

regimenting the nation in business, without goose-steeping every little industry, without leaving loose a bureaucratic flock of nosey incompetents running around clothed in brief authority, and with all the thunder of the majesty of the United States government behind them, giving petty orders—with the little man and the little business cracked down upon—while prices keep soaring for the necessities of life and business and individuals carry additional taxes and unemployment continues to grow with the number of those needing relief mounting. Food and grain and cotton and cattle have been destroyed in the past and people by tens of thousands have been paid for doing nothing. The government must take care of the needy. That is part of the duty of government. I defy any lawyer, however, to show any authority in the National Government to pay farmers for not producing, not working.

It is no disgrace nor dishonor to fail in the conflict for justice and liberty. It is only a disgrace and dishonor not to enter the arena and give battle. Democracy and parliamentary government with all its faults is the sole hope of a world seeking a possible solution of economic problems. If depotism conquers it will mould the world in unchangeable form; it will build on the masses for the benefit of only a few.

Luther Burbank once said:

"I shall be content if, because of me,
there shall be better fruits and fairer flowers."

We should be content if because of our battle for a free earth there shall be better human beings, peace, and the abolition of poverty, liberty and democracy in all the world.

So, take heart; consult your despair, your desperation in a tottering world; take heart for the earth in all its fruitfulness has not been destroyed. Tickle the earth and it will still laugh a harvest. Take heed for the learning and science of mankind, with all of steam and electric power, is still our heritage ready for use. Take heed—what should you fear? Our ancestors came from all parts of the world with courage, facing unknown conditions and dangers, helped clear a continent and established the glory of these United States. Can we do less?

Liberalism In Being

YES, there is a Liberal Party!

I saw nearly all of it all at once the other day. Three M.P.s stood in a group outside the Eisteddfod pavilion—all Liberals.

They were Captain R. T. Evans, A. O. Roberts and L. Jones.

The first estimated, in a talk with me that of the £10,000,000 recently spent on public works in Wales, half had gone to the landlords!

He might not go so far as to admit it, but the logical remedy, of course, is land reform on the Henry George pattern.

HANNEN SWAFFER in London *Daily Herald*.

POLITICAL juggling will not balance a budget.

Prosperity—

A Normal Condition

AN EFFORT TO FIND IN LIBERTY A COMMON
DENOMINATOR FOR THOSE NOT RESIGNED
TO DEPRESSIONS

BY HENRY J. FOLEY

Just what do you mean by prosperity?

I mean a condition in which every man able to work can secure without difficulty the necessities of life, and a reasonable share of the comforts and luxuries.

Is prosperity a condition difficult of attainment?

Prosperity is as normal as breathing. Depression is as unnatural, and should be as unusual as suffocation.

Why do you say that prosperity is a normal condition?

Because men were provided with the earth and its raw materials, from which all their wants may be supplied, just as they are provided with air to breathe; and they are likewise provided with hands to work up these materials, just as they are provided with lungs to breathe the air.

How could the normal condition of breathing be replaced by the unnatural condition of suffocation?

1. By destroying the lungs with which men breathe, or,
2. By shutting off the air which they must put into their lungs.

How could a normal condition of prosperity be replaced by depression and wholesale poverty?

1. By destroying the hands with which men work; or,
2. By keeping men away from the materials on which they could work.

Is prosperity the actual condition of mankind?

Some of the best minds assure us that unemployment and low wages must be perpetual.

Is this because men have lost the use of their hands?

Certainly not; it must be for the other reason, that they have nothing to use their hands upon.

Does the cure of depression require a deep study of political economy?

If it did, the human race would have been extinct before the population reached a thousand.

Does the human race need employers?

If it did, Adam would have died in a poorhouse, if there had been a poorhouse. There was no "capital fund" to pay Adam's wages.

Is the problem of making a living a dreadfully complicated problem?

The problem of working for something to eat should be no more complicated than the problem of eating.

What has complicated the problem of making a living?

The fact that the majority of people are barred

from any right to a place to make a living, and must work for some one else, if possible.

Can a man of ordinary intelligence understand the cause of depression?

Yes, if he can understand this statement: A man who is forbidden to work can not make a living.

Is poverty caused by a scarcity of the good things of life?

The good things are apparently so plentiful that they must be burned or buried.

What causes wholesale poverty while good things are so over-plentiful?

The fact that some men have the privilege of taking, and do take, as much as they wish, leaving very little for the others.

How do people get this power to take?

Through the possession of some special privilege, monopoly; monopoly of gas or water or electricity, monopoly of food or of some branch of industry.

Is there any other way in which people could get the power to take an unfair share?

