

purchases and hail a cab or even an automobile to take them home.

In Yucatan an American dollar will buy four eggs, or three collars, or a little more than a half a bottle of beer, or one-half a pair of silk socks, or a box of talcum powder. One must pay fourteen American dollars for an ordinary pair of shoes, or seven of them for an ordinary hat. Other prices are in proportion.

But these prices are not prohibitive. Far from it! They are high, yes; but not high enough to keep even the so-called lower classes from having the bottle of beer, the talcum powder, the eggs and the things that "hall-mark" the middle class of the rest of the world.

And what about the merchants? Do they fare well? The answer, as they themselves give it, is that they are being ruined, shamefully, disgracefully ruined. One who becomes familiar with the matter inevitably comes to the conclusion that overwork in figuring profits is causing this lamentable ruin and that the headaches they get from swollen credits are what drive them to their physicians, who, by the way, are suffering from the same ailment.

GABRIEL S. YORKE

Who Owns America?

WE, the people," answers with patriotic fervor the Republican candidate for sheriff.

"No one has a better title than the taxpayer," says the plutocrat.

"The capitalists," say the muddle-brained, machinery worshipping Socialists.

"The government, which is the sovereign power," declares the legal light.

Before we can determine the ownership of America we must first determine what this America is. Having learned what America is, we can the more readily find out in whom the ownership of it is vested.

When was America "discovered?" In 1492, by Columbus. Did he discover a large shirt waist factory, a tenement house, a palatial hotel, a tramp's "flop," a billion dollar Congress, a bread line, an army of unemployed, and other characteristics of America as we know it? No. What, then, did he discover?

He discovered some red-skinned people, whom he called Indians, and they spoke a peculiar language and used tomahawks for weapons and wore hardly any clothes, and were in many ways different from the peoples he knew. The Indians lived on some Land which somebody later called America.

These Indians were later driven from a good part of the Land by white folks from Europe. And these white folks later had a war with other white folks in England because the former wanted to be free in America.

Now, during this war the soldiers used flintlocks instead of tomahawks. And the new American people lived in houses, and had town meeting halls and a continental Congress, and they wore silk breeches and powdered wigs and hoop skirts—so different from the Indians. Yet, like

the Indians, they lived in America—this same America, whatever it is.

Then the people in this free America made their own laws, and wrote a great constitution, and elected public servants, and in many ways did things differently from the way things were done before, and very differently from the ways of the Indians whom they had displaced in this same America. Pretty soon a man built a steamboat; then everybody sailed up and down American rivers on steamboats instead of on sailboats. Another man built a railroad, and another an automobile; so in a few years the people travelled all over this America in these things, instead of on horseback as they had done.

It came to pass soon that instead of making pies for her family in the great kitchen oven, the housewife found it more convenient to purchase these edibles at a bakery store, which was in this same America. And the honest workman, whose wont it was to wear home-spun clothing, soon discovered that good clothing was made in a factory where hundreds of other fellow-citizens worked, and where there were many complicated machines. This factory was in America. He was told that there were clothes made in another factory; but that was in England.

In Europe there were a lot of dissatisfied people. Many were dissatisfied because no matter how hard they labored they did not have enough to eat—a Land Lord took everything away from them except a bare living. Some were dissatisfied because they could not worship God in the manner they thought best. And these people heard that in this America they could get Land for nothing, could keep for themselves more of what they produced, and could worship God as they pleased. So they broke up their homes and took a long voyage over land and sea to this wonderful America.

There were among them Italians and Irish and Jews and Poles—any number of peoples, with different languages and customs. So there came to this America many that became dominant factors in the social, political and economic life. These peoples from Europe so changed things in New York that the former inhabitants of this place, if they came to life, could not recognize it. Yet it is the same New York that was discovered by Hendrick Hudson many, many years ago.

And this America was divided up into States and cities. One of these cities was called San Francisco. A very disastrous earthquake nearly wiped out this city. But America remained. It seemed as though nothing could happen that would wipe out this America.

In fact, America remains—somehow or other—no matter what happens. The Indians are gone, the Revolutionary Americans are all dead, American women discard hoop skirts for short skirts, whole cities burn down, factories replace farms, Republicans defeat Democrats, negro slaves become "free" tenant farmers, new diseases are discovered, in fact everything about America changes so often that one hardly recognizes it from one day to another—and yet America remains.

