

and believing that we are moving toward the collectivist's aim of complete extinction of social power through absorption by the State, he says:

"It may be in place to remark here the essential identity of the various extant forms of collectivism. The superficial distinctions of Fascism, Bolshevism, Hitlerism, are the concern of journalists and publicists; the serious student sees in them only the one root-idea of a complete conversion of social power into State power."

The author bitterly opposes the government taking over public utilities and other public monopolies, or any other industries, as he sees the centralized government "managing them with ever increasing corruption, inefficiency and prodigality, and finally resorting to a system of forced labor." I personally believe that under the *present* system public utilities cannot be properly regulated, as they control the government. The citizen is on the horns of a dilemma of choosing to be exploited on the one hand by public utilities and being governed by them in addition, or allowing the State to own and operate them.

Nock, as stated before, carefully distinguishes the State from government; showing one being based on force and theft, and the other based on the consent of the governed; the State being an instrument for exploitation of one class by another, and government being an instrument for the protection of liberty and security and justice between individuals. He carefully shows that from the earliest days of history conquerors always confiscated the land and natural resources, compelling the conquered to pay tribute. That only the assumption of the justice of things as they are, aided by the school system, the press and the churches, prevent the people from examining the right of those who by conquest or theft parcelled out the land, and continue to levy tribute on those who wish to use it. He shows that William the Conqueror invaded England and divided its land among his followers. He shows that the foul factory system of England—and incidentally ours—could not have grown up except that the people had been denied access to the land. He shows how the Indians in America were wiser than we are in the use of the land.

One of the fundamental reasons for the American Revolution, Nock contends, was the desire on the part of many of the leading colonists to obtain access to the vast land of the west, England having in 1736 forbade the colonists to take up land lying westward of the source of any river flowing through the Atlantic seaboard. He makes clear that "land speculation may be put down as the first major industry established in Colonial America." He shows the ideal of the Declaration of Independence and Thomas Jefferson for a free people with free access to the land.

Our author believes, pointing the Single Tax remedy, that "Our Enemy the State," can be shorn of its power, until it is merely a government "of the people, by the people, for the people." He gives enough of the Henry George theory so that those who have the intelligence can understand, and those who desire the full argument on behalf of the Single Tax are pointed to "Progress and Poverty" for study. He succinctly states:

"The first postulate of fundamental economics is that man is a land-animal, deriving his subsistence wholly from land. His entire wealth is produced by the application of labor and capital to land; no form of wealth known to man can be produced in any other way. Hence, if his free access to land be shut off by legal preemption, he can apply his labor and capital only with the landholder's consent, and on the landholder's terms; in other words, it is at this point, and this point only, that exploitation becomes practicable."

and bitingly holds:

"it is interesting to observe that although all our public policies would seem to be in process of exhaustive review, no publicist has anything to say about the State system of land-tenure. This is no doubt the best evidence of its importance."

Nock, of course, believes in free trade. He says of tariffs:

"We all know pretty well, probably, that the primary reason for a tariff is that it enables the exploitation of the domestic consumer by a process indistinguishable from sheer robbery."

Though he adds in a footnote:

"It must be observed, however, that free trade is impracticable so long as land is kept out of free competition with industry in the labor-market."

He does not sufficiently show to one unfamiliar with the Single Tax theory, how society by taking the economic rent would simplify the government and do away with hordes of government officials. A fuller discussion of that, with a few examples of how the Single Tax would eliminate tens of thousands of custom officials, income tax investigators, etc., and the present horde of bureaucrats who are helping the unemployed (sic), would have made it clearer to the uninitiated reader.

Nock pleads for the small subdivisions of government where each citizen can take part, and learn self-reliance and the pride of citizenship by actually solving local problems—rather than having a centralized bureau dominate, control and possibly enslave. He explains the continuance of our present system as follows:

"The persistence of our unstable and iniquitous economic system is not due to the power of accumulated capital, the force of propaganda, or to any force or combination of forces commonly alleged as its cause. It is due solely to a certain set of terms in which men think of the opportunity to work; they regard this opportunity as something to be given. Nowhere is there any other idea about it than that the opportunity to apply labor and capital to natural resources for the production of wealth is not in any sense a right but a concession. This is all that keeps our system alive. When men cease to think in those terms, the system will disappear, and not before."

