

Louis F. Post

THE great teacher is dead. He passed away at the Homeopathic Hospital, in Washington, on January 10, after a brief illness. He leaves a widow and a son by his first wife, Charles Johnson Post, well known in Single Tax circles.

Louis Freeland Post was born in Vienna, N. J., in 1849. He learned the printer's trade in Hackettstown, N. J. and later practised law in New York. He traced his ancestry to Stephen Post, a native of Kent, England, who settled in Massachusetts in 1630. He was an editorial writer on *Truth*, a daily paper of this city, from 1879 to 1882, when he returned to the practise of law. During his editorship of *Truth* "Progress and Poverty" appeared serially in its columns.

He dated his conversion to the Single Tax from 1881, and edited the *Daily Leader* in 1886. He was an early contributor to the *Standard* founded by Henry George, and became its editor in 1891. He was chairman of the New York Convention of the United Labor Party in 1887 and chairman of the Single Tax Conventions in New York (1890) and in Chicago (1893).

He edited the *Cleveland Recorder* in 1896-7, and in 1898, in association with his wife, Alice Thacher Post, founded the *Public* in Chicago, which paper was later transferred to New York. In 1913 to 1921 he was Assistant Secretary of Labor by appointment of President Wilson.

Services for Mr. Post took place at the Church of the Holy Trinity in Washington. The pallbearers were William B. Wilson, former Secretary of Labor under whom Mr. Post served in both of Wilson's administrations, Chas. Glen Levin Swiggert, Dr. John R. Swanton, and Judson King.

In commenting on Mr. Post's outspoken protest against what seemed to him the miscarriage of justice in the Sacco-Vanzetti case, we said: "Louis F. Post has rendered what may be his last signal public service in a great crisis." This was nearer the truth than we imagined.

It was characteristic of Louis Post that wherever the cause of justice and humanity needed an advocate he was among the foremost to volunteer. He faced public obliquy with utter fearlessness when convinced he was right. He stood like a stone wall when the madness of war would have compassed the wholesale deportation of innocent aliens, and against the threats of impeachment opposed a rare tact and matchless courage which drove his enemies into complete rout.

There are few lives, whose labors continued for fifty years, have been characterized by so long a period of uninterrupted activity and so effective a close. For the last year of his life was one of the most fruitful. It saw the publication of two books from his pen, "What is the Single Tax," and "Basic Facts," in which we find the same virile grasp of principles, the same clearness and

cogency of reasoning, the same wealth of illustration as characterized his earlier works. Never has Louis Post embodied more convincingly in limited compass the statement of our principles than he has done in the article contributed to the Nov.-Dec. issue of LAND AND FREEDOM under the title, "What Henry George Proposed."

Mr. Post, in addition to being the greatest protagonist of our movement, next to Henry George, was one of the great editorial writers of two generations. It is hoped that the attempt will be made to add to his published works, "Ethics of Democracy," "Social Service," "Land Value Taxation," and the two later works previously mentioned, a volume containing the more significant editorials that appeared in the *Public* during the fifteen years of his editorship. Such a volume would be a revelation to those accustomed to the superficial, clever slap-dash of present day journalism.

Mr. Post's intellectual processes were so rigidly formal that readers were apt to overlook the moral fervor that lay beneath them. With few graces of style, his prose was nevertheless limpid, clear and often epigrammatic. His elaboration of a point suggests the military tactician; he uses his light arms and his heavy artillery alternately but he uses them all, and attacks with a confidence and brilliancy that leaves the opposition with the merest shred of defence. He was as keen a controversialist as any great movement can boast.

Press Tributes

FROM THE *New York World*

THERE should be more citizens like Louis F. Post, who has just died in Washington at the ripe age of seventy-eight. During all his long adult life Mr. Post never allowed private profit or personal advancement to interfere with the free use of his time, his money, his strength and his zeal in furthering public policies which he believed wise for the Republic. Best known as a consistent Single Taxer, Mr. Post was engaged in a variety of movements for liberalizing law, custom and opinion in his Nation. His appointment as Assistant Secretary of Labor in 1913 was a recognition of his services to the working man. Placed in charge of the Immigration Bureau, he put into that important service the broad-minded sympathy which it needed and still needs. He was a stalwart American.

FROM THE *New York Telegram*

THE principle of a tax on land as the only one to be laid on a people carried with it preeminently the names of two men, Henry George, the founder of the Single Tax, and Louis F. Post, for over a generation its great propagandist.

