In 1943, a handful of books appeared that helped nourish the revival of the individualist political movement in twentieth-century America; most prominent among them were Isabel Paterson’s *The God of the Machine*, Ayn Rand’s *The Fountainhead*, and Albert Jay Nock’s *Memoirs of a Superfluous Man*. These voices broke the silence, sounding out for personal freedom during America’s most collectivist era.

Nock was well known to the “remnant” (as he called it), in no small part because of an earlier work, *Our Enemy, The State*, and for his valiant work as editor of *The Freeman* and *The American Mercury*. His *Memoirs* are, like Rand’s 1943 novel, *Atlas shrugged*, yet widely recognized as a classic 50 years later. What better way to celebrate its anniversary than to print, for the first time, the very words of Nock himself?

### Lectures

**Understanding the State**

*by Albert Jay Nock*

When one mentions Albert Jay Nock, what most likely immediately comes to mind is his hatred for the State. Consider his well-known quip:

“Taking the State wherever found, striking into its history at any point, one sees no way to differentiate the activities of its founders, administrators, and beneficiaries from those of a professional-criminal class.”

Nock’s first attempt to present his views on the State appeared in a six part article in *The Freeman* in 1923. Probably his best known book is *Our Enemy the State*, published in 1935. It is certainly true that Nock wrote a great deal about the State. Under his editorship, *The Freeman* (1920–24) was well known for its anti-statist views. Publisher Benjamin W. Huebsch described Nock’s series as “summing up this paper’s attitude towards the State.” His columns in the New Freeman in 1930 and 1931 and in the American Mercury between 1935 and 1939 (under the column-heading, “The State of the Union”) were similarly strongly pre-occupied. The four lectures published below are the last known sustained comments Nock ever made on the State. The similarities and differences they have with his earlier essays make them interesting. They also give us a glimpse of a conversational style quite distinct from his well-known stylistic acumen.

Nock’s vehemence about the State made it stand out above other, equally important, concerns. He sometimes seemed to have lost sight of the positive things he really valued. His readers often saw only his negativity and his seemingly sole focus on attacking the State. There was in fact a great deal more to him. He was deeply concerned about excellence, freedom, and individualism. He had an abiding regard for the preservation of the best of civilization and the promotion of a “humane life.” Individual responsibility and moral autonomy were key to a code of action summarized in the title of one of his best essays, “On Doing the Right Thing.” Nock’s emphasis on society, the “economic means,” and “social power,” hinted at a positive alternative to State power that we might describe as Civil Society today. In the end, though, Nock’s own anti-statism has distracted friends and foes alike from his much broader, and indeed quite radical, social criticism. ²

And so, there is something terribly incomplete about such a narrow focus on the State. A little over a year before Nock gave the lectures reprinted below, Harvard professor Carl J. Friedrich pointed out the cost of demonizing the State. He explicitly linked Nock with an American tradition that included Jefferson, Emerson and the I.W.W. Obliquely referring to Nock’s book, Friedrich wrote:

> But if the state is chided as “our enemy,” this is in fact only the reverse side of the same medal, — for it amounts in fact to a devil theory of the State. Now the State as Satan is still the State as Leviathan, only looked at with disapproval. While the disapprobation is an improvement from one viewpoint, the satanic view is nevertheless objectionable, because of its exaggeration of the modern state’s place in man’s life. While from our...
vantage point, it may not exaggerate the State’s place, it certainly can send one down a road with no alternatives and positive proposals.

So there is a danger that these previously unknown lectures on the State might merely solidify a narrow and unfortunate perception of Nock’s broader brilliance. One might prefer, for example, to publish Nock’s nearly completed study of Alexander Hamilton; it might have been a fitting contrast and complement to his wonderful Jefferson. There were apparently several other manuscripts he destroyed just before his death in 1945. Such is life, and those were his wishes.

Nevertheless, these lectures are delightful little pieces quite different from the polished style for which Nock is known. Delivered just after his 70th birthday, they do round out his views of the State. They will surprise these readers familiar with Nock’s writings, for here we have him speaking to us. What is printed below is taken from a transcript of his actual lectures; the four lectures are long and are often awkward, as is common with spoken presentations. Nock was a consummate stylist; his writing is justly regarded as among the finest in American letters. Memoirs of a Superfluous Man, for instance, is a recognized classic. While there is something quite attractive about these very colloquial, almost off-the-cuff lectures, Nock no doubt would have been acutely embarrassed to see them in print.

These lectures are undoubtedly affected by other factors as well. They were presented toward the end of his life, for example, to publishing Nock’s nearly completed study of Alexander Hamilton; it might have been a fitting contrast and complement to his wonderful Jefferson. There were apparently several other manuscripts he destroyed just before his death in 1945. Such is life, and those were his wishes. Nevertheless, these lectures are delightful little pieces quite different from the polished style for which Nock is known. Delivered just after his 70th birthday, they do round out his views of the State. They will surprise these readers familiar with Nock’s writings, for here we have him speaking to us. What is printed below is taken from a transcript of his actual lectures; the four lectures are long and are often awkward, as is common with spoken presentations. Nock was a consummate stylist; his writing is justly regarded as among the finest in American letters. Memoirs of a Superfluous Man, for instance, is a recognized classic. While there is something quite attractive about these very colloquial, almost off-the-cuff lectures, Nock no doubt would have been acutely embarrassed to see them in print.

These lectures were found during research for my collection of Nock’s essays publishing in 1991 by Liberty Fund, The State of the Union: Essays in Social Criticism. They had been transcribed and filed away, undiscovered for nearly fifty years. Nock gave them at the Henry George School of Social Science in New York City. They were given on October 29, November 12, November 19, and November 26, 1940.

The original transcript is incomplete and nothing is known about the circumstances of its development. I have edited it only very lightly. I made some of the long and awkward statements more easily understandable by adding or changing the punctuation the transcription reader used. I corrected mistakes and adjusted lacunae in the transcript. As you will see, the lectures remain the spoken presentation of Albert Jay Nock. What is presented here is virtually identical to the original transcript.

— Charles H. Hamilton

ONE:

The Nature of the State

There are many more of you here than I expected to see. I was counting on a dozen perhaps or something like that. I am very glad that you are here, of course, but I feel a little embarrassed because it may be that you are expecting something that I may not be able to give you: something in the way of a popular lecture, something interesting, or in the way of entertainment. I can’t give you that because I am neither interesting nor entertaining in the first place, and in the second place, the subject is not entertaining at all. It is a very difficult one. I will tell you why presently and I will show you why. And so I can only do with you as I used to do in the old days when I was a university professor of politics and American history [Bard College, 1931–33]. I shall talk with you very informally and we will get on as best we can.

