

FIRST REFORM YOURSELF

By Will Stuart

SOCIAL reformers often approve of such sentiments as: "The cure for the ills of democracy is—more democracy." "The only trouble with competition is we haven't enough of it." In like vein, the trouble with this Age of Science is that there isn't enough science. Most Georgeists will agree to this, at least academically. But I doubt that many are prepared to accept that criticism for themselves. What is of permanent value in George's work is the contribution of a certain objectivity of approach, and the mature inclusiveness and correlation of data never before, and seldom since, brought to the consideration of social problems. At its best this becomes the scientific method.

Goethe created in the character of Mephistopheles the archetype of the modern spirit. Not, to be sure, someone's ideal or wishful thought, but the existing fact. "The intellect in the service of the senses," as someone put it; or, more aptly, adult science in the service of infantile impulses. It is this Mephistophelian spirit which has produced scientific Huns and Vandals on the one hand, and erudite infants on the other. We should expect nothing else until the scientific method is applied to our own personal, imperfect human nature.

Plato and Ibsen indicted democracy as a tyranny of the many rather than of the few. For what really is so terrible an indictment of democracy as democracy itself—masses of men—in action? Let us not quibble about terms. Democracy is crippled by demagogues who vie for citizens' support to "vote for that gang which will plunder them least." Here is our point—Georgeism, both in theoretical content and propaganda methods, is based on an eighteenth-century conception of man's nature. George's entire economic theory and social reform postulates man as a constitutionally rational creature, whose innate good sense is perverted by adverse external environment.

Today this logical assumption has been, not simply revised, as some would have us believe, but completely revolutionized. The rational aspect is seen as an acquired degree of psychologic maturing and unification. The basic nature of men may be aptly observed in the behavior of an infant. Human nature is seen entirely in evolutionary perspective. Is it not time to see what science has to say about human nature?

George specifically stated that economic injustice was creating the "greater Huns and Vandals of which Macaulay prophesied." It is silly to say that he was wrong, but it is dangerous evasion to assume that the problem stops there. George demonstrated so ably that social ills are the result of ativistic conventions—that land monopoly perpetuates serfdom where chattel slavery is formally abolished. His reform proposal is designed to make this more modern and subtle form of feudal exploitation unprofitable. But from the standpoint of genetic psychology he was only dealing with symptoms.

Too often the liberal appears to recognize but two factors in the production of wealth, namely, labor and capital. He occupies himself with all kinds of devices to adjust relations between them. The radical recognizes a third factor, namely, natural resources, and is absolutely convinced that as long as monopoly-interest in natural resources continues to exist, no adjustment of the relations between capital and labor can possibly be made and that, therefore, the excellent devotion of the liberal goes, in the long run, for nothing.

Dr. Theodore Schroeder in the *Psychoanalytic Review** says on this as follows: "A psychologist may well insist that to abolish monopoly-interest in natural resources will leave all the evil psychologic imperatives intact, to create new modes of satisfaction. It will therefore be just as futile for the elimination of aristocratic ambition, and its satisfaction through other forms of exploitation, as was the abolition of feudalism, without our outgrowing feudal-mindedness. That feudal-mindedness perpetuated slavery under new forms."

Thus, so long as the infantile interest in parasitic living continues to exist, the excellent devotion of the radical goes, in the long run, for nothing. The radical is not radical enough; he has not gone to the root of human nature in his inquiry into human problems.

PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL REFORM

What has psychology to do with economics? Society is composed of an aggregate of individuals, and to reform society the individuals must be reformed, say most psychologists. To reform individuals, one must have some knowledge of what one is dealing with. Thus, psychology has a definite correlation to social reform. Social-economic reform based on eighteenth-century speculation about human perfectibility is bound to be eminently ineffectual. This is of vital concern in any consideration of the acceptance of George's reform proposals. It is one thing to insist that the knowledge of economic science is necessary to effect permanent social reform. It is something else to assume that that is sufficient.

George said the single-tax is not a panacea, but freedom is; and that the single-tax is necessary to freedom. I do not recall that he ever said it was sufficient. Many Georgeists, in their almost exclusive emphasis on "single-tax," and possibly free-trade, either believe these are sufficient to freedom; or at least *act* as if they were. If there is any truth in the principle that the means determines the end (and George seemed thoroughly to believe it, for he expresses this principle repeatedly

* "Conservatism, Liberalism and Radicalism," *Psychoanalytic Review*, October, 1920.

through his thesis), then many Georgeists *practically* believe the single-tax and free-trade are sufficient to effect a democratized freedom, and in this they practically, if unconsciously, differ with George.