There is absolutely no other way. Without monopoly, every worker could insist upon, and could secure, a fair share of production, i. e., fair wages.

What is the immediate cause of depression?

Wages are so low that workers can not buy the good things, production must stop, and workers are thrown out of work.

What makes wages low?

The fact that workers must bid for jobs, against unemployed people who must get work or starve.

How does it come about that men are unemployed?

Because government takes the most effective means of barring them from work.

Is there any law on the statute books barring any class of men from the right to work?

No; but the thing is done more effectively by allowing some men the privilege of barring others from work, and of charging without limit for allowing them to work.

There is something refreshingly novel in Mr. Foley's presentation. There are those unable to follow the economic reasoning fortifying our contentions, but we are certain they can understand the statement, "They have denied you a place to work. Land is a place to work."

Mr. Foley is a student of the Henry George School and loves economic discussions. But he is confident that the common man can comprehend our teachings without resort to them. He is the author of articles which ran serially for nearly forty weeks in *The Gaelic American* outlining his position.

The new students of our movement are bringing to us some unfamiliar concepts that are new in our philosophy. Charles H. Johnson, a convert of Henry George Atkinson and a student of the Henry George School under the beloved Oscar H. Geiger, gives us this: "Men are all agreed that air, sunlight and water are not property. Then why not land as well, since without air, sun and water land is of no use and therefore of no value? Is it not a little curious that we regard as private property something which has no value save as it is created or enhanced by what we are agreed is *not* property?" Is not this thought worth remembering?—Editor LAND AND FREEDOM.

How is this accomplished?

By allowing individuals the right to control land.

What does the private ownership of land now include?

It includes the right to control the labor and the lives of those who do not own land, and to appropriate their earnings with absolutely no legal limit.

Why is this plan more effective than a law forbidding men to work?

Because men might evade a law and go to work but they can not evade a man who can make money by charging them for a place to work.

Could not government force wages up in spite of the private control of land?

The law of supply and demand is a natural law, as resistless as the law of gravitation. A stone dropped from a balloon will fall to the ground, and fifteen million men with no place to work will depress wages, in spite of any government regulations. A government which supplies an unlimited amount of helpless labor to the demands of employers must expect unemployment and low wages.

What does the present land system do to the labor market?

It constitutes a most effective "dumping" of the labor of the nation.

Has any government ever succeeded in regulating wages?

Not unless it first abolished every trace of liberty, as in ancient Peru and in modern Russia. Of course, any slave owner can divide his wealth among his slaves as he sees fit, and any nation which abolishes liberty can, and must, regulate production, and dictate the distribution.

Would not business and industry become oppressive in a democracy without government planning and regulation?

If men were given access to the earth and its raw materials, and protected from monopolies, they could, and would, refuse to be exploited. Industry would be restricted to bidding for workers to keep the industries going.

What is it necessary for government to do to prevent oppression and unemployment?

Only these two things:

1. The negative duty of leaving men free to work.
2. The positive duty of preventing any one from interfering with the equal freedom of every man.

Could not the poor still be oppressed by the rich if all were free to use the land on equal terms?

A million men with a billion dollars each could not oppress the poorest man on earth if that man were free to make his own living, by having access to the earth and its raw materials. The president of all the holding companies could no more oppress a western farmer or a city merchant than he could keep the arctic fox from making a living.

How can the farmer or the merchant be exploited at present?

When land monopoly bars him from the land he

looks for work, and the employer allows him to bid for a job against a million other people similarly situated.

Is it only farm workers who suffer from this oppression?

It applies equally to every one who lives by service. The president of Schulte Retail Stores Corporation denies that the reason for closing four of its stores in New Orleans was restrictive legislation. He says: "The reason for closing the stores was that the rents were more than we could pay." The clerks, and perhaps some of the stockholders, may now look for jobs and help to bid wages down.

Which is the most flagrant of all the monopolies?

The private ownership and control of land.

Why is this the worst of all the monopolies?

1. Because it bars the people from work by denying them a place to work, and leaving them to "look for jobs."

2. Because it "dumps" the labor of the people who are able to find work, by forcing them to bid against other people who must either underbid the workers or starve.

3. Because it furnishes all the other monopolies with a world of helpless human material on which to operate.

Could not other monopolies oppress the people even if the land monopoly were destroyed?

They might temporarily exact unfair prices for their products, but they could not keep people out of work, nor hire workers for unfair wages.

What else would limit the exactions of monopolies?

If people had access to the land they could get their own necessities. Other products, such as manufactures, they could do without until prices came down to a fair level.

Should the government disregard other monopolies?