Louis F. Post who has just ceased his labors for the common good at almost four score years of age, has a much greater claim on the memory of this and succeeding genera-

tions than his advocacy of some particular principle of taxation, important as it may be in the life of man.

As editor of *The Public* for many years his brilliant intellect was always at the service of those who were fighting to realize that equality of opportunity, so vital to the happiness of the race and so necessary to the continued existence of a truly free government.

One remembers the magnificent fights he waged in the latter part of the last century and the early days of this one for absolute freedom of expression. Some of his greatest battles were fought to maintain the rights of those with whose opinions he had not the least sympathy. He once said that he would fight for the right of the devil himself to give expression to his point of view and that no institution could endure whose humblest member was deprived of the right to express the truth as it was given him to see it.

Post believed that the prime reason for the existence of government was to enable its citizens to exercise the fullest freedom in individual development. Men were not made to be the mere pawns of the state. Government could be either a tyrant or a nourisher of great souls, and Post had no love for it except as it allowed the freest individual development.

Louis F. Post chose to serve the cause of the common man throughout his long life, and he died in the full assurance that he had achieved that happiness which comes only to those who have kept faith with their souls. His life will go on in the struggle that other men will continue to wage against all the powers of tyranny in whatever shape they show themselves.

FROM THE *Evening World*

THE death at the age of seventy-nine, of Louis F. Post ends a long controversial career of no little brilliance. He joined forces with Henry George on the latter's tax theories almost half a century ago, and became one of their most clever and persuasive advocates. His temperament leading him instinctively to a public career, he early abandoned the law for journalism. Scholarly, pungent, concise, vigorous, he soon gathered to himself a following independent of his great leader. His impulses made him the inevitable spokesman of the "under dog." Thus he was associated with numerous movements and parties described as "radical" by the conservatives or reactionaries. For many years previous to his appointment by President Wilson as Assistant Secretary of Labor he edited the *Public* in Chicago, a powerful weekly dealing ably with political and economic problems. As he grew older his interests and hobbies expanded, and for some time previous to his call to Washington he had been recognized throughout the Middle West as one of the foremost of the progressives.

His activities as Assistant Secretary of Labor were wholly satisfactory previous to the war; and then his troubles began. He refused to be stamped into some

of the absurdities of "patriotism" and insisted on consideration of the cases of "radicals" brought up for deportation. Time enough has elapsed to make us all heartily ashamed of some phases of the hysteria of those times. It required just such courage as Louis Post had to take the position he did. The threat of impeachment was abandoned, probably with reason; and the fact that his resignation was not requested by the President may be taken as evidence that Woodrow Wilson saw nothing unpatriotic in his position. And that is quite enough.

FROM THE *Baltimore Sun*

LOUIS FREELAND POST, who has died in Washington at the age of 78, was an outstanding example of the old-time American radical, the man who persistently and intelligently sought root causes for social discontents and economic maladjustments. Clear-headed, kindly, blazingly sincere and transcendently honest, he won and held the admiration of all fair-minded men, regardless of how they differed with his theories. The passing of Louis Post is in itself a cause for national regret. The loss is increased by the thought that his type, so influential in the early days of the Republic, is now becoming very scarce.

None could more perfectly meet the test of "one hundred per cent. Americanism" than Louis Post. Not merely in the fact that he was a scion of three centuries of American stock, but even more in the fact that most of his absorbing intellectual interests, such as the Single Tax, or, in late years, the League of Nations, were of American origin. He even took, as vividly he showed during his eight-year term as Assistant Secretary of Labor, the Constitution of this country with utmost seriousness. In the sorry episode of the deportations delirium of 1920 the courageous liberalism of Mr. Post stands out as a bright and a redeeming light.

From the Daughter of Henry George

IT is difficult for me to write of Mr. Post,—so closely has he been associated with some of my deepest and dearest memories that he seems like one of my very own.

He who had dedicated his life to service, who had worked for Truth as he saw it—almost to the last, had grown so weary that no one who loved him could want to hold him, unless the old strength and vigor could be given him again. He was more completely ready for the next Experience than any "professing Christian" I ever met. He was long in preparing himself for the Birth into another Life and during the short visit I had with him a few days before he died; he spoke of his own death as casually as another might speak of going on a journey.

It was difficult to believe that he was so seriously ill—he looked so much better than one had dared to hope. His eyes were keenly bright and his voice was strong.