

To the Editor:

Mr. Cooney brings up some very interesting points in his letter. For instance, what he says about the "Moss Mantle sect" is at least partly true, I think. I have often suspected that there are a number of Georgists, so-called, who simply use the single tax as a convenient lectern from which to preach reaction. If this is true we certainly should be kept reminded of it. Every reform movement has its ragged fringes.

Some of our most earnest and most learned Georgists are apt to lean towards the Utopian—as Mr. Cooney calls it, the Chimerical—school of thought. Dear, good souls, but—well, for some four thousand years men have been discovering at intervals that they could not reform the world just by passing laws. Henry George himself was once asked if the single tax would cure all our economic and political ills.

"No," he answered, "but freedom will."

Is the single tax then just a step on the road to freedom? I am prepared to grant that, but I insist that it is an absolutely essential step, for without freedom of the land there can be no true freedom for those who dwell upon it.

Does Mr. Cooney really regard the socialization of forest preserves and ports as new departures? Are publicly paid cops and firemen actually signs of transition to something or other? Zoroaster, Hammurabi, Moses, Saint Thomas Aquinas, Charlemagne and Henry George are just a few of the hosts who have preached the common interest of all of us, and the common responsibility of all of us where natural resources and rights of way are concerned. And if we may judge from the most primitive societies in existence today, the very earliest governments set up by men were for the purpose of protecting the lives and property of the governed. It seems very probable too that they were not concerned with interfering with the activities of the private citizen as he made his living. Surely it is stretching things a bit to claim that such "socialism" as this makes ours a "mixed economy."

If socialism were limited to the protection of the citizen and his property, then our fight would not be with socialism. But when it involves organized restriction of his right to labor, when it limits his right to use his own property for the production of wealth it does become the natural adversary of Georgists and of all who fight the good fight for freedom.

When Mr. Cooney speaks of unionization, does he mean the organization of labor for collective bargaining, or does he mean a gigantic machine, equipped by government franchise to monopolize labor? What is the exact significance of "organized capital?" This term may be found in legal works covering the various complexes of statutes which regulate incorporation in this country. It has also been used to describe the Marxist state, Hitler's Germany, international cartels and trusts.

The English Fabians of a couple of generations ago tried, with the best intentions, to "mix" socialism with freedom. Perhaps they made their brand of socialism more salable, but they certainly have finished up with their freedom sadly diminished.

It would seem that confusion in defining general principles can be a very dangerous thing. Let us first of all know clearly what we are fighting for. And let us never for an instant forget what it is that we are fighting against.

—MARSHALL CRANE  
Bedford, New York.