

THE JUSTIFICATION AND LIMITS OF PUBLIC PROPERTY
IN FREE SOCIETY.

George Hardy

-Introduction-

The objective of this paper is to show that whilst a Free Market Society is the most desirable, such society cannot exist unless it ensures that its members have EQUAL RIGHTS TO EXIST.

The Economic projection of political rights is shown in entitlements, ownership, property rights.

As Equal Political Rights to exist ensure that one individual is not entitled to kill another to suit his own advantage - similarly EQUAL ECONOMIC RIGHTS to survive ought to ensure that one individual be not entitled to deprive others from equal "access to survival conditions".

CONSEQUENTLY - Equal rights to exist imply that "survival conditions" i.e. natural resources ought not to be in private property. They form the basis of Public Property, to which then, each citizen, has an equal entitlement.

There is general agreement that some limitations of individual freedoms are justified in order to protect citizens from each other, and to ensure the safety, security and health of the community.

It is accepted that optimum individual freedom can be achieved if political rights and responsibilities are equal.

Unequal rights clearly permit privileged groups to oppress and persecute others.

As unequal political rights result in persecution, similarly unequal economic rights permit privileged (monopolist) groups to exploit others.

Equal Rights projected into the economic sphere imply Equal Access to, or more practically an equal share in the benefits of survival conditions. So long as some individuals, or some groups of individuals may be entitled to demand a fee from others before they are permitted to survive, to remain in Spaceship Earth, to breathe air, use water - in other words - to share in the benefits of survival conditions, then neither political freedom, nor free trade is possible.

"FREEDOM" IMPLIES EQUAL RIGHTS FOR SURVIVAL.

In my view, which I call "Consistent Liberalism" or "Anti-Monopolism" - "Freedom" in the Libertarian sense implies both that all citizens are entitled to equal political and economic rights and responsibilities, and also that they have equal rights to survive, to exist.

As the economic equivalent of political freedom is private property so the economic equivalent of political equality is public property.

To anticipate possible objections concerning the communisation of public property, I want to state, that communal management, (or State monopoly) cannot provide the greatest benefits, and it also inherently permits the oppression and exploitation of individuals in the same way as private monopolies and privileges do.

Communisation, and state monopolies result mostly in bureaucratic exploitation and are neither efficient nor equitable methods for utilising resources and maximising benefits.

They are certainly not the only nor the best methods to return the benefits of public property to the citizens.

Equal rights to survive, equal shares in the benefits of survival conditions can be ensured quite practically without taking land, or other natural resources out of private use.

Exclusive use of natural resources can continue, free market trading in real estate, in minerals, exploration rights etc., will continue, and all possessions, private property can be freely gifted, bequeathed and inherited - as the exclusive right of free individuals.

THE MOST BENEFICIAL (profitable) management OF PUBLIC PROPERTY IS RENTING at open Public Auction.

Tenderers can be required to satisfy detailed requirements, to observe prescribed conditions for land-use, conservation etc., just as landowners are subject to all this already.

Functions which are currently run as "public services" or "utilities" (i.e. Post Office; Transport; Electricity; etc.) can be similarly leased to "Performance Contractors" - who can be subjected to penalties for non-performance.

The economic benefits deriving from the use of Public property can be collected in the form of a rental fee paid for their exclusive use, as determined by offers made on the free market.

This is the justified public revenue, which represents the maximum value of benefits from the best use of Public property, and this is the clearly quantified amount, in which each citizen is entitled to an equal share.