

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *The Single Tax Movement in the United States* by Arthur Nichols Young

Review by: C. B. Fillebrown

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of a trade union is to make a collective agreement of some kind, and it would seem that the methods employed by labor organizations in making agreements would be the proper approach for the treatment of the subject of collective bargaining.

The order of arrangement in this section is as follows: Two chapters are devoted to the strike, in which definitions of strikes and lockouts, history of early strikes, strike statistics, classification of causes, and other documentary information are compiled with great detail. Then follow two chapters on arbitration, which are devoted in the main to legal provisions for conciliation and arbitration; two on the boycott, two on the closed shop, one on the trade agreement, one on restriction of membership and output, and one on trade-union benefits. The reviewer submits that neither the order of arrangement nor the treatment of the topics is well conceived to accomplish the purpose which Professor Groat sets for himself.

I cannot refrain from making one criticism on the general make-up of the book. The use of heavy-type paragraph headings is likely to make any text choppy in appearance. When such headings are used as frequently, and often with as little reason, as in this text, they become a cumbersome handicap in the use of the book. A much better mechanical device is to number the paragraphs or sections and group all of these headings at the beginning of the chapters, or let them appear in a table of contents.

It must not be concluded from the foregoing criticisms that the book is wholly bad. Professor Groat has shown great industry in bringing much valuable information within the two covers of a book. Certain portions, such as those dealing with conspiracy and the legal restrictions on union activity, show the influence of his earlier studies in this field. The student will, I am afraid, lay down the book with a feeling of regret. He will catch no such inspiration as may be gained from the works of the Webbs, nor does the text measure up to the standard set by Commons and Andrews in their recent book in the kindred field of labor legislation.

F. S. DEIBLER

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

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*The Single Tax Movement in the United States.* By ARTHUR NICHOLS YOUNG. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1916. 8vo, pp. x+340. 1.50.

Dr. Young, after interesting reference to the anticipators of Henry George, has given a very satisfactory history of *Progress and Poverty*

and its author up to the grand climacteric of the middle eighties, followed by a full and patiently authenticated narrative of what has been by common consent designated as the single-tax movement, in its different forms and phases from 1886 to the present time.

The immediate and favorable reception which has been accorded to *The Single-Tax Movement in the United States* is indication that the time and place await it. The order and sequence of the book, with its maximum of condensed information and minimum of personal opinion, puts it far ahead of all competitors as a compendium for students and inquirers. The author, of whom it may truthfully be said that he seems born to fair conclusions, is not niggardly of his judgments, but so plainly are these the necessary deductions from long lines of facts, that it is difficult for either friend or foe to take grave exceptions.

Dr. Young, in cataloguing precursors of Henry George's ideas, discusses "(1) some of the more specific anticipations of George's characteristic doctrines" by various isolated writers, by socialists, by the German "Bodenreformers," and in movements for the special taxation of land; and "(2) the relations between George's doctrines and the doctrines of the leading economists, from the Physiocrats to Cairnes" (p. 2).

Chaps. ii, iii, and iv are those which deserve to be dignified as history—the history of the Henry George movement. These are devoted to the staging of *Progress and Poverty* from the time Henry George first set foot in San Francisco in 1858 through its complete production in 1879, and covering the period of its enthusiastic reception and self-propagation, during the following five years.

About this time, in the words of one of George's critics, as quoted by Dr. Young, Henry George had "arrayed on his side not a few of our ablest literary men, magazine writers, presidents and professors in colleges and universities, statesmen and jurists of recognized ability and integrity, together with some leading merchants and manufacturers." To this Dr. Young adds: "The partial and inadequate replies to his arguments and the exhibitions of bad temper and poor taste in denouncing them formed but a poor offset to the brilliancy and persuasiveness of *Progress and Poverty*," thus, as it would seem, according to its author a place upon a high pinnacle. Dr. Young further says: "Henry George's ideas had surely been receiving all the attention that any social reformer could desire." To this, as though to cap the climax, he adds the testimony given in 1884 by Professor Arthur T. Hadley, now president of Yale University: "Henry George exercises a strong influence over a

vast number of people. We must face the fact squarely, whether we like it or not. His books are sold and read in America and England as no other books are sold and read; the sales are numbered by the hundred thousand, the readers by the million" (pp. 87-88).

