

producer more murderously than any past administration in order to preserve monopoly and foster bureaucracy; if politics under it has degenerated into a meaningless maze of sound and fury—the cause is an ignorance of, and an indifference toward, rights and liberty shared equally by all shades of politically minded opinion, whether reactionary, conservative, New Deal, avowed Socialist or Communist.

KARL B. MICKEY in *Cleveland Press*.

"UNEARNED INCREMENT"

AS the new dealers deal and the nation wrestles with economic problems of unprecedented magnitude, there arises occasionally one of those who still cherish the idea of "the single tax" or are otherwise disciples of the late Henry George.

Every so often an example is cited where the "unearned increment" of a piece of property reaches a staggering sum, and someone, a Georgist or a potential one, arises to protest.

And, indeed, the "unearned increment" argument has never been convincingly refuted. Today in our colleges and universities professors in economic class rooms discuss the ideas of Henry George with their students and the injustice of a land owner or his heirs profiting enormously as a result of population pressure and other factors is pointed out.

Typical of such discussions is an article contained in the current issue of *Unity* by James G. Blauvelt, from which the following is taken:

There was a vacant block of land in New York owned by a subsidiary of the N. Y. Central Railroad which leased it to the Waldorf-Astoria hotel at an annual rent, to begin with, of \$300,000, increased to \$600,000 in 1932, and increased \$50,000 every five years until 1956, when the yearly rent would be \$800,000, when a new lease is to be made. Who made that value? Not the railroad, though it contributed, as did all other activities of everybody else, fire and police protection, great waterworks, sewers, streets, parks, bridges, tunnels, airports, streets and highways, hospitals, schools, colleges, churches, art, literature, commerce, the greatest stores in the world, great newspapers and the presence of millions of people providing activities of every kind.

Why should the railroads have what millions of people have made? The rental of that land should go to the public treasury. The land belongs to the people and so does the income of it.

The Astors bought the property where the Empire State building now stands, for a few thousand dollars. They sold it to Al Smith and his associates for \$15,000,000, and William Waldorf Astor trotted off to England with his half, seven and one-half millions, on the interest of which he and his children, to the end of their time, can ride on the backs of the people. Such a system is a curse. It so distributes wealth that it is a public menace. No graft ever disclosed in public life compares with this enormous gift to the Astors of a value all of the people had created and morally owned.

The recovery administration is so busy with codes and crops that never a minute has been spared to look at a picture which a good many Americans believe is eminently unfair. Henry George's "Single Tax" as a remedy no longer has much liberal support, but perhaps before the present phase in our economic life is passed, a page or two may be taken from the Georgist philosophy and modernized to fit the new deal.

The Progressive, ROBT. M. LAFOLLETTE, Editor.

FROM THE HILLS

Offhand a liberal would regard this slum clearance programme as a noble bit of constructive work on the part of the government, yet when you analyze it out a bit there are fundamental objections.

Generally speaking, anything that raises the standard of living, that provides a better family environment, I am for it, but if along with such improvement goes renewed slavery to the god of greed, then my enthusiasm begins to stutter and backfire.

If the government confiscates these slum sites and erects model tenements, that's fine, but if the government pays an exorbitant price

for these sites and then makes a pleasant place where before there was a plague spot, the government has raised immensely the value of the adjoining private property and the rents on the private tenements will be jerked up.

I am most enthusiastic for these co-operative farm communities where unemployed and their families can begin to create their own living and also a surplus to be traded for necessities that they do not produce.

But I see where Uncle Sam bought the farms of 22 farmers to start one colony and I know that Uncle Sam has thousands of farms that he has taken over on federal loans and that he is offering for sale at private bid. Why not put the farmless farmer on the farmerless farm; indeed why not keep the farmer on his farm, instead of throwing him out and trying to get another poor fish to undertake the load of interest and mortgage payments and taxes and the rest?

If western cities would quit trying to sell these thousands of lots that have been taken over on street assessment debts and would enable jobless gardeners to use these lots, the bread lines would shorten before these "relief" bureaus. Handing our salt pork, beans, flour really doesn't get either civilization or the jobless anything but a temporary belly relief. Nobody need go hungry in this country if idle men and idle land can get acquainted.—HILL BILLY, columnist in *Seattle Star*.

SOUTH AMERICANS ARE FOOLISH, TOO

Economic blindness seems to follow the same channels the world over. Down in Brazil more than 63,000,000 pounds of coffee are being destroyed with the idea that growers of this highly valuable article of food will receive a better price for their products. Ridiculous and senseless of course, but no more so than the action of the federal government in forcing the destruction of thousands of acres of cotton in Mississippi and other southern states on the absurd theory that the way to attain riches is by destroying wealth.

One wonders if in Brazil the policy of destruction is carried to the extremes it is in America? Do the Brazilians levy a tax on themselves to pay themselves for destroying their own cotton? And do they pass laws, in their wild desire to rid themselves of their wealth, designed to fine the little producer who keeps his wealth at home and reward the great foreign owner of the land who ships his wealth abroad? If not, the Brazilians can come to America and learn a few wrinkles in the destruction of wealth by government decree. The officials of both federal and state agricultural departments are experts in the destruction of wealth and will gladly give our distressed neighbors to the south a few pointers on how best to destroy those things they have gone to great pains and expense to produce.

It never occurs to our dumb officials, the same as it never occurs to the dumb officials of Brazil, that to attempt to raise the price of agricultural products by their destruction, even though such a procedure accomplished new money without borrowing a thin dime from anybody, since the government made nearly three billion dollars in clear profit on the revaluation of gold.

The writer is not a veteran of the World War nor the Spanish American War, but I am fighting in defense of the principles involved and for the sake of downtrodden suffering humanity. I dare to call an axe an axe, and a spade a spade. "Big Business" is running America lock, stock and barrel, and unless the plain people take the bull by the horns and start to doing a few rounds for their own beloved America, we are just entering into the real depression ahead of us, instead of being behind us.

False optimism is more dangerous than an angry army. Let America give the men who saved America the just debt due them and do it quickly. An ungrateful Nation never did and never will prosper—it is defeated already.—*The Jeffersonian Democrat*, Jackson, Miss.

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