Now, what is meant by freedom? There are many ways of describing it, but that is because there are as many facets to it as there are to human nature. Every freedom, including "the four freedoms," is but a different aspect of a unified concept of liberty. If there is any aspect of human nature left out of consideration, the concept is marred. Insofar as one's concept is lacking, his efforts toward attaining freedom are necessarily limited. Many who are earnestly devoted to one little corner of the truth in liberty, are ignorantly opposing the efforts of others who are just as earnestly devoted to the attainment of the little corner *they* see. To have a corner *of* the truth is not to have a corner *on* it.

Some persons think that economic freedom is basic. George did. He asserted that if men could get a living without hindrance, they would be free to get whatever other freedoms they felt desirable.

NEUROSIS OF EDUCATORS

But since we *don't* have economic freedom, let it be remembered that free speech is *necessary* to establish it. We cannot disseminate George's philosophy without it. From this viewpoint it appears that free speech is as fundamental as economic freedom. *Chronologically free speech will have to antedate Georgeism if a free society is to be attained by democratic efforts.*

So long as education is controlled by neurotics who seek thereby to produce other neurotics, all freedoms are jeopardized. For all anti-social conduct and attitudes (and I use anti-social in the broad sense—to include monopoly, protectionism, anti-semitism, negro-phobia, alien-phobia, and all hatred of non-conformists) are now understood to be manifestations of (1) immature psychologic development, (2) the morbid compulsions of "split personalities," and (3) the ignorant imitation of the other two. The more normal, healthy-minded behavior of relatively more mature and unified personalities often offends those who measure all things by their own psychologic infantilism. So long as the legislative and judicial branches of government are used as instruments for punishing those who have given psychologic offense, the liberty of a free economy is liberty by permission, and not by right.

I previously mentioned that George demonstrated so ably the fact that social ills are the result of ativistic conventions. Georgeists have convinced themselves that not *monopolists*, but *monopoly* is to blame. Nevertheless, in the face of stubborn resistance by monopolists, some Georgeists are often reduced to attributing "immoral" motives to them. Although such name-calling is but the last recourse of impotence, it does indicate at least a partial recognition of the personal element involved in monopoly.

To deal effectively with the monopoly convention, we must do more than simply recognize and label its various symptoms, and then try to legislate them out of existence.

I only wish to extend the concept of education to include the more basic aspects of our sentiment and knowing selves. Many Georgeist circles concentrate on education. But even where legislation is not expressed, it is implied. "Forget legislation," some say. "Educate, and when enough of the people want land value taxation the politicians will give it to them."

CENSORSHIP NEGATES FREE SPEECH

Certain enterprises have been destroyed by means of censorship. It has interfered with free trade.

Censorship is often judicially implemented by obscenity laws. Economic competition has been restricted by such statutes. In certain cases where existing laws directly prevented a specific monopoly from being effected, rivals were ruined by charges of obscenity.

Moral superstition and the "obscenity" laws have often been used to silence economic and labor reformers.*

Clarifying the obscenity laws is necessary to economic freedom. We can readily sympathize with George when he dubbed a certain New Jersey judge as being "an immortal ass" for deciding a suit against him on the ground that "Progress and Poverty" was an immoral book. How interdependent are such issues as free speech, political freedom, and economic freedom! The denial of one delimits the others. Such decisions, on irrelevant grounds, constitute a construction of the laws whereby judges make or "construct" their own laws. And since this construction is made after the offense, it becomes also an *ex post facto* law. It is therefore unconstitutional on two counts.

"Obscenity,"† which has been employed to limit free speech, free economic enterprise, and political rights, has no objective existence; instead it is the modern counterpart of the witchcraft superstition. Millions of persons were judicially murdered for witchcraft, a crime that existed only in the disordered mind of the accusers. A society with free trade and no monopoly, but which kills and persecutes citizens for imaginary crimes, cannot claim to be a free society. Political freedom is necessary to economic freedom.

"Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom," we are told. But universal vigilance is necessary too.

Robert Louis Stevenson said:

Something that seems quite new, or that seems insolently false or very dangerous, is the test of a reader. If he tries to see what it means, what truth excuses it, he has the gift, and let him read. If he is merely hurt or offended, or exclaims upon his author's folly, he had better take to the daily papers; he will never be a reader.

(Continued on page 24)

* See Theodore Schroeder's "A Challenge to Sex Censors," Free Speech League, Coscob, Conn.

