

# Land and Freedom

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## Comment and Reflection

THE few among us who would confine the Single Tax movement to the discussion of the mere transference of taxes from labor products to land values, and who would hold LAND AND FREEDOM strictly to the narrow advocacy of that policy, have now something to consider.

PERHAPS the very reason why many people feel a lack of sympathy with the Single Tax movement is due to the too formal character of our agitation, to the purely cut and dried formulas, to the narrow range of our inquiry that fails to take into account the varied phenomena of social movements, and the many manifestations continually arising because of the lack of social justice which it is the aim of the Single Tax to establish. At a time when we were successfully appealing to many of the disinherited, to minds only vaguely conscious of great social wrongs, our words were out of a vocabulary more universal, and therefore more distinctly welcome to hearts that hungered for a message of emancipation. We were by reason of this better understood.

AND indeed if the proposal of Henry George is not for a new and different state of society, and if we will not accord our teaching to this very real vision, then indeed has this movement of ours lost its magic. Our sympathies must be with those who for any reason are raising the standard of revolt against the intolerable conditions of a false civilization. Their way may not be our way; their justice not our justice. But their right to revolt, and their right to express their convictions, is our right. We must defend their rights as peculiarly our concern. The state of society we are helping to build as disciples of Henry George, is a society of freedom, for it is that, and not a new tax system, that we would bring about.

OUR enemies are not merely those who attack the Single Tax. In a sense they are our friends. Our real enemies are those who, desiring to perpetuate things as they are, would bring under ban those who are doing anything to destroy what they regard as existing injustice. For the time being these are our friends.

THIS comment is for the purpose of leading up to what we want to say about a certain group of irresponsible,

reactionary busybodies calling themselves "Key Men of America." Their names, though not important in themselves, deserve mention for qualities that are typical of certain so-called 100 per cent Americans. Their names are Fred B. Marvin, Edward A. Hunter, of the Industrial Defence Association, and Harry A. Jung, of the Military Intelligence Association. Just now they are preparing a blacklist of men and women among whom we find some of the finest characters of our time.

THE object of this blacklist is to prevent certain persons from obtaining engagements to speak at public functions, town halls, and universities. In other words, their aim is to create a reign of terror that will suppress all freedom of speech. The *New York World* has been commendably active in disclosing the evil machinations of this dangerous group which may well arouse us to exercise that vigilance which has been declared to be the price of liberty. They have already prevented many distinguished men and women from addressing audiences by threat and intimidation and misrepresentation. They sought the removal from the high school faculty of a teacher whose sole offence had been that he won a five dollar prize for a definition of socialism. The man who sought this dismissal should be mentioned so that he shall receive the proper share of obloquy. He is Major General Amos A. Fries, Chief of the Chemical Warfare Service. Happily he was unsuccessful.

OTHER activities successfully achieved are said by the *New York World* to be the dismissal of two teachers from the West Chester, Pa. Normal College, their offence being the support of the right by the Student Liberal Club to criticise the American policy in Nicaragua, the cancelling of addresses by Lucia Ames Mead on the charge that she failed to salute the flag (though she has denied this), the preventing of Dr. Frank Bohn, journalist and lecturer, from addressing the Community Forum at Cranford, N. J. Other achievements are recorded to their discredit. And it is to be noted that members of the American Legion who fought in a war to make the world safe for democracy are active in this new movement to make democracy impossible.

THESE "Key Men," with the apparent object of making themselves as ridiculous as possible, have issued a blacklist of names of men and women supposed to be dan-

gerous to the welfare and security of the country. Look at just a few names on this list: Jane Addams, John Dewey, Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, Zona Gale, Oswald Garrison Villard, Rabbi Wise, George Foster Peabody. We see by this that Single Taxers are not wholly ignored.

