

Land and Freedom

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Comment and Reflection

DO they change, these Labor Leaders? They do not. Since the destruction by the mob led by the labor agitators of Lancashire of the factory erected by Sir Richard Arkwright in 1774, they have not changed. The leaders of the labor movement remain the same ignorant and stupid supporters of reaction and blind conservatism

WE are moved to write thus by the latest declaration from Mr. Green, head of the American Federation of Labor, who is quoted by the press to the following effect:

If we must choose between scrapping machines and science and scrapping human beings, we must scrap the machinery in favor of men and women with minds and souls. What will happen when we meet the point of saturation? Will we eventually reach an all-mechanical age, an age when only machines will be in demand and men will not be wanted? This can never be.

IT is now nearly fifty years since Terence V. Powderly, a prominent labor leader of the time and head of the Knights of Labor, declared that he made it a practise of breaking soda bottles whenever he bought a glass of soda in order to provide employment for the bottle makers! Henry George rebuked him at the time. To the present head of the American Federation Mr. Fred. S. Wallace, of the *Daily Tribune*, of Coshocton, Ohio, administers a mild but none the less effective castigation. We quote:

That these beliefs should persist until now in spite of abounding proof that the inventive faculty implanted in man is not a curse and that labor saving machinery is a help and not a hindrance to the onward march of the race, is proof of the power of wrong economic teaching to survive generation after generation and of the ominous fact that appeals to men's prejudice and selfishness are more powerful than appeals to their reason and the plain manifestations of science. That the rank and file of labor should still entertain delusions of this character is less surprising than that men of Mr. Green's caliber should give them credence. It is all a part of those economic fallacies which gave birth to the Malthusian theory and which still lead even a majority of people to believe that "protective" tariffs in some mysterious way add to the earnings of labor, whether in the factory or on the farm.

AND in order that Mr. Green should be informed of some very significant facts that as head of the American Federation he should know, Mr. Wallace prints a table

which we trust Mr. Green will prayerfully consider: Mr. Wallace says:

It is the appropriation of this publicly created value by less than five per cent. of our population that is responsible for the ills of which Mr. Green complains and not until this exploitation is stopped can there be any hope for the better day which he so earnestly and properly bespeaks. As a concrete illustration of the real source of the trouble let the following figures taken from statistics compiled by the federal Census Bureau be presented to the American Federation of Labor. These figures tell exactly where the trouble lies. They show that in production costs legitimate capital even more than labor is being victimized by social parasites who reap without sowing and are a menace to the natural development of civilization:

Year	Pct. of Wages Cost	Pct. of Capital Cost	Pct. of Capital and Wages Cost	Pct. of Land Value Cost	Total Cost
1870	52	42	94	6	100
1880	37	34	71	29	100
1890	32	16	48	52	100
1900	28	10	38	62	100
1905	26	8	34	66	100
1910	24	7	31	69	100
1920	23	5	28	72	100

Do not these figures reveal ominously yet accurately what is resulting from our insane flouting of the natural economic law? Do they contain no lesson for the American Federation of Labor and every other patriotic group that would save individualism, private initiative and what is left of our democracy from the economic sink hole into which is pouring the real wages of labor and the interest of legitimate capital? They show eloquently that the small merchant, the small manufacturer, the farmer and all the classes engaged in the real production of wealth are yearly being driven nearer to the verge of economic serfdom by a system which is clearly within their power to correct.

OUR quarrel with Vice President Woll, Vice President of the American Federation of Labor, is of more serious character. He is greatly exercised at Prof. John Dewey's carefully considered study of conditions in Russia, which ran through the columns of the *New Republic*. Mr. Woll calls Prof. Dewey a teacher of Bolshevism. As Prof. Dewey's known sympathies are with labor, as he is one of the Advisory Committee of the Henry George Foundation of America, one of the world's great scholars, as well as one of America's greatest educators, such charge seems little less than ridiculous. Perhaps no one but Mr. Woll would think of Prof. Dewey as a communist. What he

indicated in his *New Republic* articles is the new atmosphere that has been created in Russia as evidenced in its educational systems, the contrast afforded between much that prevailed under Czarist rule, and the determination of the people to work out their own salvation. Prof. Dewey has no sympathy with communism, but views the experiment with toleration that Mr. Matthew Woll might do well to cultivate in his official capacity.

