

CALLS BOOK REVIEW UNFAIR

★ I have just read in the current issue of THE FREEMAN what purports to be a review of my book—"An Economic Program for a Living Democracy." I must say that it represents a new low in book reviewing, especially for a publication devoted to the discussion of economic theory. Mr. LeBaron, out to commit a literary killing, has wielded his pen in a more reckless and shameful fashion than a gangster would his gun. Since his review told little about my book, his chief purpose being to parade his own profundity (?), I take the liberty of pointing out the following:

1. LeBaron says my program is "Socialistic or projected New Dealism." (Some one ought to tell him the difference between the two.) It is hardly "New Dealism," since a substantial portion of the book is devoted to showing that the many New Deal regulatory laws added each year is bringing us ever closer to the regimentary economies adopted in Fascist states. I tried to make out a strong case for more freedom from regulation and taxation for private enterprise in those areas where free competition is possible.
2. As to whether my proposal is "Socialistic," I emphasized that labels are unreliable guides, since Fascists appropriate words like "Socialism" and "Social Justice" and, I might now add, since bigots embrace the name of Henry George, if not his philosophy. LeBaron boils because I advocate government ownership and management of enterprises in those areas where "public enterprise would be more efficient than private." He should be told that this is precisely what Henry George advocated. A portion of my book is devoted to proving that point. Abraham Lincoln, John Stuart Mill, and other eminent social philosophers preached the same thing. Perhaps LeBaron ought to lump them all together as "enemies of freedom."
3. In one paragraph of his review LeBaron assembles widely scattered phrases outside their context and breaks them up in such a way as to utterly distort my real meaning. To put the record straight here would make this letter far too long.
4. In my book I proposed the public acquisition of all land, either by outright purchase now or by gradually increasing the taxes on bare land and decreasing them on the improvements until we reach the single tax stage. No one would suspect from your review that this very fundamental Georgist objective is a dominant feature of my book.
5. In addition to the land, I urge the purchase of all monopolistic industries—railroads, power companies, telephone systems, etc. This is clearly in harmony with what Henry George stood for.
6. I also urge that in semi-monopolistic fields in which anti-social practices have developed, the government shall, instead of resorting to regimentary control laws, (which you also abhor) either offer to purchase such enterprises or set up social competition as a test to determine which is most efficient in that field. That, too, is something that Henry George favored

under the principle that government shall engage in those enterprises in which it can "do for the mass of individuals those things which cannot be done or cannot be so well done by individual action."

Would any reader of LeBaron's review suspect, that the above mentioned proposals are contained in my book; that I am essentially a disciple of Henry George and was even awarded at one time a "diploma" by the George School of Social Science?

I trust that THE FREEMAN will try to make amends for the irresponsible statements contained in its pages about a book which should have received in your columns sympathetic consideration, to say the least. Some of us may have honest differences of opinion over the meaning of portions of Henry George's philosophy. But no publication devoted to his memory ought to tolerate for one moment the Hitlerian tactics which your reviewer applied to my book.

Chicago

IRVING H. FLAMM