

The Worst Monopoly

Dear Sirs:

Among the promises that we, the people of the United States, made to ourselves and to posterity in the Preamble to the Constitution was one to establish justice—that greatest of human aims. But the adoption of neither our Constitution nor our Bill of Rights resulted in the attainment of this aim.

Indeed, to those same forefathers, to whom we unstintingly give credit for our wonderful Declaration of Rights, must we, unfortunately, charge statutes and institutions that directly oppose the grand principles enunciated in that declaration and nullify their application.

They declared for the principle of justice (the only possible meaning of which must be equality of opportunity), while enacting laws that permitted one to charge another for living on the earth. Those laws still continue to operate and maintain a condition of slavery worse in some respects than chattel slavery—worse because more widespread and insidious, because not understood.

Lincoln understood both, and said, "The land should never be the possession of any man, corporation, or unfriendly government, any more than air or water."

Lincoln freed the slaves. But the 13th Amendment covers more than chattel slavery. It says, "Neither slavery, nor *involuntary servitude* shall exist."

It would be unthinkable to normal men that we should ever again put the black man back into slavery. But we have never understood that *involuntary servitude* exists universally in our "free" land because one man must pay tribute to another in the form of "ground rent" for the right to live, one of the rights which we consider inalienable.

The object of the 13th Amendment can only be realized through government collection of all ground rent.

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