Government should end all monopolies. But the abolition of land monopoly would remove most of the power for mischief which other monopolies now possess.

Is depression caused by the fact that some people have too much wealth?

Wealth in itself is powerless to oppress anybody.

What is the connection between great wealth and depressions?

Depressions are caused not by great wealth, but by control of opportunities. This control causes swollen fortunes, which give rise to further monopolies, resulting in more swollen fortunes, ad infinitum; a perfect vicious circle.

Could depression be cured by dividing the wealth equally?

No. If every man were plentifully supplied with money the monopolists would raise their prices and the land owners would raise their rents. The swollen fortunes and the bread lines would be restored without delay.

Who are the best propagandists for communism?

The landowners and other monopolists.

Why are these more effective as propagandists than the Third International?

Because they are demonstrating to the unemployed and to the underpaid that there is no way in which they can make a living except by dividing the wealth.

How does communism propose to bring Utopia?

By doing away with all private property.

Is there any sound reason for abolishing private property?

If private control of opportunities were ended every one could make as good a living as he cared to work for, and there would be no one rash enough to suggest that the workers divide with the drones.

Who should be the most ardent advocates of equal opportunities for all, and equal access to the land?

The wealthy, who have the most to lose by the threatened abolition of all private property.

What is communism?

Rule by the working classes.

Is it really?

No. Only in theory. In practice it is an absolute dictatorship.

What developed communism?

The well-verified conviction by the workers that there was no way in which they could secure justice except by seizing the power of the state.

Were they correct in this conviction?

No. They could have secured justice and prosperity by voting for freedom of opportunity, and the rights of all to a place to work.

What is fascism?

Fascism is rule by the upper classes.

How did fascism arise?

When Italy, e.g., saw the terrible effects of rule by the socialists in Russia, she decided to forestall its spread by placing all power in the hands of the upper classes, and keeping the working classes permanently helpless.

Which of the two forms of government, communism or fascism, is more desirable?

Both are complete and practicable working forms of tyranny, one disguised, and the other unashamed. "A plague on both your houses."

What is the American form of government?

It is rule by all the citizens, each one as free and as powerful as any other.

Is the American plan workable?

It is workable so long as men are really free. A permanent democracy is impossible where workers are helpless to work without the consent of employers.

What is the greatest danger to the freedom of a free people?

The greatest danger is a lack of freedom. "The cure for the troubles of democracy is more democracy."

Please explain this more fully.

In a free country where people have no right to work for a living, living conditions become unbearable. The victims attribute this to the form of government, and democracy is swept away in a flood of communism or fascism.

Are these your conclusions?

No. This is only modern European history.

What is the greatest objection to communism?

It must begin with the complete destruction of liberty.

What is necessary to end unemployment and low wages, without communism?

Absolutely nothing except liberty, including the right to a place to make a living, and to the raw materials of the earth.

Is there any hope of ending wholesale poverty while land monopoly persists?

It is as hopeless as to expect that a man will become wealthy while other people are allowed to take his earnings without limit.

Could not prosperity be assured by the control of other monopolies without interfering with the land system?

If other reforms could put every man to work at high wages, "land values" would rise by the exact amount of the increase. In other words, the landowners would pocket the entire increase.

Why is not private control of land universally recognized as a monopoly?

Because the ownership of land is so widespread that even some poor people own land.

Does not this widespread ownership take land out of the monopoly class?

To the fifteen million Americans who have no work, and no right to a place to work, it makes no difference whether the ownership of the land is in one man or a million men.

Can it be possible that landowners are victims of the land system?

They are, by thousands. Every landowner who must work for a living is a victim of the depression, either in low wages or in unemployment. A deed to a house or farm is no cure for a depression.

Is it ownership of land that causes unemployment?

No. Unemployment and low wages are caused by *control* of land, with the privilege of barring others from access to the earth.

Is control of land necessary to encourage industry and thrift?

No. To encourage industry and thrift it is only necessary that men have security in the possession of land.

How could government give men security in the possession of land, and at the same time prevent this harmful control of land?

By government making a reality of the law of eminent domain, and taking the rental value of the land as a consideration, the same as any other proprietor does.

Could not the people in possession of land still control land and force unemployment if government took the rental value of its land?

No. The landowner now forces unemployment by holding the land idle until a satisfactory tribute has been paid. He could not afford to hold land idle if he had to pay the annual value to the government. Idle land would be thrown on the market the price of all land would fall, and the unemployed could use it to make a living.

Is the system of private land control as vicious as the old system of slavery?

The right to force people into unemployment and starvation is just as vicious as any system of individual slavery, and by so much more mischievous as it is disguised.