I do not presume to tell you anything. It would be rather impertinent, and I do not think anybody can ever tell anybody else anything effectively. The most that one can do is to put a person in the way of getting something for himself. What education you get is what you pick up and store away. It is not what somebody throws at you. And that is all that I am presuming to do in these lectures, all I ever would, as a matter of fact, presume to do.

The subject is the State and I think we would best know what it is we are talking about. We are not talking about New York State, the State of Pennsylvania, or anything like that. Nor are we talking about any species of State. We are not talking about the monarchical State, the Republican State, or anything of that kind. We use the word as a genetic word under which all these are grouped. That is where the difficulty comes in, when you are asked to regard the State as an institution, because it is very difficult to get an objective view of anything that is born into you. As much as anything, because you don’t try, you don’t have any curiosity about it. We cannot think where we have no curiosity about it.

Now, you were born into the State. For that reason it is a very difficult thing to envisage it as an institution. When you are born, the State takes cognizance of it and gives you a certificate. The doctor who attends your mother is certified by the State. If you are born in a hospital, the State supervises that hospital. You grow up a little and set about trying to educate yourself. Well, the State supervises that. All the way through school and college the State has control all the time over the institutions that you attend. And if you meet some likely young man, or some likely young woman, and think about getting married, the State supervises that.

If you go into business of any kind, the Lord help you. The State tells you what you can do, what you can’t do, and sits at your elbow to see that you do not do this and you do that. The State taxes you very severely, takes away your profits at its own will. After you have had about enough of that sort of thing and get ready to fold your hands, the State doesn’t let you die without taking cognizance of that. It issues the death certificate and you can’t be buried without a permit from the State.

Being in so intimate association with the State all through one’s life, one takes it as a matter of use and wont, and hasn’t any curiosity about it.

We might go back four hundred years to a time when the State was very weak. It hardly touched the individual at all anywhere. There was another institution that did touch him. That was the Church. The Church was exceedingly strong and every individual was documented into the Church and into his grave and presumably into the Kingdom of Heaven, or somewhere else, exactly as one is documented by the State today.
As you know, with the weakening of the Church, the State began to grow in power. Men began to think in terms of secular politics and for a time there was a very superstitious holdover of vestiges: that the State derived its being from God and that the ambassadors of the State exercised their functions by what was called divine right. Sir Robert Filmer of England wrote a very eloquent treatise on that. Later on the idea began to spread that the State derived its authority from the people. The French Revolution exploded that idea all over Europe so that is the current theory in those countries that call themselves republics.

Then it was that people began to raise questions about the origin and character of the State. How did the State come into

What education you get is what you pick up and store away. It is not what somebody throws at you.

being? If it is a divine institution, if it was something taken up in Almighty hands and planted here, that is one thing. That idea is gone and the State is presumably deriving its authority from the people. Where did this institution originate? What is its primary function? Several people had answers for that. Rousseau had one, the American economist Carey had another, as did Hobbes, and so on. Rousseau thought the State originated in some form of social contract, some agreement among persons who had formed a society.

It never occurred to anyone until the latter part of the last century to apply the historical method to those questions. The historical method being this: to go back on the trail of the institution as far as there was any record available and analyze its appearance at every possible point in its progress to see what the factors were in its composition. As you know, in studying any relation of cause and effect, if you find a single invariable antecedent, that is very probably the cause of the effect you are studying. Anyway, these are the things you turn to in the first instance and examine with the greatest care.

A professor at Graz, Austria, [Ludwig Gumplowicz, 1838–1909] was the first to employ this method, although one or two scholars had fought over adumbrations but they were mostly speculative. All these efforts to answer questions regarding the genesis and function of the State before the time I speak of were pure guesswork. Rousseau made the best guess he could, but it was a guess. It was not until the historical method was applied that any real light was shed on the State’s origin.

A single invariable antecedent was found. Every association of human beings has established some sort of regime, and there are two historical regimes that were entirely unlike when subjected to analysis.

I wonder which one I had better begin by describing. Perhaps the simpler. In certain regimes — as Mr Jefferson found among the Indians — there was a very high type of social organization. But the actual regime — what we might call the political regime — contemplated only those crimes and irregularities which are put down by the common conscience of men, pretty much all over the world, as being such. These regimes interfered no further with the individual, no further than that. For example, take the Indians as Mr Jefferson found them. Their institutional regime punished murder, arson, assault, fraud, theft and such crimes as the Scottish philosophers say the conscience of mankind designated as crimes. Beyond that there were no categories of crime. The institution didn’t interfere with the individual at any other point.

There was one exception. They punished adultery. Now there has since been a change in the view of the status of women, a considerable change. The punishment of adultery in those communities was then on the theory that a woman was property. So in disturbing marital relations you were infringing on a right of property and that has come down curiously into our law and into some of our ceremonial practices. For instance, there is the Church of England and its American agency, the Episcopal Church, where the status of women as property is maintained from beginning to end of the marriage ceremony. She comes into the church as the property of her father and the Church asks “Who gives this woman to this man.” The father says “I do,” and she becomes the property of her husband. That is an interesting angle and our laws have a similar vestigial holdover in the provisions they make against adultery and against sexual relations between unmarried persons.

Elsewhere, there was something very different, a second type of regime which had a very distinct origin, very distinctly discernible, which the other had not. And it filled a primary function which the other did not fill. It originated invariably in conquest and confiscation which the other did not. Its primary purpose, everywhere it was found, was to maintain the stratification of society into an owning and exploiting class, and a propertyless and dependent class.

The first type of regime, the one prevailing among the Powhatans, the Mannahoacs, and the Monacans of Virginia, as Mr Jefferson testified, was nothing like that at all. It didn’t originate in conquest; there was no confiscation of anything; and the society was not stratified in that way.

Well, to account for those differences between regimes, some people began looking back to see what the sole invariable antecedent of that fact was, just as men did in the case of certain tropical fevers, the Dengue fever, for instance. It was thought for a long time that a person got it by contagion, but there were later instances of contagion where the person exposed did not get the fever. After a while, someone thought of tracing its origin to the bite of insects or mosquitoes. That was done but a lot of people who were bitten by mosquitoes didn’t get the fever. But they did find that the bite of one particular kind of mosquito was invariably followed by a case of Dengue fever. That was positive evidence. Then they took negative evidence; people who were bitten by all kinds of mosquitoes except one didn’t get the fever. That was negative testimony.

