

the most conservative and reactionary—that a tax on land values cannot be shifted. Why? Because the surface of this planet is limited in area—the quantity of land is fixed. Not so the things produced by the application of labor and capital to land—the potential output is practically unlimited.”

Unless the use of land and natural resources is recovered by the people in this sane and simple way, depressions will recur more frequently, each worse than the one before. Then we shall see in this country what is now taking place in Spain, where the landless peasants, goaded by hunger and misery, are seizing the great landed estates, with accompanying bloodshed, and parceling them out among themselves.

Most of the believers in this philosophy realize the futility of an appeal to the ballot box until the consciences and the minds of the people have been aroused. When that happens, the reform will come as a matter of course. A great economist once wrote: “Social reform is not to be secured by noise and shouting; by complaints and denunciations; by the formation of political parties, or the making of revolutions; but by the awakening of thought and the progress of ideas. Until there be correct thought, there cannot be right action; and when there is correct thought, right action *will* follow.”

## Land is Source of our Living

**I**N the *Traveler* recently several Henry George disciples have accused Peter A. Reilly of Boston of not understanding the principle of land-value taxation, hence his opposition to the doctrine. As if to corroborate their charge, he asserted in a letter the other day that it is “difficult to understand.” Well, we didn’t find it hard to understand.

When I first read “Progress and Poverty” I found the truths stated to be so simple that I wondered why it was that I hadn’t thought of the relation between man and land, that this old earth was created by God for the wants and uses of all mankind and that taxing the community-created value of land into the public treasury would establish the equal right of all persons to the earth, or—as the late Rev. Fr. McGlynn expressed it, “provide a place at the Father’s table for all His children.”

There seems to be no good reason why we Single Taxers should waste time arguing with a man who is in favor of labor being exploited. It is evident that Mr. Reilly is committed to the present unjust economic system and doesn’t want to be enlightened. Unemployment, poverty, vice and crime, all the result of the injustice bottomed on landlordism, doesn’t concern him in the least.

Wherever land-value taxation has been applied, even in a limited degree, the result has been beneficial to all except the land speculator. Diverting ground rent into the public treasury would be a natural tax.

The necessity for government and the value of land are both the result of population, and the revenue of ground rent from the one should be used to pay the cost of the other.

The Single Tax would make it impossible for speculators and monopolists to hold natural opportunities unused or only half used, and would throw open to labor the illimitable field of employment which unused portions of the earth offers to man.

W. L. CROSMAN in *Boston Traveler*.

## The Difficulties of Democracy

JOSEPH DANA MILLER in *International Journal of Ethics*, London, England

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“Of all forms of government democracy is the most difficult.”—Sir Henry Sumner Maine.

“The difficulties of popular government which arise from the modern military spirit and from the modern growth of irreconcilable parties could not perhaps have been determined without actual experience. But there are other difficulties which might have been divined because they proceed from the inherent nature of democracy.”—Sir Henry Sumner Maine.

**D**EMOCRACY contemplates no more than other forms of government—all seek to justify themselves as serving best the happiness of the people. Democracy claims for itself no other *raison d’être* than a tempered monarchy or an honest despotism. We have learned that it is best that power should proceed from below rather than from above, and that it is not safe to vest large powers in any branch of government or any group of persons. And we trust that the practical application of this theory of government will give us all greater happiness, and that civilization and progress are indissolubly connected with it.

Yet what we have termed the difficulties of democracy remain. We have assumed that what stands in its path are obstacles placed there by its foes, when in fact the chief difficulties are inherent in democracy itself. We have assumed that all that it was necessary to do was to place power in the hands of the people, and liberty would be an accomplished fact. We have assumed that democracy would be attained by smashing institutions that impeded it, and that all the rest was a triumphant march.

But democracy is not so much a system of people’s power as a *state of social consciousness*. But even with this all is not attained, since the practical difficulties that remain, defects of knowledge, unconscious bias, failure of governmental machinery, or the natural propensity of men to grasp power and of others to yield power to those who authoritatively assert it, are appalling to whoever will think of the possibility of a pure democracy.

It is seldom we reflect how young democracy really is. We look in vain for any satisfactory democratic teachings among the most eminent of the philosophers and thinkers. Democratic tendencies in their writings we may discern readily enough, with suggestions for more liberal laws, but of democracy, as we of today understand it as a fundamental concept, hardly a trace. It might be thought that here and there some thinker philosophically detached from his times would have announced the discovery of democratic tenets. But no. Aristotle, who discovered more than one important law of human association, could never get away from the institution of slavery, founding the argument for its necessity upon the deceptive analogy of the subordination of body to soul, of appetite to intellect, of