At this period, then, it would seem that there were open to this latest reformer all the educational channels of the world. Writers, periodicals, schools, pulpits and rostrums, colleges and universities with professors and presidents, statesmen and jurists, in addition to the greatly enlarged audience provided by the translation of his writings into many languages—all these opportunities were open to a continuance of what had already begun, the materialization of the vision of the prophet, and its reduction to a demonstrable science. One naturally asks why it is that today most of these channels have been practically closed; and being closed, how they can be reopened, and why it is that the exchange of *Progress and Poverty* for politics has turned out to be a delusion and a snare. There is nothing in the important contribution which this book brings to the understanding of the single-tax movement more valuable than the data it furnishes upon which this vital question can be intelligently answered. It indicates with sharp definiteness the point at which the irresistible force of education was relegated to the background in favor of the always confusing and divisive force of political action.

Had Dr. Young done no more than to lay his finger upon the strategic error which abruptly checked and for thirty years has hindered the progress of the single tax, he would have earned the gratitude of all who believe this movement to contain the potentiality of vast benefit to the human race.

In 1886, only two years later, the movement assumed a different phase; and in chap. v our author deals chiefly with this differentiation in character, methods, aims, and personnel from the Henry George movement of the previous chapters. These modifications had been so considerable that even a new name was called for; and in 1887 it began to be called the single tax. Few or none of the agencies of the first movement projected themselves into this second phase.

After a record of the Delaware campaign (1895-96) Dr. Young summarizes the fruits of the past thirty political years and presents figures showing that during seventeen of those years, beginning with 1898, and ending with the year 1915, the Single Taxers at widely separated intervals prosecuted in the western states of Washington, Colorado, Oregon, Missouri, and California no less than eighteen major political campaigns. Of the issues in these campaigns, thirteen were mainly the

exemption of improvements, and five involved local option—not one of them involved primarily the fundamental principles underlying the single tax.

In the first three elections occurring within a period of twelve years, i.e., Washington, 1898, Oregon, 1908 and 1910, in an aggregate of 229,070 votes cast, 40 per cent were for and 60 per cent against. During the three years, 1912–15 inclusive, the total votes cast were 3,223,298, of which 32 per cent were for and 68 per cent against. That is to say, the percentage “for” was, in the latter period, 1912–15, 8 per cent less than for the twelve-year period 1898–1910. This indicates either a declining interest in the subject, or else that the single tax, being now taken seriously by all, was vigorously opposed by some. Consolation for both friends and foes may, however, be found in the fact that these elections with their differing issues have small significance as bearing on the Henry George movement.

Dr. Young, under the caption of “Single Tax and Taxation of Land Values,” gives generous consideration to the efforts of the limited number of those disciples who have persisted along the less dramatic and non-political lines. The closing chapter contains not only a survey of the legislative achievements of the movement, but a few references to its most important “adversaries,” along with an interesting enumeration of the “persistent objections” with which the single tax has been confronted. A list of “Single Taxers who have taken an active interest in the tax abuses of their respective localities would,” says our author, “be a long one.” Among these there appears in bold relief the name of Mr. Thomas G. Shearman, who has contributed the sanest series of vital conclusions that have yet been evoked by the teaching of Henry George.

The book is supplemented by a useful bibliography and other addenda.

C. B. FILLEBROWN

BOSTON, MASS.

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*Studies in the Cost of Urban Transportation Service.* By F. W. DOOLITTLE. New York: American Electric Railway Association, 1916. 8vo, pp. 467+xxiii. \$3.50.

*Studies in the Cost of Urban Transportation Service* is a book that should have a special interest for the economist. Facts about any business are difficult for the outsider to get, and the economist has frequently to do pretty broad and far-reaching reasoning from a rather