So the historical method began by hunting out the sole invariable antecedent. It was found in the opportunity for exploitation, the opportunity for economic exploitation. With the one type of regime there was no such opportunity. For ex-
ample, in the hunting tribe there isn’t any way you can make a man hunt for you. He’ll go off in the woods and forget to come back, so that economic exploitation was not possible. And wherever economic exploitation was impossible, this particular type of regime prevailed under which the individual was perfectly free. So long as he didn’t steal, didn’t kill, didn’t burn somebody’s place down, or didn’t commit some kind of violence, the State did not interfere.

On the other hand, wherever there was opportunity for economic exploitation, you found the State exercising control — a great many measures of control — over the individual with a view of maintaining this division or stratification of society into two classes. The conclusion is obvious, that exploitation was and is the primary function of this type of regime. You all get that distinction clearly, don’t you.

Now it seems to me that it might be a very good idea to give the one type of regime the name of government — the Indians had government, certainly — and call the other type the State. That may be arbitrary but at all events it will be useful. The State then is a human institution. It is not divine; we don’t take any stock in that anymore. It’s an institution which invariably originated in conquest and confiscation. That is the first point I would ask you to remember.

When William of Normandy came over to England in 1066, the first thing he did, you know, was to occupy the land. And of course, as you know from your studies here in this school, any person who preempts and occupies the land controls the labor of everybody who is living on that land. He divided up the land into baronies and distributed it around among those other banditti that he brought over with him. They constituted an aristocracy and made the other people work for them. That was economic exploitation.

Now you might say, “How does that apply in the case of the United States?” Well, it applies in this way, that the conquering and confiscating party was on the inside instead of the outside. We were a colony of Great Britain. Great Britain rather over-played its hand and we rebelled against them and took by conquest the land we were living on. General Cornwallis and his forces had to get out and so had everybody who expressed loyalty to Great Britain. They all had to get out. The holdings of land that were established under the British government were confiscated by the conquering party.

The State, then, is an institution originating invariably in conquest and confiscation. No State in all history ever came into existence in any other way. Its primary function, historically, is to maintain the stratification of society into a ruling and owning class, and a propertyless and dependent class. There is evidence of it in every newspaper you pick up; there is no enormity that any State will not commit before it will relinquish that primary function. It will fight to the death for the right to maintain the stratification of society in that way. And I say that it is something you can prove to yourself by reading the accounts of the doings of various States from day to day.

You know, Mr Jefferson said in a letter [January 30, 1787] to Madison when he was speaking about the Indians that they didn’t have any government. They did have government, but they didn’t have the kind of government that Jefferson knew anything about. He said in this letter to Mr Madison that he wasn’t sure but that their way was the best. I believe that we may think so too. He said that it was probably impractical with any large amount of population, but I don’t know whether that is so. It is impracticable whenever the opportunity for economic exploitation steps in. That is the point.

I wish I could go over all this again with you. It is something that people aren’t at all used to and it must be frightfully hard for you to follow. It is very nice of you to make the effort as I see you are making it. My time is really up. The next time we meet, which I understand will be in two weeks, we will consider some of the relations between the State and the individual. After this when I speak of the State you will think of a certain definite type of institution that had a certain definite invariable origin and is committed primarily to one definite ascertainable primary purpose. All right then, we will next consider the relations between the State and the individual and we will let the Indians go.

TWO: The Citizen and the State

It is really a great pleasure, ladies and gentlemen, to be with you again. I had such an agreeable reception the last time I spoke, it made me feel very much at home. You all were aware that the subject was difficult because the idea of the State is so unusual, so much out of our common line of thinking. By your attention and consideration you made it so easy for me to speak about it. I have begun to feel perfectly at home with you.

Now you remember that the last time I spoke we ascertained that, applying the historical method to the history of government, every people had a regime, but that those regimes were sharply divided into two types. We might, for convenience, call Type A the State and Type B the government. I am aware that is arbitrary and you might do as you like about it. I do not insist on it. What interests me is calling your attention to the very sharp differentiation between the two. They are differentiated in origin: Type A originated always in conquest and confiscation; Type B apparently never did. They are differentiated in primary purpose: the primary purpose of Type A is to maintain a system of economic exploitation. Type A is an institution which is forced upon a defeated group by a conquering group, and it has for its object the keeping of that conquered group in a state of economic subjection. It is differentiated also because Type A is always a class state and Type B never is. So you can see that those are three very distinct marks of differentiation.

This country has had an experience different from that of Europe. In Europe the regime Type A passed from the very
Wherever there was opportunity for economic exploitation, you found the State exercising control — a great many measures of control — over the individual with a view of maintaining this stratification of society.

preeminence. They put feudalism in the background and, as we say, took over.

It was just at the time that transition was going on that the regime Type A was imported to this country. It was an importation. We had here the Dutch State, the British State, the French State, and the Spanish State. They were all of this Type A. We of the United States have never known practically anything but the merchant type of Type A. Our State has always been a merchant State and it came about in that way. The ruling or governing class under this regime sent over its representatives, as you know, and sent over the exploitable material with them or under them. It organized expeditions of indentured persons who came over here and for a certain length of time worked for these merchant companies. The Massachusetts Bay Colony, for example, had the whole apparatus of a State, of a regime of their own. The Bay Colony and its Governors exercised every function of a State. There was a State within a State: the distant State of Britain and the colonized or offshoot State here. But they were all of the same type so we have known nothing but that one type. We have had no god-kings; we have had no kings; we have had no nobility; we have only known the one kind of regime.

S
o much for the a priori examination of these two types. Now looking at it a posteriori, you see evidence of the character of both these types. Type A's anti-social character is demonstrated in various ways by various things. You notice, I presume, that the regime here in the United States always has great reluctance to move in any direction that we would call social. It acts for any social purpose only under great pressure. Now that is common with the A type of regime everywhere. That is one piece of evidence. John Bright said that he had known the British House of Commons to do some good things in his lifetime, but he never knew it to do a good thing just because it was a good thing. I doubt very much if you can recall at the moment any instances where the American Congress ever did a good thing just because it was a good thing, or the legislature in Albany, or any functioning body of the A type of regime. Furthermore, if the Type A regime were social in its character, it would take great pains to safeguard the interests of individuals. You know that the A type of regime only safeguards individuals within limits. If the interests of individuals collide with the primary purpose of the regime, it is always the individual who has to give way. That is the second piece of evidence.

Then another piece of evidence is the immense and shocking disparity between the public and private character of the Type A regime's functionaries. We have just had an election, a campaign, and I suppose you have noticed the straits to which the candidates were reduced — moral and intellectual straits — in order to carry their point. The functionary of the A type regime will, indeed he must, as circumstances require, lie, slander, steal and commit all sorts of acts which are held to be reprehensible in private persons, and which — as Count Tolstoy pointed out — many, as private persons, would never think of doing.