THERE continues to be a chorus of approval for Mr. Hoover's suggestion to relieve unemployment by accumulating a reserve fund for public construction. There is nothing new in the idea—it has been proposed again and again and sometimes acted upon by the states. But this of itself would not be an objection against it. And indeed there is no reason to oppose it. We only wish to indicate that these ever recurring suggestions to transfer a portion of the wealth of the people to the pockets of others as a remedy for what Henry George called the riddle of the Sphinx—the problem of poverty—are futile attempts to answer the question which if not answered once and for all is to be destroyed.

AND of course the suggestion of Mr. Hoover is no answer. It is of a piece—this transfer of wealth from the pockets of one class to the pockets of another—with the clamor for an increase in the tariff as a remedy for depression in certain lines of industry from the very people who have been telling us how wildly and conspicuously prosperous we all are! For this fund to provide a reserve for public works to be used in times of unemployment must come from increased taxation—that is, (and it cannot be repeated too often) must be taken from the pockets of some of the people to be transferred to the pockets of others.

THIS is but another of the efforts to solve the unemployment question by ignoring the necessary passive factor in production—the land. It proceeds, too, on the mistaken assumption of the helplessness of labor as something that needs to be provided for, to be aided by artificially constructive processes. It ignores wholly one pillar of the industrial edifice—Land—forgetting the true relation, seeking to build out of the air a wholly fanciful adjustment between Labor and Government without regard to the main pillar of the edifice. We submit that this is not the way that engineers proceed, and Mr. Hoover has been highly praised for his engineering feats. We submit that not a single bridge, not a single edifice of the simplest sort, could be constructed in this way if the engineer misunderstood the factors and calmly ignored their relation.

THOSE who have read the little pamphlet written by the Editor of LAND AND FREEDOM, "Jones Itemized Rent Bill," have perhaps been amused by the inventory

of those many things that add to the value of land, and the objections that occur to the tenant that he ought not to be called upon to pay for some of these things twice—once to the city and again to the landlord. This aspect of the question is taken quite seriously (as indeed it should be) by the *Washington Post*, which features in a recent issue, museums, art galleries, police protection and traffic provisions as adding to the value of what it calls real estate. Only the *Post* might have indicated that these things add only to the value of that part of real estate which is land or site value.

ONE of the astonishing characteristics of the literary men of this and the preceding generation is the superficiality of their social outlook. It is doubtful if any one of them has made a single contribution to the better understanding of social phenomena. Certainly not Kipling, and just as surely not Wells or Shaw, who in intent at least have set out as adventurers on social discoveries—in both cases a barren quest. We have more to learn from the older generation of literary men, Guizot, in his way, Sainte-Beuve (who in his critical dissertations surveyed the whole of life), Matthew Arnold, Ruskin, Macaulay, Dickens, Carlyle, and others. How petty and shallow in comparison seem the modern essayists with their infatuation for the frothy and frivolous, or, at best, the extraneous, the accidental, the panoramic—never the deeplying, fundamental and determining forces that are at work beneath the surface—the deus ex machina back of it all, and which to make no effort to understand is to unloose the fancy for every extravaganza of socialism, futile Utopianism, proletarian or strong-man dictatorships. Anything may be accepted where there is no anchor, no compass, and no sense of direction.

IT is interesting to know that the officers and crew of the notable Expedition to the South Pole, which is now in the Antarctic Region, under the direction of Commander Richard E. Byrd, will have the opportunity, during their long stay in the coldest and most lonely region of the world, to study the writings of Henry George.

To the carefully selected library which was assembled for the expedition, the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation of New York contributed a number of George's books conveyed with an appropriate letter by President Hennessy of the Foundation to Commander Byrd. Writing from Wellington, New Zealand, before his ship set sail for the Far South, Commander Byrd wrote thus:

"Dear Mr. Hennessy,

Thank you for the edition of Henry George's books which will be a valuable addition to our Antarctic library. I am grateful too for your kind expressions wishing the expedition success in the Antarctic."

Mr. Hennessy was prompted in sending the book to Commander Byrd's ships by a timely suggestion made to him by Mr. Morris Van Veen, this city.