The future is not as dark as Nock sees it—and his book put into the hands of 10,000 editors and teachers of the country, thinking business and professional men, might help stave off the coming despotism. This book in the hands of one man—Franklin D. Roosevelt—and studied and understood by him—would stop the growing bureaucracy, for while Roosevelt is a politician and wants re-election (I believe his motives are sincere) his understanding of the way out of the depression is darkened by too much counsel, by a "brain trust," which now more clearly is seen to be what I called it, almost two years ago, "brain dust."

This book if carefully read by those with intelligence will be found as startling and as devastating as the establishment of the fact that the world was round or of Newton's law of gravitation.

Men of America, I believe, are still lovers of liberty—though in desperation to find an economic solution of the depression they may have acquiesced or submitted to experiments economic and governmental, along the road of State despotism. The men and women of America, will not, I believe, sell their birthright of liberty for a mess of pottage.—HARRY WEINBERGER, of the New York Bar.

## Correspondence

FROM THE SON OF JUDGE ROBERT MINOR

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Mr. E. P. Haye tells me that you have asked for an outline of the life of my father, Robert Berkeley Minor, who died here June 19, 1935, in his eighty-fourth year. His last illness interrupted his twenty-third year as judge of the 57th District Court of Texas, and a half century of earnest effort on behalf of the Single Tax movement. Manuscripts found among his papers give evidence of his repeated attempts to secure legislation enacting its principles.

This is written in his library, and round about are many volumes of Henry George. All are worn and thumb marked. One, of "Progress and Poverty," became so tattered in use that it required rebinding to preserve the copious notes and marginal references his interest inspired. From the edges of them all hang the straggly ends of page markers—grocery store string—marking his favorite passages. I believe you will understand as I did what he meant when he whispered, rather wistfully, just before he died, "There is so much to do—so much."



He was born in the ancestral home, Edgewood, Hanover County, in the James River country of Virginia, in 1851. The great cry for enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law sounded from the North in that year and grew to a rumble of gunfire during his "conditioning years." In the sudden joining of battle at Chancellorsville his older brothers, soldiers in the Confederacy, dug a hole in the ground and sat him in it when he was caught there as a messenger boy of twelve, come to bring them fresh meat. His and his family's hatred of the institution of slavery was equalled only by their devotion to the cause of the States' right to settlement of their own problems.

The Reconstruction, striking desolation upon his people and hopelessness upon his youthful spirit, set him off to the new frontier, Texas, in 1878. He taught a school for boys near San Antonio for several years, then came here as clerk in the Maverick Land Office. The old files of that institution are mines of color in stories of that and earlier periods of Texas history, when the vast domain of the cattleman and sheep rancher was disputed by the first dirt farmers. Strangely intercurrent just here, there came to his attention at this time some reflections by a San Francisco newspaper writer on "Our Land and Land Policy." Little from this Western writer's pen escaped him thereafter.

With a background of courses in Latin and Greek, in Engineering and in Law in the University of Virginia, my father chose the latter and was admitted to the bar in 1886. He became a stout champion of the United Labor Party led by Henry George in far away New York in that year. He never lost this enthusiasm. Ever cautious against fanaticism he would tear at the Georgian preachments ruthlessly, testing, weighing, seeking conflicts with its enemies, always strengthening his convictions—and winning converts.

He was elected City Attorney of San Antonio in the nineties, returned to private practice at the turn of the century, headed the state board that codified the jumbled laws of Texas in 1910, and in 1912 was elected to the judgeship he gave up in death.

San Antonio, Texas.

JOE H. MINOR.

### THE CALIFORNIA CAMPAIGN

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

The California campaign is warming up rather rapidly even though the election is nearly a year away. Our enemies are unmasking their batteries. Coming into the open we have against us the State Chamber of Commerce, State Board of Equalization (controlling among other matters the administration of the sales tax), the various Real Estate Boards and some farm organization officials.

