

CITADEL, MARKET AND ALTAR,
by Spencer Heath, The Science of
Society Foundation, Inc., Balti-
more, 1957. 259 pages. \$6

Reviewed by SELIM TIDEMAN

THIS imposing title of a new book, announced as dealing with the land question, attracted my attention. The author draws an interesting parallel between the evolution of societal relationships and the mass, motion and time concepts of the physical universe. This is interesting, but he conceives of land values as being derived, apparently in their entirety, from associated public and community services.

All security comes from the convention of property and the free contractual technique of the market. The ownership of land, the author affirms, is the foundation for security of property. Government, *The Citadel*, "needs to engage itself only with the prevention and punishment of force or equivalent fraud, and to accept the advantages of the *contractural* process in the performance of its public and community services. This social-izing of government itself cannot fail to follow upon discovery of the presently existing operation of property in land and resources as the democratic distributive service through a contractual as opposed to a political and coercive process."

Our current form of land ownership is said to confer a social service in distributing land for use. "It remains for land owners to take over the responsibility of furnishing all the public services, and some that are now privately performed but could be improved, and thus serve their tenants. The rent that the land owners would collect would yield a profit and make the business desirable."

It is explained that to do this land-owners will form large corporations,

throwing in their individual interests. The shares of these corporations will be in demand as investments. The services rendered will not be merely public utilities but police protection etc. When the system is fully developed, the landed citadel will be the government, beneficent, granting full freedom and protection to the people (as long as they pay the rent). The populace will be free to buy citadel shares in the stockmarket. This evidently means the ultimate merger of all landholding interests into one corporation, finally international in scope.

While the system was gaining ascendancy, it would be the landlord's duty to protect the individual against government exactions and political knavery. Pending the time when land ownership is in complete control of the situation, this might be a difficult task. The owner would tax the tenant all the traffic would bear but might not collect enough to keep government out of the tenant's pocket. Mr. Heath evidently believes that politics can be done away with and security purchased from a landed oligarchy.

The book bears the stamp of a man of culture and broad information even though its message seems almost facetious. Incidentally, the author states that he is not making an attempt to answer "The 'moral' arguments and ponderous syllogisms of the early Herbert Spencer, Malthus, Ricardo and Henry George, which have a kind of formal symmetry within their premised settings." He does not believe in the subjectivity of an individual, "his 'rights' and desires, how he is supposed to feel about them or their supposed infringement. No social institution," he writes, "can be evaluated on such premises." The discussion therefore "avoids both argument and refutation in its description of how, in a social organization, human services, public as well as private, are incorporated in property and distributed by exchange."