

News From Malta

LAND AND FREEDOM SEIZED AS SEDITIONOUS LITERATURE

IN 1929 Dr. Joseph Orlando celebrated the Jubilee of Progress and Poverty by laying on the table of our parliament a bill to tax land values. Those veterans of our movement who remember the "bitter eighties" will appreciate the statement that Malta is fifty years behind the times.

When parliament was dissolved he sought re-election; but as the local bishops imposed a ban on all who voted for the labor and constitutional parties the elections were postponed. When they were resumed proclamations were suddenly issued, and as suddenly repealed, which made it illegal to hold meetings in sundry places where it is customary to hold them. That favored certain parties and injured others, so in the end all parties at one time or another ignored those ill-advised proclamations. His Excellency the Governor granted forgiveness to all offenders except the meeting held in Dr. Orlando's district. He and other leaders were arrested, found guilty; some being first offenders were warned, the others imprisoned.

In October, 1931, when His Excellency was inaugurated, he said: "My only desire is to see the people of Malta prosperous and happy." In his candlemass speech of 1932 he repeated that statement, adding "that he also wished to enable responsible government to be restored," but in his candlemass speech of 1933 he said: "that which I then told you I wished for has come about and responsible government has been restored."

But Malta today is further from prosperity than it ever has been during the recollection of the present generation. A hundred years ago one-third of Malta was government land, its rent was public revenue. His Excellency and his predecessors have alienated into private ownership more than a half of that land, and have imposed taxes principally on the poor, to recoup that loss.

These acts here, as elsewhere, have created unemployment and poverty.

Thus he confessed that he had ceased even to desire to make the people prosperous. For that change there were two reasons. First he had learned that the only way in which he could make the people prosperous is the way taught by Dr. McGlynn; and secondly that: His Grace the Archbishop "does not in any way approve of Dr. McGlynn's opinion."

Where the sovereignty of God and His justice are established no man is anxious as to how he can get food and clothing and no government fears riots; but in Malta a retired government official, in his evidence before the royal commission, stated that the alternative to this was the passage by His Excellency as president of the nominated council which governs Malta in reserved matters of a

sedition propaganda ordinance, professedly to nip in the bud the plant he had sown.

Under that ordinance he signed warrants for the arrest of six leaders of the labor movement, including Mr. Orlando, on the ground that they had kept in their possession literature which it declared was seditious. But the ordinance expressly stated that those are exempt who have a *lawful excuse* to keep in their possession such literature. That clearly includes all journalists, and the trial brought to light that some of the accused had actually used said literature as basis of their articles against sedition.

He also brought to light that while the middle and lower classes in Malta are expected to know at sight what is seditious literature yet the highest legal talent that the government could buy "retained for further consideration" *Land and Liberty*, LAND AND FREEDOM, and other literature which had been seized from Mr. Orlando. Finally they acknowledge that there was nothing seditious in the first two. Other literature was considered seditious and was lodged in court, and included "Set My People Free," and a "Freeman's Citizenship."

ERNEST GEOGHEGAN.

BOOK REVIEWS

A VALUABLE WORK*

Nothing can be more fascinating, more fruitful of profitable conclusions than the study of the ideas that have impelled the human race toward progress. Mr. Whitehead has chosen to adventure among various kinds of ideas, summarizing their history. For instance, there is the chapter on the human soul; on the humanitarian ideal; on freedom; on foresight; the laws of nature; science and philosophy; truth; peace—and many other ideas and ideals of humanity. We have had summations of the philosophic systems of the world, but this is the first time, perhaps, that an attempt has been made to garner and arrange in historical order the growth of ideas along many lines.

The author develops a peculiar difference between ancient and modern thought. He calls attention to the fact that slavery dominated and colored all thought in ancient times. Thinkers accepted slavery as the necessary, obvious background. Modern thought on the other hand does not start from the premise that slavery is a natural human condition, inevitable to a large proportion of the earth's inhabitants. This difference of concept, indeed, this change in the picture of civilization—is highly significant.

Pursuing this trend further, is it not possible that some day there may be a third era in human history when men will look back with pity to our time, and marvel that we had such a set concept of the ownership of land, that for thousands of years private property in land was accepted as a necessary condition?

Georgists have been heard to bemoan the fact that the progress of Henry George's fundamental idea is slow. While not intending to shirk present opportunities, and while fully intending to do all that we can to further the cause of Georgism, the following words are nevertheless comforting, and true to a very large extent:

Mr. Whitehead says:

"The slow issue of general ideas into practical consequences is not wholly due to inefficiency of human character. There is a problem to be solved. The difficulty is just this: It may be impossible to conceive a reorganization of society adequate for the removal of some admitted evil without destroying the social organization and the civilization that depends on it. Even the wisest are unable to conceive the

*Adventures of ideas, by Alfred North Whitehead. Cloth 8 Vo. 381 pp. Price \$3.50. Macmillan Co., New York and London.

possibility of untried forms of social relations. Successful progress creeps from point to point, testing each step.

"The final introduction of a reform does not necessarily prove the moral superiority of the reforming generation. Conditions may have changed, so that what is possible now may not have been possible then. A great idea is not to be conceived as merely waiting for enough good men to carry it into practical effect. That is a childish view of the history of ideas. The ideal in the background is promoting the gradual growth of the requisite communal customs, adequate to sustain the load of its exemplification."