WE say now to these preposterous "Key Men of America" that Single Taxers are more dangerous than any of those named—dangerous to the spirit of war which they are fomenting, dangerous to the policies of injustice and oppression and militarism, and the government policies in Hayti and Nicaragua. What the Single Tax proposes is the destruction of most everything that these superheated patriots stand for. It spells complete obliteration of the spirit of persecution that this dangerous group would launch upon the country. It has nothing but supreme contempt for them, mingled with concern for their power of harm, which is in proportion to the hate they can engender among the ignorant and prejudiced.

THE last outstanding Liberal leader in British politics passed away in the person of Asquith a few weeks ago. With his death British Liberalism ceased practically to exist. There is no longer a Liberal Party in Great Britain animated by the old Liberal traditions and able to appeal to great names like Cobden, Bright and Gladstone. To celebrate the demise of British political liberalism the party has issued its valedictory in a document of 500 pages which they call "Britain's Industrial Future"—the report of the Industrial Inquiry Committee of the Liberal Party.

THE authors of this precious document do not call it a valedictory, of course. It is supposed to be a new political programme with recommendations to guide the party in its deliberations as to future policies. In putting forth this death warrant they ignore the fact that there is already a Socialist Party in Great Britain known as the Labor Party. As there is no room in British politics for two Socialist parties, members of the Labor Party must exult in this formal renunciation of nearly all the Liberal principles held by the party of Gladstone and Asquith.

WE have not seen this voluminous Report. Our knowledge of its contents is gained from the *New Republic* and a few papers we have seen from England. It is said to have taken eighteen months of intensive study devoted to the task by such men as John Maynard Keynes, W. T. Layton, editor of the *Economist*, H. D. Henderson, editor of the *Nation*, and B. S. Rountree. Party leaders like Lloyd George, Sir Herbert Samuel and Sir John Simon assume responsibility for the Report, and so we are left in no doubt as to the eminence of the pallbearers officiating at the Liberal obsequies.

IN his reply to James G. Blaine in the *North American Review* on the subject of Protection away back in 1890, Mr. Gladstone said: "The argument of the free trader is that the legislator ought never to interfere, or only to interfere so far as imperative fiscal necessity may require it, with the natural law of distribution." Evidently in the mind of Mr. Gladstone this truth did not solely apply to the question of Protection, but was of far more general application. But the *Manchester Guardian*, which is supposedly a Liberal organ and is a journal of high standing, refers to the Report approvingly as an attempt "to infuse into the mainly haphazard economic growth measures of control and co-ordination." It therefore proposes to interfere with the natural law of distribution, or to proceed as if it had been tested and failed.

WE are told by the *New Republic*, which can always be depended upon to do its best to add to the cloudiness and complexities of economic thinking, that "the influential Liberal leaders have turned their backs on *laissez faire*." "They are in harmony," says the *New Republic*, "with the thought in this country which is stretching out toward social control of economic institutions." We had sensed this and deplore it as much as the *New Republic* exults in it. We are told by this organ of confused economic thinking that "the main task (of these new and strangely constituted Liberals) is the better organization of business." This, we are told, may require, in some instances, "the taking over by public authority of important enterprises that are not well adapted to private ownership through lack of profit or through the danger of monopoly."

WE hope we are not unduly facetious in pointing out that there thus appear two reasons for taking over private enterprises—one that they are not making profits, and another that they are, for surely a monopoly must be profitable. If government is to take over unprofitable enterprises—presumably not without compensation—it will have accumulated quite a large collection before many years—quite enough, we should say, to bankrupt most governments. But the reader will observe that no principle is urged that should govern the acquisition by government of private industries, or any distinction beyond the broad one indicated, which, of course, is no rule of reason by any law of economics. Single Taxers agree that the distinction is between industries subject to the law of competition and others not so subject, and requiring the use of land for their operation. The distinction may not be an exact one, but it is at least a roughly convenient approximation.

THE degree to which the new liberalism would go in increasing the functions of government is appalling. We are told: "Thorough publicity of accounts of all