Finally, the fourth piece of evidence that I would ask you to consider is that the A type of State is not particularly eager to abolish crime, but it is very eager to maintain a monopoly of crime. The regime does not take any great pains to abolish crime. From experience, you all know that it monopolizes crime very closely. So there are four a posteriori bits of evidence as to the character of the A type of State.

You do not detect these differentiations a posteriori in the B type of regime any more than we do those differences we adduced a priori. So we are warranted, I think, in saying that the A type of regime — which I prefer to call the State as distinct from government — is not a social institution. On the contrary, the State is an anti-social institution and the operations of its functionaries are indistinguishable from those of a professional criminal class.

T
here is one little matter that I did not point out when I spoke before, because I wanted to see if it occurred to you. I know it did occur to one person who was here because I heard of it. You might say with good reason, "Well, all that is very good, very interesting, but after all, this is the Henry George School of Social Science and as representatives of Henry George's system of economics and ethics, what is in it for us?" "How does it concern us?" Well, you remember that the A type of regime never appears anywhere except where there is opportunity for economic exploitation. The primitive peasants never formed a regime of the A type because they were not exploitable. They did not have enough economic accumulation to be interesting to anyone, and what accumulation they did have spoiled too quickly. There was nothing permanent about it. So they never formed an organization of this A type. As I told you when I spoke the last time, the hunt-
ing peoples never formed one because there is no way to exploit a hunter. Now, you are in a much better position than I am to know that the economic side of Henry George’s teaching—if it were put into effect—would pretty well do away with economic exploitation. That is a very large part of your purpose of advocating it, I believe.

If that is so, just what effect would that have on a political organization of the A type? You see it comes pretty close to you after all, as students here. I think you should be very much interested. I think if you followed through with the exercise of the scientific imagination and supposed that George’s system were put into effect right here and now in this country, and then asked yourself what effect that would have here, there, and everywhere on our government, why I think you would find—as I have when I ascertained that for myself—that would be precious little of it left. The whole public business of the United States, if Henry George’s system were put into effect, could be done, I am quite sure, in the Senate Office Building.

Henry George never followed that out, so you are in very good company if you haven’t. He did not do it because in his time the historical method had never been applied to government, ascertaining its origin and function. That was after his day. For the same reason, Herbert Spencer did not follow that line of thought through. But I think if you followed it through with your own brains, just using your imagination on the results, you would see that it is a pretty important reason why you should go on considering the economic and ethical system of Henry George.

For example, I have here a very fine book. It is recently out, called The Dead End of Bureaucracy by Mr Lawrence Sullivan. To show you just something of the aggrandizements of the A type of State in this country in the past eight years—its centralization and its administration as personal government in the matter of executive orders—consider that during his first seven years Franklin D. Roosevelt issued 2,538 executive orders or an average of thirty every month. That is personal government for you! The past eight years were a time of emergency, so it was said. Well, Lincoln lived in a time of emergency. There was a very tidy civil war going on during his presidency. How many executive orders do you think he issued during that period? Two. Since 1933, 124 new federal agencies have been established in the country. The amount of civil employment in the executive branch of the United States government in the course of that time totals 959,146. The A type of State certainly came into its heyday recently.

There are certain superstitions about the State that have come down and which have a very distinct bearing on what we are talking about. In the days when the king was a god, the obedience which was rendered him and the interest which was felt in him was something that centered on a real belief, on an actual belief. Now, the superstition—the Germans call it Aberglaube, which is a much better word—which has emanated from that retains the devotion and the obedience towards the State even though the belief in it has evaporated. You know that Madame de Stael said she did not believe in ghosts, but she was afraid of them. That illustrates what I mean. The superstitions and the ensuing obediences and devotions related to the god-king remain.

The Romans sometimes deified their emperors after they were dead. The emperors themselves had no illusions. Vespasian Caesar, on his deathbed, said “I think I am become a God.” As an example of the beliefs and obediences relating to royalty, in 1607, a Regents professor of Civil Law at Cambridge said, “The king is above the law by his absolute power,” and at the time of Louis XIV, the great preacher Bossuet said, “Kings are gods and share, in a manner, the divine intelligence.” That was all very well as long as people believed it. Thus it was all very well for kings and nobility to surround themselves with pomp and circumstance and all that sort of thing. That belief very much died out and I believe it is not now shared by people. But the Aberglaube which comes down from that earlier time still goes on.

When the President appears before us we do not regard him, as William Jennings Bryan (a very fine man) did; he said that the President was the people’s hired man. We do not regard him in that way. There is a certain amount of superstitious reverence that goes out toward the President, and towards the Senate, whom you certainly would not deify if all of them died. I doubt very much if we would deify very many out of our House of Representatives. But still, if you see State occasions down there in the Capitol and watch the behavior of the crowd, you see the recrudescence of that superstition, that Aberglaube, which has come down from the past. When it has become settled among us that the king is not a god, that the President is not a god, that they do not represent God at all, but that they derive their functions from the people, well if that is the case, it seems to me that our attitude should be more in accordance with our actual beliefs.

Now, let me pass on to what I said I would talk about tonight and have time only to introduce, the relation of the individual to the State. There is one thing that I want to leave with you particularly and that proceeds from a consideration of the rights of the individual: whether they are natural or made by the government. You remember in the words of the Declaration of Independence, that Mr Jefferson said it was a self-evident truth that men were “endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.” They were born with them, and he went on to say that “to secure these rights governments are instituted among men.” Parenthetically, I may say the B type of government does just that and that is all it does.

Liberty 45
At the present time, the idea of the origin of human rights is, as you know, denied. That is at the bottom of all this folderol about totalitarianism, Nazism, fascism, and so on. If the doctrine of natural rights be true, the bottom drops right out of all those things. I won't go through that for you because you can see it for yourselves that if human beings have natural rights, then there can be no such thing as totalitarianism, Nazism, fascism, Communism, or socialism. It is a very large question of our time whether or not men have natural rights or whether the State gives them all the rights they have and is perfectly privileged to take away those rights or modify them at its own pleasure.

The theory that all rights are State-made comes from the German idealist philosophers in the last century. Hegel said, "The State alone possesses rights. The State is a supreme power, ultimate, and beyond appeal." You see how mystical the State is. "The State incarnates the divine idea upon earth," that is Hegel again. When you get down to Mussolini you find that the State embraces everything. Nothing outside the State has value. The State creates rights. Lenin, a man of philosophic turn with a great deal of strong common sense, puts it forcefully, saying that it is nonsense to make any pretense of reconciling the State and liberty. So there you have some testimony.