Would the removal of land monopoly inevitably bring prosperity?

Giving men the right to work, and a place to work would cure unemployment and low wages as obviously as the giving of food would cure starvation.

Will you describe the steps by which equal access to the land would bring prosperity?

To describe all the good effects of letting men work, and letting them keep the fruits of their work, would require a volume larger than an unabridged dictionary. It would take longer than to tell the things a starving nation could do if they were fed.

Will you give an outline of the effects of government collecting all the rent of land?

Yes, but I must restrict it to a few of the effects of freedom, including only those effects so obvious that they are beyond dispute, and rigidly excluding any flights of fancy.

1. If the holders of idle land continued to hold it idle they would pay the full yearly value to the state, thus largely relieving other citizens of the payment of taxes. Of course no landowners would continue to hold land idle. They would put it into production, or surrender it.

2. If they surrendered it, the now unemployed could use it to make a living; farm land to grow food, or city land to start a business.

3. If the owners put the land into production they would have to employ men.

4. Bearing in mind that the annual rental value of land is collected by the government, the land would not be free, but the speculative values would be squeezed out, the lowest grade of land now in use would have no rental value, and all other land would be cheapened in proportion.

5. Every piece of land put into production would require building, giving rise to employment, and solving the unemployment problem.

6. If any unemployed were left, (which would be very unlikely), they would have an abundance

of good land on which to make a living, free of taxes, or with only nominal taxes.

7. The above results would be cumulative. Every parcel put into production would give employment to builders. Men put to work would buy food, clothing and shelter, speeding up business in all directions.

8. The chaotic tax system, now running wild, would be wiped out, and the values produced by land would pay all the taxes, and every man's earnings would be left to him in their entirety.

9. The bureaucracies now smothering the American people, with their mountains of taxes, would be done away with. People free to make their living would need no bureaus.

Why have all the efforts of reformers to abolish poverty gone for nothing?

Because each one has concentrated on some symptom instead of looking to causes. Their scattered efforts have nullified each other, while the monopolists have gathered in the spoils.

How do these efforts work out in practice?

The ineffectual cries for myriads of reforms, many of them contradictory, have about convinced the nations that reform is an impossible dream, that political economy is the dismal science, and that the poor must be always with us.

Will not these multiplied efforts of reformers finally abolish poverty?

The same kind of efforts, continued during the next thousand years, will see the same results, accelerating unemployment and poverty.

Is there any disagreement among the monopolists?

The monopolists have been able to work together with a harmony that would put the early Christians to shame. They have a common meeting ground, a common denominator, to which everything else must defer, and which coordinates all their activities.

What is the common denominator of the exploiters?

That a helpless people, barred from any right to work for themselves, shall be at the mercy of the exploiters.

Do the exploiters never quarrel among themselves?

Oh yes; but only over the division of the spoils. It would be unwise for a pirate band to quarrel before the ship has been looted.

Could people interested in abolishing poverty find a common denominator?

They could find a common meeting ground in fighting for liberty, the equal rights of all men to the use of the earth on equal terms.

Would any reformer have to abandon his pet reform by adopting this common denominator?

He might be able to introduce his favorite reform, if it is a genuine reform, when men are once free to work. It is a hopeless job to introduce any

reform in a country where men have no right to work, and where fifteen million men can not even find work at low wages. Men on a bread line want work, not lectures on economics or politics.

Could Jews and Christians concentrate on this plan?

Every real religion is based on belief in the brotherhood of men. A Jew or a Christian who believes in shutting out his brother from a chance to work is below the pagan in morality.

Could communists join in this policy?

If a man desires to divide up the wealth of the world, it would certainly seem logical for him to begin by giving all men equal rights in the earth.

Could government planners unite on freedom of the land?

Government planning might get somewhere after men have been given the right to work, and have gone to work. Government plans to bring prosperity to men forbidden to work are more Utopian than Utopia.

How about the battlers for good government?

Governments were instituted among men to promote life, *liberty*, and the pursuit of happiness. Liberty to make a living was not specifically expected. The word "government" applied to a system which bars its people from the right to work is poetic license.

How about the patriots fighting for the liberties of their conquered homelands?

If land monopoly were abolished the conquering heroes would find their occupation gone. The first aim of the conqueror is to monopolize the land, not for the conquering nation, but for the war lords. The first doctrine of patriots throughout the world should be that the land of a nation belongs to the people of that nation.

Moreover, political freedom without economic freedom, without the right to make a living, is an empty formula. The domestic exploiter can be just as merciless and grinding as the foreign war lord.

Should welfare workers work for the right of the people to the land?

