

Our Credo

* AS ITS NAME IMPLIES, THE FREEMAN believes in FREEDOM. Like that great American economist and philosopher, Henry George, whose principles it espouses, THE FREEMAN believes that the chief obstacle to freedom is poverty. Poverty springs from unemployment, and unemployment is the direct result of our unwise system of land tenure. This system permits land to be withheld from use in the hope of speculative gain, and allows economic rent—sometimes termed ground rent or the site value of land—to be collected by private landlords.

THE FREEMAN believes that taxes are a needless burden on labor and labor products and therefore an unmitigated evil, while tariffs, by compelling the American public to pay higher prices for both foreign and domestic products than would otherwise be necessary, are nothing more nor less than a system of sheer robbery, foisted on the people under the pretense that they protect the American workingman. The truth is that, to the extent that they limit imports, tariffs curtail domestic industries which, in the absence of such barriers, would be actively and profitably engaged in producing American goods to be exchanged for those of foreign origin. This makes for unemployment and keener competition for jobs, while the higher prices exacted by the protected industries tend to reduce the purchasing power of the pay envelope. Thus, instead of protecting labor, as has been the claim since the fallacy that they protected our "infant industries" was exploded, tariffs are conducive to increased idleness, lower wages and a lower standard of living.

In the international field, tariffs render the raw materials and superior products of each country more inaccessible to all other countries, and thereby thwart man's natural instinct to get the best there is to be had, to gratify his desires with the least exertion. This leads to harder living conditions the world over and to increased rivalry

for trade in the fallacious belief that the "supply" of trade is never as great as the "demand" for trade. Tariffs are therefore the most prolific cause of war.

Aiming at the establishment of freedom and enduring peace, THE FREEMAN advocates

FIRST: The collection of economic rent by the government. This would bring idle lands into use, since no one could afford to hold land out of production; and it would obviate the necessity of taxes, since the revenue thus collected would be adequate for all legitimate expenses of the government. With land available to all, widespread unemployment would disappear as if by magic, and with it would go its evil progeny, poverty.

SECOND: The abolition of all tariffs and trade barriers of every kind, both within our own borders and between our own and other nations. Thus would men be free to exercise their natural instinct to trade, and, since men never trade except at a profit, the standard of living would rise in every country in the world.

The foregoing measures are justified on both moral and economic grounds. Economic rent is in a peculiar sense a socially-created product, and its one legitimate use is to defray the cost of government. Tariffs are class legislation of the most vicious kind and, like taxes, they have never been anything but a burden on industry. The adoption of these proposals would constitute the greatest step in the direction of freedom that the world has ever known.

—C. O. STEELE