Let us look at it first in one way and then in another. Let us assume that all human rights are State-made. Then it comes to something like this. Looked at a priori, the people, none of whom have any rights, by hypothesis, appoint a regime made up of people like themselves. They have no rights either, no natural rights. That regime creates rights and then turns around and confers them on each individual of the lot by which it was appointed. Well, you know, ladies and gentlemen, I can't follow that logic, but there it is. I do not see how the ideas tally.

The regime in the case we have supposed is obviously only an agent. If you could say, as they used to, that the regime came right down from heaven, you would have a case. Then it would be easy. But if you dispute that and say that the regime is man-made, then, if I may use the term, you are right up against it. Because the people then appoint the regime as an agent, obviously the rights that the regime confers must come from somewhere, mustn't they? And where do they come from? The people who appointed the regime haven't them. The people who make up the regime haven't them. Yet they are somehow conferred by this regime which was appointed by those who have no rights and who have no rights in themselves.

Rights are somehow conferred upon the great mass who didn't have any rights to start with, so, as I say, it does not look as if that theory was tenable. But, you might say, "No, the rights do exist but the people surrender those rights to the regime." Well, do they surrender them outright or do they surrender them in trust? "Well," you say, "they surrender them in trust, must be." Then somehow they must have previously possessed them. So much for that. That is all from the a priori point of view. I cannot follow it myself and I do not expect you to, but there it is.

Now look at it a posteriori. Which comes first as a matter of history, custom or law? Apparently custom did because as far back as we can get among primitive peoples, all the laws they had were simply declaratory. They were made up out of the customs of the tribes. The common law of England — upon which our common law depends to a great extent — Blackstone said, was declaratory of the customs of the English people. So customs preceded law. If rights —property rights and all forms of civil rights — are conferred upon the individual by the regime through law, how is it that we find, before there was any law, such a keen sense of the thing that the law codifies, formulates, and declares; of what it was? You can puzzle that out. In the absence of some determining cause, it would be highly unlikely that there would be any uniformity in the decisions among regimes of various peoples, various nations. Yet we find a very singular uniformity in respect to rights. We find that they all are codified and declaratory of rights, the various rights of property, and the rights of protection against violence and any intrusion or trespass upon person or property. So, in that case, uniformity seems to be evidential. It must be, because if on one side of the earth you find a codification of the same articles of conduct that you find over here on the other side of the earth, there must be some anticipatory sense which is responsible for the form that those codifications took. That seems reasonable. So as civilization advances there is simply a fuller recognition of what we call natural rights and better enforcement of them by the regime. Here, there, and everywhere, that is the case.

Well, now, let me furnish you with the main fact I have been dwelling on. The doctrine of natural rights is important because it is questioned everywhere. If the matter is not settled affirmatively, the collectivists have all the best of it. There is no denying that. I furnished you with that outline very sketchily and, perhaps, unsatisfactorily. At any rate, you can supplement it for yourself from different authorities. My aim was simply to outline a procedure to establish the fact that the Declaration of Independence was quite correct when it said that man is endowed with certain inalienable rights.
I will go on the next time I speak to you with something further in the consideration of the relations of the individual to the State and the government.

THREE: The Nature of Natural Rights

Speaking of the relations between the State and the citizen last week, we touched upon the doctrine of natural rights. I didn’t try to tell you anything about it. I muddled a few vague words and I did it deliberately. I rather think you may have been disappointed, but, as I say, I did it on purpose.

As I told you earlier, I was for a time sort of a onehorse professor, a university professor. That is to say I had the title and all it amounted to. I was living in Europe then. I would come over each year for a couple of months and give two courses. I was titular professor in politics and this was what I used to do with my students. I would say to them, “Now, this matter of natural rights is pretty fundamental. If there isn’t anything in it, why we have to shut up shop. If there is something in it, we might go on.” I put it that way as I wouldn’t quite put it to you because their primary object was getting a degree and that is not yours. What your primary object is we will try to see in a moment. I’d say to these young men, “I’m not going to see anything more of you for two weeks. I am going to give you a lot of references on the subject, not books, but men’s names. You have got to root out the books yourselves.” On the negative side I gave them every name from St. Augustine and Archelaus down to Jeremy Bentham and Carlyle. Even Matthew Arnold. What I owe him is beyond explanation, but when he was talking about the State and about natural rights he talked the most dreadful bilge you ever listened to. On the affirmative side I gave them similar references by name. I said “You come back here in two weeks with a précis of every argument indicated there. Every one. Then we will take it up, discuss it and see what we can make of it.”

That plan worked very well and the young men were able to understand the doctrine of natural rights, to understand what was said against it and all that sort of thing. In a word, they were put in the way of quite a good education on that subject. So that was the reason why I didn’t say very much about it last week and I am not saying much about it now.

We are in a position, I think, to mark out now the next stage in our line of progress. What is the ultimate thing that you are aiming at here? Is it the Single Tax? No. No, it isn’t. You all know that. Is it the Law of Equal Freedom? No. What, then, is it? Why, it is the fundamental condition of human happiness, general human happiness. Henry George was a good deal wiser than a good many of his disciples have been. When somebody told him that the Single Tax was not a panacea, he said, “Yes, I know that very well, but freedom is, and the Single Tax is the way to freedom.”

In going between here and Europe I would take the Holland-American Line steamer to Rotterdam. I liked the steamer very much and like the Line, but that was not my primary interest. My primary interest was Rotterdam. While my getting on that steamer was no guarantee whatever that I was going to get to Rotterdam, I couldn’t possibly get to Rotterdam without getting on a steamer. Moreover, I had a pretty good chance of getting to Rotterdam, not because the Holland-American Line cared so much about its passengers, but because if they lost a ship, a cry of pain would go out from the stockholders in Amsterdam that you could hear all the way down to Marseilles.

So the Single Tax is no guarantee of bringing in the Law of Equal Freedom which is the elemental condition of human happiness, as you know. But you can’t get the Law of Equal Freedom without it, just as I couldn’t get to Rotterdam without going on the steamer. The Single Tax is no panacea but freedom is, as Mr George says. If you want to establish the Law of Equal Freedom, your only chance, and it is an exceedingly good chance, is the way of the Single Tax.

Now you see what the steps in your line of progress are and you can think that out. If there is no such thing as natural rights, well, that is the end of it. We are through. Then the relation between the individual and the State is the relation of simply master and servant without any modification whatever. That is the importance of knowing just where you are heading, what you are heading for, what the steps are, and what is the basic thing that you are after.