It would be a heartless thing to say that all the charity work is love's labor lost; but the millions of dollars donated by private persons, the millions collected by the St. Vincent de Paul Societies and the Salvation Army, from people who can ill afford them, and the billions expended for relief by the United States Government, all these find their way to the strong boxes of the exploiters as inevitably as the rain on the mountain top finally comes to rest in the ocean.

The exploiters have been given power to take, and there is no magic to keep from them the millions collected for charity. The result of land monopoly is to leave the people as a maximum, the bare cost of living, and the exploiter automatically

subtracts that amount from the wages that must otherwise be paid.

If men were once more free to work, the labors of the charitable societies could be concentrated on the widows, the orphans, and the helpless, and the job could be done thoroughly and handsomely. They are now engaged in filling a bottomless pit.

Why have all the efforts of government and of philanthropists failed to bring prosperity?

Because they are engaged in an undertaking which is physically impossible. Public prosperity and private control of land are a contradiction in terms. Nothing can ever make men prosperous while their earnings may be taken in advance and without limit for a permit to work.

Is there any mystery connected with depression?

Yes. The mystery of why fifteen million men who are barred from work are out of work; and the mystery of why workers who must bid against these fifteen million unemployed find their wages low; and the mystery of why the American people have not recognized the vicious land system as the inevitable cause of the depression.

Would it be a serious matter to abolish the private control of land?

Yes; but it will be a more serious matter to continue unemployment and poverty and depression until the end of the world. And communism is rather a serious matter.

Reformers, Respectability and Officitis

MOSES did not choose to be respectable. Had he done so, the greatest reform movement in history would never have happened. He might have advocated some ameliorating measures for Jewish slaves, such as shorter hours, or better housing conditions, or maybe even a minimum wage. In advocating such things he could have maintained a comfortable place among the ruling group, of which he was a member, he would not have violently offended the Pharaohs, and thus would have retained his personal comfort and importance. Perhaps he might have made the condition of his co-religionists somewhat less repulsive. But they would still be slaves. Their degraded position would in time have weakened their resistance to the idolatry of the Egyptian religion. Indeed, during the Exodus it was the degenerating influence of their past environment that caused him so much concern, and it was only because of his genius as a leader and moulder of opinion that he was able to overcome this influence. Several generations of slavery produce a people that is akin to a domesticated animal—entirely subservient to a master. Realizing the growing decadence of his people

Moses did not propose any change that would ease their thralldom; he chose the difficult course of revolt, with a consequent loss of respectability.

Respectability in a reformer consists in attempting to slightly alter the condition of the people without depriving the predatory group of their vested interests. Their slaves were the vested interests of the Egyptian landlords. The latter might have tolerated some humane suggestion for easing the condition of their slaves, provided the institution of slavery were not abolished. In our time, we find the House of Representatives advocating old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, community chests, collective bargaining—"social improvements" of one kind or another that do not in the slightest affect their vested interests and monopoly privileges. Such political reformers as Roosevelt and Tugwell and Ickes et al are quite within the sphere of respectability in advocating these innocuous measures. They do not risk their social or political prestige by advocating the application of a salve to the sore-covered hide of the slave, provided they do not threaten the institution. Social ostracism is visited only on those who attempt real reforms—that is, reforms that aim to deprive the privileged class of their privileges. Moses was determined to free the Jews, and therefore he lost caste with the Pharaohs. The Roosevelts of our day have no intention of breaking with our Pharaohs; they are respectable.

Jesus was not crucified because of his ethical teachings. His martyrdom (unless we accept the theory of vicarious atonement) was the direct result of his attack on the vested interests of the Jewish priests. Had he let them continue their money-changing in the temple unmolested, he might have continued without interference the performance of miracles and the teachings of the "other cheek" philosophy. But Jesus realized that the spiritual degradation of the Jews, and the consequent loss of their political independence, was the direct result of their poverty, and that this was caused by the selfishness of their rulers. A true reformer does not deal with effects; he seeks to eradicate causes. In doing so, if he is really a great man, he is influenced neither by the interests he attacks nor the consequences upon himself. Jesus' unrespectability cost him his life. He did not lay the blame for the priests' wrong-doing upon a "system;" he did not condone their greed on the ground that the laws of the land permitted it. He did not try to change the laws. He accused the priests of personal guilt. Sin is always personal; there is no institutional sin. If the law permits me to deprive other people of their property, that fact does not exonerate me from the crime of robbery. Society simply is too stupid to recognize the crime and to visit punishment upon me. The great reformer aims to show society that my acts are in fact criminal; having done so, restrictive and retributive regulations follow. Jesus' attacks upon the priests