On the other hand we find an apparently united body of labor organizations, all leading bodies being unanimously committed to our measure, earnest and intelligent support from the entire number of Labor papers, some twenty or more, scattered newspaper support in addition, as well as the aid of certainly a big percentage of the Epic group.

We have virtually three regular offices in the State, the center of work. In San Francisco Mr. Noah D. Alper is in charge at 83 McAllister Street; in Los Angeles, Franklin Lowney at Philharmonic Building, and in San Diego, E. M. Stangland at 2660 National Avenue. These are the centers of distribution of all our literature.

It seems appropriate that the first wide struggle for the attainment of a large share of the ideas of Henry George should be the State which first saw his great production. For all the prior attempts or successes have been on a small scale or did not involve sufficient revenues to signify all that we would have them mean. Here, however, we have five per cent of the people of the United States and our measure, taking taxation off tangible personal property and improvements, involves a shift of not far from one hundred fifty millions in taxes and a contribution to the State and its subordinate jurisdictions of fifty to sixty per cent of the economic rental value.

This measure will be fought with all the virulence which would have greeted an attempt to make a complete transfer of all other

taxes to land values, and the question arises why should not therefore the fight have been made for the whole rental value. The answer is easy. We can only succeed by the votes of those who are willing to join us. To them we have proof to make. They would not have been willing to go the whole distance. They apparently were and are willing to carry into effect the present undertaking. We are in a war, which must be fought much as would be a military campaign. We can remind ourselves of the words of General N. B. Forrest, who is quoted as saying that the whole art of war was "to get there fustest with the mostest men." If with an appeal to the majority we can get half way today we can leave the future to take care of itself. If our plan of reform is correct it will justify itself so that there will be no fear of a backward step.

Will we succeed in the present campaign? I can assure you the California fight will not be ended till we do win. As for the present, our greatest hopes are founded upon the panicky fears of our opponents, who realize the strength of our call upon the public. The papers of the State fifty times over have disclosed this attitude.

The greatest restriction upon our activity is found in the want of money. While our opponents have a right to make demands upon the longest pocketbooks in the State we work with relatively almost nothing. Our friends in the State supply half of what should be our minimum necessities. We have received of late appreciated and increasing sums from scattered friends throughout the United States, but vastly too little for our real needs.

We cannot say too strongly that the fight we are making is the fight of the whole United States, and that all contributors are helping themselves and even their children's children.

Finally I am glad to note that Mrs. Anna George De Mille is now in Los Angeles, and will shortly aid us in San Francisco. We count greatly upon her assistance especially with the Women's Clubs. May we hope that all friends will consider California for their next vacation ground and help us by their presence and money!

Palo Alto, Calif.

JACKSON H. RALSTON.

### SOCIALISTS HELP IN READING, PA.

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

In presuming to make suggestions about Single Tax progress I am somewhat influenced by an unusual experience: The City of Reading, Pa., now systematically assesses real estate with separate land and improvement values, which is essential to the applying of Single Tax. The movement was started by the Reading Chamber of Commerce, in expectation of the so-called Pittsburgh law being extended to third class cities in Pennsylvania. The Chamber bore the expense of making sample appraisements of eight city blocks and employed the Manufacturer's Appraisal Co.; the different foot-frontage values, however, being determined by public meetings. These appraisements were made use of by succeeding Republican and Democratic city administrations, but they were not extended to the whole city as hoped for;—until a Socialist administration came in and immediately employed the same Manufacturer's Appraisal Co. in applying the Somer's system to the entire city. This was done after a friendly conference with our Chamber of Commerce Tax Committee.

How did this happen,—with Socialists notoriously unfriendly to Chambers of Commerce and distrustful of all their doings? Simply because Socialist leaders were convinced, by investigation, that it was a movement in good faith in a direction they wanted to go,—and they carried it through. I was Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce Committee and Single Tax was freely talked at this conference. Reading, Pa.

W. G. STEWART.

### WE DO NOT AGREE

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I am delighted to find Frank Chodorov saying in your last issue that such reform as Abolition are based entirely upon sentiment and that their advocates have nothing to teach. This is correct; and it