Human happiness depends on the free exercise of all one’s faculties. There are some happy people presumably, but freedom of all is the thing that will induce the general happiness that we are all in search of. I do not think with things as they are, there are quite as many happy people as we think there are. When Mr Edison was eighty years old he was interviewed on his birthday by reporters and one of the reporters asked him what he thought were the conditions of human happiness. He replied simply, “I am not acquainted with anyone who is really happy.” That is a very serious indictment to bring against a very large number of acquaintances and presumably against the civilization which bred them.

There can’t be general happiness unless all are enjoying a free exercise of all their faculties. That is what is meant by the Law of Equal Freedom. That law, stated in other terms, is that every individual can do what he wishes to do as long as the doing of it doesn’t impinge upon the equal right of somebody else. That is the Law of Equal Freedom.

Assuming that we are correct in believing that natural rights exist, we might mention a few of the many subordinate rights that follow out of that, particularized a little bit. The first is the right to life and personal liberty. If you are not alive, if you are dead, you can’t exercise your faculties.
If you are under any form of personal restraint you can’t exercise all your faculties in harmony and balance. You can’t be happy and that condition represents an infringement upon the law that I have been speaking of. Nothing will correct it except the general establishment of that law, which is the secondary thing which you are driving at.

Then there is the right to property. Is that a natural right or is it not? I think that you will find that it is. It has been disputed. You know Proudhon, the Socialist, said that all property is theft. The collectivists apparently believe in making a pretty clean sweep of the individual right to property. I suggest the idea for your own consideration to decide.

In the third place, there is the right of exchange. Mr Jenkins has something that I would like to have and I have something that takes his fancy. I put a price on my article and he puts one on his. We agree on whatever the difference amounts to. It is paid, one to the other, and that is the end of it. That is a free transaction, and I think you would find that it is a natural right.

In the fourth place, there comes up our old friend, the right of free speech. Now speech is a form of action, obviously. It represents the exercise of one of our faculties. Under the Law of Equal Freedom, so long as your exercising that right doesn’t interfere with anybody else’s right, it seems to me that the right of free speech is natural and inherent in our human quality. You might look into that. Discuss it.

The State, as you know, is always aggrandizing itself at the expense of individuals. I suppose you see without trouble how that comes to pass, and it interferes with all these rights. It interferes with them regularly and seriously. Take the right of property for example. The State makes an interference with the right to grow cotton and sell it, thereby impinging on the right of property and the right of exchange. It was done with a view to the general good. It didn’t work out that way because the other cotton growing countries immediately stepped in and took the cotton market pretty well away from us. The point I am asking you to notice in referring to these interferences is that the Law of Equal Freedom is the only one that can be relied on to adjust situations like that without serious and very probably irremediable difficulties, insoluble difficulties.

We were forbidden for a time, you know, to grow potatoes in our yards by Mr Wallace. Now, Mr Wallace may be a very able man, no need of venturing any opinion about that. But no person has the ability to make a general arrangement like that under statute law, with reference to potatoes, without somewhere and to some extent making a mess of it. You remember the potato ordinance didn’t last a great while. Nothing will do what is needed to be done except the Law of Equal Freedom. In its application it will work, and it will work to the very best advantage of everybody. Statute law will never work.

For instance, the State violates the natural right of exchange when it puts tariffs on merchandise, that is, puts up an artificial obstacle to the normal, natural flow of goods, the flow being directed towards the best market. The government said no, that is bad, so it puts up a barrier to divert that natural flow in some other direction or else to check it, make it less. You see what happens. The thing simply can’t be done. There is no man or any body of men wise enough or good enough to legislate in general terms for an economic matter like the flow of the volume of goods in exchange. But the Law of Equal Freedom does it automatically. It regulates that flow, checks it here, increases it there, without any direction or effort of any lawmaker and always to the best possible general advantage.

Take the distribution of land again. I never could make out how collectivists intend to manage that. It is much clearer to you than it is to me; you have been studying the subject so much of late. You can see for yourself that anything like the distribution and division of land which would be just all around and workable all round is simply impossible. But, as you know from your study of Progress and Poverty, the Law of Equal Freedom will do it pretty well, and without anybody’s bother. It is natural, automatic, and there is never any trouble about it.

It is the same way with the great final aim of the collectivists to establish a regime which would demand from each according to his ability and give to each according to his need. Well now, ladies and gentlemen, who is going to determine what that is. I do not see how it can be done. To each according to his needs. Well, suppose on the general scale a dentist’s needs are rated at 10. What would a dressmaker’s needs be, at what figure would that stand? What would be a schoolteacher’s needs? How are you going to find out? How are you going to adjust it so that it would be perfectly fair and workable all round? I doubt very much if you could suggest any way or if you could suggest any man or body of men who are capable of even making the beginning of doing it. The Law of Equal Freedom will do it, do it without fail, and do it without making any trouble for anybody. There wouldn’t be a headache in a carload.
So, when you are attempting to get at the relations of the individual to the State and are considering the individual's rights, and the requirements which those rights suggest that he should make upon the State, you can see quite clearly how to get at it—through the Law of Equal Freedom.

T here is one other little collateral matter that I will give you a hint about here. That is the morality of State action. Has the State any moral right to do certain things which are by way of interference with the Law of Equal Freedom? Has the State the moral right to erect a tariff, for example, and hamper freedom of exchange? Where does morality come in? You will be told that it doesn't come in at all, that obviously the moral quality of an action would depend on the existence of a moral sense and there is no such thing as moral sense.

That was very well in the early days. The god-king of course was a god and whatever God said was right, was right and whatever he said was wrong, was wrong. So the god-king not only created rights for his subjects but he also created the criteria for absolute right and absolute wrong. Well, that is fine. Then there was an over-hang in that period which took us into the belief in the divine right of rulers, the right that Sir Robert Filmer worked out that the king was the representative of heaven and so ruling by divine right. The king also established the criteria of right and wrong and there was just one little trouble about that I might mention. Every country, I think practically every country anyway, had revolutions and they would heave out the chosen of heaven and put in somebody else. The question was whether the divine afflatus followed the fellow who was put out—he had it before—or whether it was somehow transferred to the new man. The fact was that there was an extraordinary correspondence between the strength of the incoming and the divine favor. The divine favor always seemed to go to the toughest fellow who could get himself on to the job. So that is something to be thought of because you see the question would be whether the divine ordinance followed the man or followed the throne. As in the case of Charles I of England, they not only heaved out the king, but they heaved out the throne too. That being the case, did the divine gift pass on to Cromwell? It is very hard, you see, to make that out in logic somehow.