What is it that always exists? What is it that was called "America" in 1776 by the people of that day, and is called by the same name today? What is it that remains America in spite of all changes in our social, economic and political life—in spite of everything? It is a *piece of land* first created by God for the "children of men," next inhabited (as far as we know) by red children, from whom it was stolen by white children, from whom most of it was later stolen by a few white children called Land Lords.

America is different from England, from France, from Afghanistan, because America is different Land. Not because it has different laws, or different customs—only because it is different Land. It is differently "bounded," as our geography books tell us.

Who owns America? Whoever owns that portion of the Earth bounded by Canada and the Great Lakes on the north, and Mexico and the Gulf on the south, by the Atlantic on the east, and by the Pacific on the west.

"Ah," exclaims the Republican candidate for sheriff, "do not we, the American people, own that portion of the Earth?"

Fiddlesticks! Only a very few own it—that is, have title deeds to it—and all the rest of us have to pay these few for the privilege of living on the portion of the Earth known as America. And if we refuse to pay them for that privilege we can jump into either of the oceans, any one of the Great Lakes, or the Gulf, whichever happens to be nearest.

There are over a hundred million of us who live on the Land called "America," but it is owned by less than four million, many of whom are citizens of other countries. To these four million we give tribute, just as we would have given tribute to the Kaiser if he had conquered America, for the supreme privilege of letting our soles rest on this portion of the Earth. We must give them a good share of our toil, we must "come across," or they will evict us. They do not do anything for the good things we give them. They do not make shoes that we can wear, neither do they write books that we might enjoy, neither do they raise wheat that will sustain us. But, while we do all these things, they simply take away from us, without any payment, a large part of the product of our labor. If we refuse—but we cannot refuse, and still live. For it is so ordained that we cannot live without Land.

"Money or your life," says the ordinary brigand. "Money *and* your life," says the Land Lord; for, not only does he take your money (which is the product of your labor), but he takes so much of it that in your vain effort to provide a surplus you are killed by over-work. As in the case of Tantalus, you try to do the impossible. The appetite of the Landowner for ground rent is insatiable. The more you produce the more he takes.

How can we stop him from robbing us? By tearing up his title deed, a scrap of paper which he uses against us as the highwayman uses his gun. We can do that merely by taxing the ground rent-collecting power out of his hands into the hands of all of us, every one of the hundred million of us. If he can no longer collect ground rent

from us for the privilege of living in America he will have no more desire to own any part of America. He will himself tear up his vicious title deed, and will take his place at the work bench or office desk along with other decent, wealth-producing Americans.

But until we do that he will keep on plying his trade. And, really, *we* are to blame, not he. *We* drive him into robbing us by making it easy and profitable for him to do so. So we must make the business of collecting tribute for the privilege of living in America a very unprofitable occupation. We can do that by electing to office men and women who will put into effect a law that will take away from any individual the right to charge any of us for the privilege of living and working in America.

The candidates offered by the Single Tax Party, would, if they were elected to power, give back America to Americans. They would institute a system whereby any decent citizen could have as much Land as he could use for a dwelling, a business house, a farm, a mine, or what not. And for the privilege of having the exclusive use of this piece of Land he would have to pay to all of us (that is, to the government) a fair rent. If he refused to pay this rent, he would have to get off the Land and let some other more capable or more energetic American use it. That is just; for since all Americans have an *equal* right to the use of American Land, no one should have the *exclusive* right to any part of it without giving a fair return to the rest of the Americans for his exclusive privilege.

Of course, this system would abolish Land speculation, or the holding out of use (for higher prices) Land which we need for crops, houses, mines, and so on. This system would, in fact, force nearly all of America into USE, thereby creating lots of work (which means high wages), and lots of food, clothing, shelter (which means a low cost of living).

And so, this Single Tax would give the ownership of America to Americans and would also make this a country in which all men and women could be really FREE—free from want and the fear of want. Pretty soon the tenement house which breeds disease, the brothel which breeds moral disease, the sickening factory, graft, privilege, prisons—all those things which makes us ashamed of America—would disappear, and to every American would be secured the "inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Are you in favor of this?

FRANK CHODOROV.

THE war is over. The minds of men are stirring as never before. Let us have done with the timid, hesitating propaganda of the years that are buried. We stand for a doctrine of social emancipation. We are the bearers of glad tidings to the poor. We have the substitute alike for economic autocracy and the red flag of social disorder. Shall we miss the opportunity to preach it?

DON'T you think public men in all walks of life should receive the REVIEW that they may know more of the movement—its purpose and its progress?