

A Word With You

ON the upper west side of Manhattan there still stands a dilapidated house, vaguely a public monument, which was once the home of Alexander Hamilton. In a neglected corner of Central Park is a weather-worn statue of Hamilton, its base scrawled with graffiti.

Hamilton's arch-rival, Thomas Jefferson, has fared better. His home in Monticello has been handsomely restored, and an impressive monument to his memory stands in Washington, D.C.

We all consider ourselves Jeffersonians today, I suppose, and scarcely anybody would call himself a Hamiltonian. Jefferson, the great apostle of liberty and decentralized government, versus Hamilton, the conservative and advocate of centralized government.

True, Hamilton wanted a strong government, but one that could act for the common good. A conservative, he was a stauncher believer in civil rights than many of today's conservatives.

We cannot today (we Georgists, at any rate) go along with Hamilton's tax policies of tariffs and excise taxes, but his economics was not all bad. He did believe in the main in the free market, but thought government could offer "prudent" aids to industry. He did not believe so much in protection as in subsidies—an idea which Henry George also favored over protection. Another "prudent" government aid he

proposed was the building of roads—not at all shocking to us today. And he did propose a land tax for the support of state governments.

In promoting manufactures, Hamilton was perhaps a better economist than Jefferson, who was influenced by the Physiocratic idea that agriculture was productive and manufacturing sterile. To this argument, Hamilton replied: "To affirm that the labor of the manufacturer is unproductive, because he consumes as much of the produce of land as he adds value to the raw material which he manufactures, is not better founded than it would be to affirm that the labor of the farmer, which furnishes materials to the manufacturer, is unproductive, because he consumes an equal value of manufactured articles."

We rightly call Jefferson a friend of man who wrote the Declaration of Independence, and also these moving words: "I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man." We may also call Hamilton a friend of man who wrote:

"The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for among old parchments or musty records. They are written, as with a sunbeam, in the whole volume of human nature, by the hand of the Divinity itself, and can never be obscured by mortal power."

—Robert Clancy

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The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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