Under Washington, you know, there was a king thrown out and his throne with him as far as this country was concerned. Was the divine favor supposed to have sort of volplaned down to our Congress? Sometimes I have doubts whether that could be, but it is worth thinking about. In further illustration, I might just say a word or two because it might assist you toward the apprehension of the way a general law works and makes itself felt.

Suppose our Congress got scared about the growth of population and made the law that for the next ten years all the girls babies should be strangled at birth. There would seem to be a law called into question which is above statute law. We would all feel it. In this case there would be evidence of some law which was being appealed to above that congressional proceeding, wouldn't there? And what law would that be if not a moral law? Where would a moral law come in without a moral sense?

It is said in defense of the negative position that what we feel under such conditions is not natural and inherent in us but it is a secondary sense which has grown up through long experience of this contemplated course. Whatever it may be, it is good and proper to be followed, for it works out well for the general good of society. That is about the same thing as saying that hunger is the result of a long experience, and that eating a little once in a while is beneficial. Or it is equivalent to saying that the love one feels for one's children is the result of long human experience which decides that the race ought to be propagated. It is quite the same thing, quite as wise.

So when you have a case like that which I spoke of, in this apotheosis, this Congressional action, you note the existence of some higher standard to which we instinctively turn. Suppose that the Congress was made up chiefly of Presbyterians and that they would say to us, "You have all got to acknowledge the Westminster Confession, you all have to contribute to the Presbyterian Church, and you must all go to it." We would, I think, receive that with an instinctive appeal to our higher law by which we would judge that action. That law is the law of morality which makes us say, "That is bad. We won't do it. It is immoral. That legislation is not moral." And so in the more extreme case.

Suppose the Congress should make a law that all persons six feet high or over should reduce those who are not six feet high to slavery. There again would come up instantly the popular appeal to a higher criterion. You notice here another thing; the people who say that we have no moral sense exhibit evidence on occasion of something that indicates a very close approximation to it. Those persons have the same idea of law and equity that we have, of the difference between law and equity that we have. If they are abused in any way, if they are mishandled or treated improperly at all, they seem to see a moral quality in those actions. They seem to have a moral consciousness, even ones who say there is no such thing. They get hot about it just as we do and so on.

The whole public business of the United States, if Henry George's system were put into effect, could be done, I am quite sure, in the Senate Office Building.
That seems remarkably like the attribution of the divine right of majorities. I do not know how else to explain it, because it treats the affair as though it were a baseball game or a horse race. Somebody has lost and somebody has won, and that is all there is to it. There is no trace in that view of your believing anything, your having any principle at stake, you see. So I think we would have to say that at least some of the divine right which it is said to have descended on Congresses and parliaments, has also descended on majorities.

I think I have given you suggestions enough to go on with for the evening. You understand that I began by saying that I quite disavow any idea of telling you anything or making you believe anything or changing your beliefs. Of course it would interest me very much to see a detachment from the School meet somewhere all framed up with everything that is possible to be got at in these particulars and have a rousing debate. I would like to see that very much. Perhaps some day we will see it.

FOUR:

Beyond Patriotism

I think that the obligation is quite on my side for the very great privilege of making your acquaintance in this quite intimate and most pleasurable way. I assure you of that.

You remember that we found last week that our attitude towards the State is determined by our answer to the question whether or not natural rights exist. We considered a few of our rights, admitting that the doctrine of natural rights is sound. We considered some few, not many, of those rights such as the right to life and liberty, and the right to hold property, and so on. We found that our attitude towards our relation to the State is determined by our attitude towards those rights and towards the State’s continuous incursions upon them.

The State is always trying to limit and as far as possible to confiscate those rights. The contrary doctrine of State-created rights is set up in order to justify it. You will remember that we found that there was a sort of hold-over from the divine right of kings to the divine right of governments. The State not only is supposed to create rights but is supposed to set up the ultimate system of morality for us to follow. We are to believe that what the State says is right is right and what it says is wrong is wrong.

This evening we have one or two larger matters opening up before us that are worth consideration as marking the end of our little dispositions on the subject. One of them is patriotism. You can see how directly what we have been saying leads up to that point. It brings us face to face with the question, “What is patriotism?” Our attitude toward the State would, in some way, be a practical expression of patriotism, but behind that there is a sentiment, what we call a patriotic sentiment. It seems worthwhile that we should ask ourselves a few questions about that and I propose that we do so. Towards what, then, is the sentiment of patriotism directed? “We love thy rocks and rills, thy woods and purple hills.” Is it towards the soil, is it towards the geographical area of our country? There are some difficulties about that. If you live, for example, in the top of the State of Vermont — I was up that way last summer and I couldn’t tell whether I was in the United States or Canada unless I happened to see some customs people — you couldn’t tell when you were on American soil and when you were on Canadian soil.

There is something in the love for familiar scenes, that is true. But patriotism is a pretty big word to cover that because you can get up an equivalent amount of steam over scenes and localities in other countries. No difficulty about doing that. So I imagine that a sentiment for the actual soil and geographical areas of our country is hardly satisfactory in the way of accounting for the sentiment which we feel. Well then, take our business. Is the sentiment of patriotism prompted by the fact of our doing business in one place rather than in another? I am not sure that would quite hold. You know Mr Jefferson said “Merchants have no country.” The spot on which they stand is not as dear to them as that from which they draw their gains. There seems to be a good deal in that.

For instance, I was hearing today something; I didn’t pay much attention to it at the time and it just came into my mind now. It seems that three great oil companies, one American, one British, and one Dutch got together and in the present international embroilment, agreed to sell considerable oil to the Japanese government. Inasmuch as Japan is an official enemy of Britain and of Holland and not on particularly good terms with us, it would seem that action might be put down on all the participants except ourselves as unpatriotic.

Then there is the sentiment which grows out of our social relations, our family and friends. If we have been brought up in a certain social circle formed around our families, we get fond of it. Perhaps that is the very soundest account that we can give ourselves of any sentiment of patriotism, unless we go out of the ordinary run of ideas taught in our schools, for example.

The schools hoist a flag and tell the children to go through certain motions and exercises. They are brought up that way and probably do not ask themselves, even in all their lives, many questions about what they did it for and why they should do it. Why should we, for example, we here, love the United States? We have got to find some less flimsy reason for doing so than on account of the soil, our business, or on account of our family and friends’ being here. I don’t want to influence you at all, but I will be very frank and tell you how this patriotism business works out for me. I would not say that it will or should work out that way for you.