† See Industrial Relations, Final Report and Testimony, submitted to Congress, Vol. II, pp. 10840-10852, for statements by Theodore Schroeder; also, pp. 10866-10896.

cessors and distributors of farm products, particularly foodstuffs, agencies of the Government; first, to get more efficiency in distribution; second, to reduce prices to consumers.

Britain is doing substantially this, but here, the opposition of entrenched food trusts, and of some labor unions—which might be affected thereby—will be bitter; farmers who have been subsidized will not hesitate to bite the hand that feeds them, unless it feeds them enough out of the Federal Treasury.

Both in the White House and on the Hill American labor is in the doghouse. The basic reason is that American labor has no program to end unemployment, except war. When "labor" here and abroad gets a constructive program, wars will be over.

Congress is likely to pass legislation requiring the incorporation of labor unions, publicity of their accounts, and regular elections. Although legislation will be introduced to prohibit strikes, and make the work week 44 to 48 hours before overtime, such bills will not pass without difficulty.

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(Continued from page 21)

We must recognize in retrospect that every effort at extensive proselytizing has failed, that every appearance of a flourishing movement has been as delusional as Coolidge prosperity. If this is not obvious to some Georgeists it is because, in their steadfast and futile devotion, they refuse to recognize their incompetence to cope with the obstinate anomalies of human nature.

I have contributed nothing in this essay to an understanding of those anomalies, unless, of course, the reader is already quite familiar with the discoveries of psychoanalysis. I prefer to point out some insufficiencies of the Georgeist outlook, rather than describe some of the achievements of the psychoanalysts.

It is important to note here that not every psychoanalyst has made any direct and vital contribution to the democratization of education, welfare and freedom. Most practitioners enter the field of psychoanalysis by way of medicine, and their interest seldom transcends its special therapeutic utility.

It has remained for Dr. Theodore Schroeder, whom I previously quoted, and from whose researches I have based much of my criticism of Georgeist methods, to apply the discoveries of genetic psychology to social problems. From the nature of these discoveries Schroeder found it necessary to apply what might be termed the psycho-evolutionary perspective, whereby all human problems are seen as problems of our defective and tortuously evolving human nature. Both individual and social maturing are seen in this perspective. Schroeder would apply present knowledge to accelerate this maturing process. The importance of Schroeder to Georgeists becomes apparent when we remember that society is not yet mature enough for Georgeism, and that, briefly, is why it has met with so little acceptance.

It has been said that he who has reformed himself has done his share toward reforming the world. Each must do his share before he can do more than his share.

A BUILDER, A

By Pvt. Walter McC. Maitland

[Concluded from the November-December issue]

THE economic and social pathologies of today are too often viewed in relation to the existing political or class structure. Internal and foreign conflicts reflect the absence of a basis for understanding the principles of free spiritual and economic thinking. In a society where such understanding is lacking, the dominance of one class or one nation over another will make little difference in the course of human events.

Until an economic balance between classes and nations can be realized, war is inevitable, and only serves to aggravate the very problems it is meant to relieve. The outcome is a planned economy under governmental control,* with its inevitable restrictions on both free enterprise and the spiritual development of the individual. No man or group of men, no matter how intelligent, can prepare a blueprint or over-all plan to govern the economy of a free people. Such economic planners are no different in their outlook from the developers of private monopolies, and their world-wide cartels. One is planning for private gain and security, while the other furthers a scheme to abolish want and fear through government control.

Such a concept presupposes a rigidly regimented economy to which all nations must conform under the coercion of economic pacts, and the armed might of allied forces. It is hardly conceivable that the democratic cartel outlined in the Atlantic Charter will insure any better guarantee of world peace and security than did Wilson's Fourteen Points after the last war. To what extent can we expect nationally crazed people, acting under the impulse of patriotic motives, to recognize the two cardinal principles of economic freedom?

That all men have equal rights to the use and enjoyment of the elements provided by nature.

That all men have the exclusive right to what they produce by their own labor or its equivalent exchange value.

To what extent can we hope for spiritual freedom when the average person's constant thought is that of freedom from economic insecurity? In practically all discussions on post-war planning the means of preserv-

*A distinction should be made here between city planners and social planners. The former are technicians usually hired by municipalities, or other divisions of government to develop an engineer's layout for the proper development of streets, parks, and other land or water surfaces. There are also many privately endowed agencies servicing communities with land-plans.

A social, or economic planner, in the sense I use it here, endears himself into a government position whereby the daily lives of people are blueprinted in all their activities. Such a scheme is envisioned in "The World Republic," reviewed elsewhere in this issue.—W. McC. M.