses for the poor, why have poor people? Let them earn good wages, that is *real* wages, and they will be able to pay the rent of a good home.

ABOLISH PRIVILEGE

A consequence of poverty is inability to pay rent, hence the poor must live in hovels. But shall we seek to abolish this one, among many consequences of poverty?

Why not abolish the cause of poverty, that is privilege? I have a great amount of literature and data on this subject, but I know you are a busy man, you are getting out a fine paper, and so I will content myself with sending one little folder gotten out by the Single Taxers of Manchester, England.

Housing schemes like that of Governor Smith are more than cruel deceptions, they are positively reactionary, in what our Socialist friends call the capitalist state. In a cooperative commonwealth it would be quite proper to build houses through "public" effort.

ALFRED HENDERSON in *Labor*, Washington, D.C.

The Inalienable Right to Work

PRESUMABLY representing the views of the British Government, of which he is a conspicuous member, Sir William Joynson-Hicks has announced the policy that should be adopted if the coal mine operators decide to resume work without coming to an agreement with the mine workers' union. In that event, he recently declared: "If any man chooses to go back to his work as soon as the mines are open, it will be our duty to give him the inalienable right to work if he so desires."

In thus setting forth clearly the fundamental truth that men willing to work should be protected in their right to labor, the spokesman for the British Government has enunciated an important truth. It is, however, only a half truth, unless along with it there is given the further assurance that the opportunity to work will be afforded, in so far as the powers of government can be extended for that purpose. It is manifestly reasonable and just that men willing to dig coal should be protected against intimidation or violence.

There remains the other, and equally important, truth that since men have the "inalienable right to work" governments should be equally zealous in protecting that right when it is denied by conditions other than those created by a strike.

Take the case of an idle miner seeking employment, who travels from one colliery to another, but finds no one to hire him. Suppose that he decides to co-operate with some of his fellows and dig coal. There are great seams of coal underground awaiting the miner's pick, but these deposits are all "owned," and cannot be touched without the consent of the "owners." To tell a man that he has the right to work, while conditions deprive him of the opportunity to labor, would appear to be similar to putting him overboard in midocean and telling him that he has the right to walk ashore. The inalienable right to work must imply conditions under which employment of some kind, not necessarily at coal mining, is open to all. To provide these conditions is the prime requisite for the solution of what is popularly termed "the labor problem."

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