I would just like to raise the previous question, “what is our country?” Answer that question as individuals. What is your country? Each one of you. Well, I think the answer to that would depend very largely upon the sort of person each of you individuals is and what your interests are. I think that is reasonable. For a long time I have not regarded the United States as my country although I was born here, got all my education here, and my family is one of very long standing in this country. But for thirty years I have not regarded this country as mine. I will tell you why.

If I were Mr Ford and manufactured motor cars, or if I were Mr Rockefeller and produced oil in great quantities, this would be preeminently my country because almost everybody in the country is interested in automobiles and oil and has
great respect for automobiles and oil. We respect the manufacturer of automobiles. And we have a very high respect for the people that make them. So, if I felt that way, if I entertained that respect, I would regard the United States as my country. It would be the place where the things that I love are respected. But I do not care two pins for oil, and I hate motor cars.

You go through the whole category of things that command the respect of this nation, and I do not click on any of them. Americans at large have an enormous respect for money and for people who have money. I haven’t. I do not care about money any further than enough to go on with. As for those who have it, well, perhaps the less said about that the better. But there are certain things for which I have great respect. I love them. And there are certain countries where they are respected much more than they are here. Very much more. Those things which I respect most command no respect in this country at all. No, I think it would be perfectly reasonable for an individual to say, “Where the things that I love are respected, there is my country.” That is the reason why I shifted about thirty years ago. I went over and dug in in a little country in Europe where the people like the things that I like. I could tell you a great many interesting stories about that, but I haven’t got time to do it now.

I leave it to you simply for what it is worth. What if a man were to be had up on the carpet and asked, “How do you justify your sentiment of patriotism?” For my part, I would justify it on the ground of respect for the things that I love. I have a good authority for that too. The greatest statesman that England ever produced — and England didn’t produce him because he was an Irishman — was Edmund Burke. When Edmund Burke spoke of a system of manners, what he meant was a way of life. He said, “There ought to be in every nation a system of manners which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish.” “For us to love our country, our country ought to be lovely.”

For us to love our country, our country ought to be lovely. If that view of the matter strikes you as at all interesting, I will leave it with you to think over.

We are brought face to face at this point in our discussion with another matter, and that is loyalty: loyalty to your country. You are hearing a great deal about that now, and I think it would be competent for you to ask yourselves a few questions about it. Loyalty to your country would imply the disposition to promote your country’s welfare, wouldn’t it? Loyalty to your country appears to be one thing, and loyalty to a set of jobholders is another thing. There is a great tendency to confuse the two. You see it in every issue of every paper that you pick up. So it would be competent for you to ask yourselves what you really mean by loyalty. Is it loyalty to your country’s best interests and the disposition to promote them? Well now, suppose that you have a crew of jobholders in office who act in a way which you conscientiously believe to be contrary to those interests and detrimental to your country. Where does loyalty come in? Are you supposed to be loyal to those jobholders or are you supposed to be loyal to your own conviction about what the best interests of your country are, and about the way in which those interests are to be best promoted?

Remembering what we have said in our earlier meetings about the nature of the State and all that, there can be some extremely interesting reflections started in your minds by canvassing those questions for yourselves. I leave them with you.

There is just one final thing to which all these questions run up, and I broach it with some hesitation. I will simply broach it; I won’t go very far with it. What we make up our minds to on all these matters comes back finally — this is the very last thing, the ultimate thing — to the nature and qualities of man. We know that the average man has not stirred a peg psychically to all appearances for six thousand years of recorded history. There are pretty distinct intimations that he didn’t get very far ahead of the anthropoids before that time. Is man in the mass indefinitely improving? Don’t you see at once how all our activities for the general welfare hang on that question? Has man in the mass, the average man, the intellectual and psychical capacity to get anywhere ahead of where he is?

Mr George believed — and Mr Spencer, John Stuart Mill, and all of them believed — that man is indefinitely improvable. That is one side of the thing. You can see how if Mr George had any doubt whatever in his mind of that matter he would never have taken the trouble to produce Progress and Poverty. It would be of no use. These authorities all agree that the average of mankind, by virtue of certain potentialities within him, is capable of postulating a great deal of time to indefinite improvement.

Now, on the other hand, my friend, Ralph Adams Cram,
the great architect, has broached the theory directly contrary to that and this is particularly interesting: the zoological definition of man will not pass for a psychical definition of man. The fact of our always permitting it so to pass is a very great confusion. You know we believe that any being which answers to the zoological definition of *Homo sapiens* is a human being. Thus the Akkas, the Bushmen, the tropical pygmies, the Australian aborigines, they all answer to the zoological definition, the structural definition *Homo sapiens*. Therefore they are all human beings. Well now, Mr Cram’s theory is that the human being is and can be proven to be throughout the whole length of human history as we are acquainted with it, what is known as a sport; the masses of mankind are not human beings. The great majority of mankind are not human at all in the sense that those men who distinctly exhibit what we allow to be distinctively human qualities in a distinct way, were human.

Of course you know all the arguments on the other side from your study of George, Spencer, Stuart Mill and also the Christian doctrine which holds to the same side of the argument. But there is this to be said for it. Not only is it true that the great aggregate of mankind has exhibited no tendency towards psychical improvement or development in the six thousand years that we know of him, but there is also the distance, the psychical spread between the highest form of *Homo sapiens* and the lowest, that is, between Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, St. Francis on the one end of the line and the Akkas and the bushmen on the other. The psychical spread between those two is indefinitely greater than the spread between the lowest form of *Homo sapiens* and the anthropoids.

I will close now and just leave that matter with you as I have done right along. All these issues you must make up your own mind about, you know. But just keep it straight in your mind that the way to human happiness is through the Law of Equal Freedom; the way to the Law of Equal Freedom is through the Single Tax. All of it depends on the doctrine of natural rights. This, then, brings up your relations to the State, which does not believe in your having natural rights and is trying to confiscate such rights as you have asserted. You get down to the matters that we talked about this evening: patriotism, loyalty and the final question on which everything depends — whether the average of mankind, the great uncountable majority of mankind, is truly human.

You know, you can’t do much. All I suggest is that you take what I say as merely an intimation of something, a series of things pretty well connected, running into one another, that you can take up for yourself and work out and debate and get very thorough about it.

Actually there is one thing that you can do, all of you, and it is the very best thing possible in the long run: to clear your own intelligence and know just exactly what you are talking about and know all that is possible to know about the fundamental ideas that belong to your subject.

Thank you very much finally for your attention, interest and your very great consideration. I do not like to leave you.

**Notes**

8. For the complete version, see “Pantagruelism,” in *The State of the Union*, pp. 200–211.

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