

AN INTERESTING PAMPHLET

FREE CAPITALISM OR LAPSE INTO TOTALITARIANISM—
ISSUED BY BENJAMIN FRANKLIN RESEARCH SOCIETY

A most attractively written and illustrated brochure has been gotten out by the Benjamin Franklin Research Society, Inc. (Non-Political and Non-Profit). Its eight large-sized pages fairly bristle with aphorisms and social precepts taken from such characters as Franklin, Lincoln, Jefferson, Tolstoy, Snowden, and others, who understood the importance of the land question.

The brochure makes an appeal for an intensive research, stating that the world's troubles are economic and that there has been too much generalizing and not enough study of facts. It cites with approval the inductive mode employed by Benjamin Franklin, in the following language:

"With his 'Kite and his Key', as he drew electricity from the clouds, we like to remember Franklin as being symbolic of our great American desire to explore, to find a better way and to know the truth. It is fitting then that we turn to the old time leaders and examine as to what were their original concepts and wherein we have failed to follow the principles laid down by them."

The thesis on which the work centers is an exposé of the conditions now threatening to throw us all into some form of dictatorship. Mention is made particularly of America, "a comparatively new country, rotten before she is ripe," for whom is waiting the "Vulture of Totalitarianism." Our "liberals" come in for a deserved rebuke, since "They seem, notwithstanding the Russian Collectivistic failure, obsessed with the idea that under a paternalistic government of the American 'democratic' brand, we can safely trifle with fire (the Totalitarian idea under some other name), and not get the burning, flaying, deadening loss of liberty, which along with the firing squad, is as sure to follow as night follows day."

We take the liberty of quoting a few more telling excerpts:

"Lower prices benefit all buyers, whether the buyers work for wages or fees or profits. Every merchant knows that lower prices are the most powerful of all trade stimulants. Every factory manager knows that volume is the secret of profits. The natural tendency of competition is to give more for the money."

"With about one quarter of our people depending upon the government for support, with farm and industrial mechanizations increasing at a rapid rate (meaning a still greater unemployment problem), with continuing deficits, with loss of our great cotton and other markets, and facing as we do the suffering and misery of a possible major inflationary move (or as some fear, the chaos of debt repudiation), it is now absolutely essential that a trust-worthy effort be made to get the facts that will enable us to chart a safe and dependable course. We must have full employment and the job hunting the man, instead of an unnaturally closed labor market. Such an improved condition will follow land value taxation, as this study will show to the satisfaction of any reasonable person."

"It might be well to remark that it is not the profits of speculation in land and natural resources which do the damage, for like the stock market, very few succeed in 'cashing in'. Our trouble comes from the holding out of use land for speculative profits, which in the last analysis can never be realized. Great portions of our domain lie fallow and unused. Analysis will show that this is what does the damage."

We are in perfect accord with the motives of this interesting research and wish it every success. Those who desire to enroll should write to 1305 Hibernia Bank Building, New Orleans, La.

A FREE COPY of LAND AND FREEDOM is an invitation to become a subscriber.

Correspondence

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

A friend of mine gave me a copy of LAND AND FREEDOM, and I was so favorably impressed by its contents that I am enclosing \$2 for a year's subscription.

Roslindale, Massachusetts.

WALTER A. VERNEY.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Here's a true story I heard last night:

Among questions asked by the school teacher of a group of youngsters was this:

"What are taxes?" A little six-year old girl answered: "It's what you pay for having something."

Arlington, Va.

ELIZABETH MAGIE PHILLIPS.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I welcome the comment by Mr. Henry J. Foley on my letter suggesting that we give more consideration to the use of demountable structures, as a means of advancing the cause of land value socialization. Mr. Foley is an excellent writer. I have enjoyed some of his contributions to this paper.

His reply to my suggesting that the Fort Wayne Housing Plan is the beginning of a movement which Single Taxers should give thought to, is by no means an answer. It merely demonstrates that he, as yet, has not given serious thought to the matter.

He, as well as the editors of LAND AND FREEDOM, know that I do not seek to exempt land from taxation. The fact that the lots at Fort Wayne are exempt is only an incident of the Fort Wayne Plan. The government, through the Housing Authority, has taken these lots into its possession. Naturally, the government does not tax itself. When it is seen advisable to sell these structures to individuals, and the purchaser places them on leased land in our rural areas, the owner of the land will continue to pay taxes on the land, but in several states, the structure, being a chattel, will be tax exempt.

Mr. Foley doubts "if the demountable structure would ever be possible on a large scale in our civilization." I am certain that Mr. Foley does not wish to continue a civilization which makes paupers of the producers and millionaires of the drones. Are we to infer from his letter that no society worthy of the name can exist unless men gather in pig-piles and live on top of each other, with the filth of the slums reeking in their nostrils? His suggestion that the demountable structure would return us to the civilization of the wandering Arab, is not new. Nearly all persons, when the subject is first brought to their attention, make the same comment. Only after they have made a detailed study of the matter do they discover that, strange as it may seem, the general use of demountable structures would have a tendency to check the mobility of the race.

That portion of Mr. Foley's letter devoted to consideration of the effects which decentralization would have upon his personal welfare, has no place in a discussion of a social problem. However, if the decentralization of population is going to ruin Mr. Foley, he should stop advocating Single Tax, for Henry George saw that its adoption would tend to depopulate our cities and spread our people out over the land.

Mr. Foley concludes, quite correctly, saying, "We must let the people know that the private collection of land rent is robbery—" Is it not reasonable to expect that, when a large portion of our home owners lease the sites for their homes they will be brought face to face with the land rent problem and, therefore, can more easily be taught the Georgian Doctrine of Taxation?

Eric, Michigan.

ROBERT L. MCCAIG.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Your excellent number is just received and much enjoyed.

The enclosed clipping, from the *Providence Bulletin*, shows that taxation is just now being looked into in Rhode Island.

FLORENCE GARVIN.