

but as a proximate irritant of war this stoppage of the free exchange of wealth is too manifest to be entirely ignored in a book on this subject. As a matter of record, the Civil War between the American states was caused primarily by the economic antagonism of the "free trade" South and the "protected" North.

Col. Rule's book, valuable as it is, leaves something undone. The world needs to be shown, beyond the peradventure of a doubt, that poverty is the real cause of war, and that the abolition of poverty is the only cure, that the urge to escape from conditions of poverty is the force which directs peoples' eyes, and those of their rulers, to other peoples' lands.

Proceeding from the economic axiom that man seeks to satisfy his desires with the least amount of effort, and that war is the exertion of utmost effort, the subject of war could be treated in such a way as to show why this contradiction manifests itself. The reason can be found in the attempt to frustrate the operation of natural economic law. Having arrived at this first premise, the scientific approach would be to apply this premise to the test by analyzing the causes of, and conditions precedent to, a number of major wars throughout history. Thus our premise of the economic cause of war would be proven by logic and by example.

Such an approach to the subject of war, by one endowed with research ability and the power of logical expression, would be a valuable contribution to the Georgist philosophy, as well as to the literature of the peace movement. It is needed.

Col. Rule's "Chaining the War God" is a good book. Every student of Henry George should read it. A familiarity with this book will help us to demonstrate to the constantly increasing number of peace advocates that in our philosophy alone can they find the real answer to their prayers. It is as good propaganda for Single Tax as it is for peace, and it is very interestingly written, in the oratorical style of which the author is a master.—FRANK CHODOROV.

OUR ENEMY, THE STATE*

Now and then a thinker breaks through the yearly billions of printed words with real thoughts ably expressed and logically presented. Such a book is "Our Enemy, The State," by Albert Jay Nock. To read it is to feel like a traveller lost on a dark road and a bright flash of lightning shows him where he is—where he is going.

Nock distinguishes government from The State, as he does religion from the organized church. He treats the historical developments of the power of the State and its present increasing power. The book traces in detail government and The State in America from the earliest colonial days through the American Revolution with its ideals of a free people—a true democracy—and shows that with the increasing power of the State man even in the United States seems made for the State instead of the State for man. How true that was in the World War when men were conscripted, but not property!

The State, Nock shows, obtaining too much power becomes a parasitic growth, feeding on civilization and destroying the social consciousness and the self reliance of the people. He condemns the State "lock, stock and barrel."

Nock wants the citizen to look very closely into the institution of the State. He wants him to ask how the State originated and why, and what is the State's primary function, and then to decide whether by the testimony of history the State is to be regarded in essence as a social or anti-social institution. He presents the Single Tax theory as a perfect solution of our economic problems, and a solution that still leaves men free from the juggernaut of the State.

Under the Roosevelt administration, faced by the present emergency, the centralized government, Nock shows, has grown by leaps and bounds, the government more and more wiping out State lines, piling up the public debt, taking larger and larger parts of the people's income to support its horde of agents. He shows the centralized

State, by what is called a planned economy, creating a scarcity of production, raising the cost of living artificially—while millions cannot pay the present price of food and clothing and shelter.

Nock points out that when the disastrous Johnstown flood occurred socialized power was immediately mobilized and applied with intelligence and vigor. That a beggar now usually asks in vain for a handout. In both instances of a large or small catastrophe, we all almost instinctively now say "let the government do it." The government does—at great expense, inefficiently, and with an added number to its cohorts, which like the seven-year locusts eat up the harvests of the land.

The other day I was in the country and the long drought had dried up most of the wells and springs of the countryside. On the main road was a perpetual spring that some one years ago had built a wall around to protect it. Many people were getting their water from it. Over the spring were some boards that had rotted. I said, "Let's get some boards to cover the spring properly and keep the dust and leaves out." Someone replied: "Let the town do it." Yes, let the town do it. Call it to the attention of the Town Council to go through the red tape to get a board, to get a man to go with a car, to cover the spring—all at the community's expense and increased taxes.

The author points out that outside of poorhouses and hospitals and such institutional enterprises—destitution and unemployment were usually relieved by what he calls the "social power" of the people. He then states:

"Under Mr. Roosevelt, however, the State assumed this function, publicly announcing the doctrine, brand-new in our history, that the State owes its citizens a living. Students of politics, of course, saw in this merely an astute proposal for a prodigious enhancement of State power."

This is not exactly true or fair in my opinion, and nowhere does Nock point out that Roosevelt was faced with a depression and tremendous unemployment, with millions of men and women ready, able and willing to work and unable to find work. Roosevelt, *not* knowing the remedy for unemployment and the depression, and in order to prevent a revolution, chose the "dole," work-relief, N.R.A., depreciated money and plowing under cotton and pig killing and cutting down production in various ways to raise prices. I believe Roosevelt's fear was not a groundless fear. Millions would not starve peacefully in a land of plenty. Was it the town of English, out west where farmers threatened to take food by force if not fed? No greater surprise to the American people could have happened. I further doubt that all these steps of grasping power was deliberate and intentional, though Roosevelt was glad to have billions of dollars to spend, which incidentally helped build up his political machine.

Nock says:

"Practically all the sovereign rights and powers of the smaller political units—all of them that are significant enough to be worth absorbing—have been absorbed by the federal unit; nor is this all. State power has not only been thus concentrated at Washington, but it has been so far concentrated into the hands of the Executive that the existing regime is a regime of personal government."

He then adds:

"This regime was established by a coup d'etat of a new and unusual kind, practicable only in a rich country. It was effected not by violence, like Louis-Napoleon's, or by terrorism, like Mussolini's, but by purchase."

If increasing prosperity should come, and the wheels of industry really begin to revolve, and the work be available more generally, I believe the revolt of the tax payer, aided by the press, will cut down a goodly portion of this conversion of social power into State power, even though Nock believes we are "a people little gifted with intellectual integrity."

He further believes that:

"The method of direct subsidy, or sheer cash-purchase, will therefore in all probability soon give way to the indirect method of what is called "social legislation," that is, a multiplex system of State-managed pensions, insurance and indemnities of various kinds."

*By Albert Jay Nock. 12 mo. Clo. 209 pp. Price \$2.25. William Morrow & Co., N. Y. City.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

and bitingly holds:

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

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

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

Though he adds in a footnote:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Correspondence

FROM THE SON OF JUDGE ROBERT MINOR

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

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

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