

Lars Lindsig's view from the right



I recently took delivery of a book I had particularly looked forward to receiving. Its cover portrays the diamond back rattlesnake from the Gadsden flag—a bright yellow symbol of American independence used in the Revolutionary War. The flag bears the legend "don't tread on me" and has become an important symbol for libertarians, invoking the Jeffersonian spirit of independence and opposition to centralised state control.

So it is an appropriate cover illustration for the 2008 reprint of *The Freeman Book*, a compendium of articles from the eponymous magazine edited by Albert Jay Nock—perhaps the 20th century's greatest individualist—with his friend and associate Francis Neilson. When the book was first published in 1926 the magazine had just closed its doors. A similar book—*The Book of Journeyman*—would be published in 1930, collecting essays from *The New Freeman* which was founded by Nock's editorial assistant, Suzanne la Follette, and which featured contributions from Nock.

The Freeman would start and cease publication several times over the years under the patronage of various publishers. In the 1940s Frank Chodorov, Nock's intellectual heir, edited a *Freeman* that was the house organ of the New York Henry George School. But he was dismissed for his unequivocal opposition to US involvement in the Second World War. Later the Foundation for Economic Education took over the name and publishes to this day a well-thought of, if somewhat unexciting, libertarian journal. *The Freeman*, like Nock, was always unapologetically libertarian, isolationist—and georgist, although modern right-libertarians tend to laud the first two positions and dismiss the latter as an eccentricity.

Despite Nock's georgism, *The Freeman* never was a battle organ for the Henry George movement. Indeed, while he wrote a book about George, Nock himself never fit the mould of a prototypical Henry George follower. For that he was too decidedly strange an anarchic soul, of too aristocratic a disposition—dismissing without hesitation political institutions, social orders and cultural discourse that most take for granted. But without Nock's brand of radicalism being channelled through followers like Murray Rothbard, modern libertarianism would be very much the poorer.

The cornerstone of Albert Jay Nock's literary production is the book *Our Enemy the State* from 1935. In it he described how the state—and its destructive warfare and New Deal policies—was consistently at odds with the cultured behaviour of gentlefolk, and reasoned why it must be brought down.

The Freeman has been defunct for 80 years. It survived—barely and only for a while—with scant circulation, shoe-string budgets, primitive production values but—not least—also with magnificent, unrelenting and uncompromising men at the helm. Still to this day it reminds us that we are not free, and eggs us on in our struggle for liberty.

The new reprint edition of The Freeman Book is published by the Ludwig von Mises Institute in Alabama—a veritable hothouse for radical market-libertarian thought and commentary—and is most easily purchased directly through their website www.mises.org