Students of the Malthusian theory will be intrigued with the chapter that traces the actual history of Europe viewed with the Malthusian doctrine in mind. Mr. Whitehead successfully refutes Malthus, but by a method unlike that used by Henry George.

It is with regret that we find no word about Henry George in this unique history of ideas. The author discusses the sudden arrest of great civilizations, and points out that they burgeoned into fullness through commerce, and that at a certain point, commerce began to fail and an "arrest" set in. Mr. Whitehead says that if we could understand the reason for that arrest, *we would solve the main problem of sociology*. To the man who can so well explain the part that Plato had in conditioning thought for more than a thousand years, it seems strange that George's startling and essentially revolutionary idea that land must be made accessible to all should be ignored. It is this very wall, this very problem of civilization's decay, that each earnest and serious present-day writer stumbles against, yet, like the thinkers of old, who vaguely felt that there was something wrong, and knew not that it was slavery, our modern men know not that the land, absorbed by the few, is the condition that arrests progress, and threatens each civilization.—ANTOINETTE KAUFMANN.

Correspondence

DISCUSSES A NAME FOR THE MOVEMENT

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I am always glad to read anything written by that valiant champion of the Single Tax, Stephen Bell.

He suggests many titles or names in lieu of the Single Tax and particularly commends "Georgian Socialism" as his first choice.

Bi-Socialism, a book by Oliver R. Trowbridge, published in 1903, stated it was the proper function of the State to socialize only land values and public utilities and a majority of Single Taxers agree with that concept.

Trowbridge (I hope he is among the living) is or was a follower of Henry George.

Louis F. Post in one of his magnificent editorials in *The Public* maintained that Single Taxers were "Natural Socialists;" that the State by its very nature was socialistic, but should confine its socialistic activities to the socializing of land values and public utilities and nothing else. Of course he recognized the right of the State to maintain peace.

If my memory serves me right Mr. Post's editorial was written shortly after Trowbridge's book was published.

Pseudo-socialism in its various guises, masquerading as "the great political and economic emancipator" would be stripped of all its economic errors, when contrasted with the truths of the Single Tax; i.e. "Natural Socialism;" a name that will induce many to enquire into the philosophy of Henry George.

Chicago, Ill.

ALEX PERNOD.

UPTON SINCLAIR CORRECTS OUR REVIEWER

EDITOR LAND FREEDOM:

I thank you for your courtesy in sending me the review of "Upton Sinclair Presents William Fox." I quite agree that this is an ex parte statement. It is avowedly that. However, I think it is fair to add that when an ex parte statement has been on the market for exactly six months, as this attack has been, and when no reply is made, we

may claim that the defendants have pleaded guilty before the bar of public opinion.

Your reviewer says he is satisfied "that the downfall of the vast chain of movie houses assembled by Mr. Fox cannot be attributed solely to the extravagance and dishonesty of his successors. Generally bad business conditions, I suspect, had much to do with the debacle." Your reviewer would have found his suspicions justified if he had read the book more carefully. For example, on page 325 "Of course this collapse of Fox Theatres was in the midst of a general collapse of business, and can't all be attributed to Wiggin and Clarke and Stuart and Otterson!" The exclamation mark in the above was intended to indicate to the reader the absurdity of the idea of overlooking the influence of the depression upon the events narrated.

Also your reviewer thinks that it is "poor taste" for me to refer to "the victim" as "the Fox." This also is fully explained in the book. Mr. Fox continually refers to himself as "the Fox," and I more than once called attention in the book to this habit of his. Very early in the book, page 19, occurs the following:

"A vital part in the life story of William Fox is the story of little Eve Leo. It was an odd coincidence that a Fox should have married a Lioness; they both of them make puns upon this coincidence."

Los Angeles, Calif.

UPTON SINCLAIR.

VOLTAIRE AND THE PHYSIOCRATS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

I have just been reading the July-August issue of LAND AND FREEDOM which is, as usual, extremely interesting. I note there is an article by Mr. Danziger on Voltaire and the Physiocrats. I cannot throw any further light upon the question of whether Voltaire changed his views or not; but you may find it interesting to know that the physiocrats wrote a very able reply to Voltaire's attack upon them. An account of this controversy was given by Prof. Leroy-Beaulieu in his "Treatise on the Science of Finance." An abridged translation of this will be found in *Land Values* for September, 1916, page 99.

It appears to me that the physiocrats had very sound ideas as to the incidence of a tax on the value of land.

London, Eng.

F. C. R. DOUGLASS.

FROM A CUBAN SUBSCRIBER

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

It gives me great pleasure to be able to congratulate you on your masterly exposition and criticism of the National Recovery Act. Do you think the "brain trust" at Washington will read it?

Mr. Roosevelt has publicly stated that the country demands bold economic experimentation. It seems we are to get plenty of it. However it appears rather childish to experiment when basic laws are known. We need not throw ourselves from twenty story buildings in violation of the law of gravitation to demonstrate that we will be killed.

Oteen, N. C.

EVARISTO MONTALVO.

PROGRESS IN ROUMANIA

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

According to the pamphlet entitled "The Agrarian Reform in Roumania," which was sent me by Mr. George Anagnostache, Vice-Counsel from Roumania, the land-loving people of that country have effected an agrarian reform.

Previously to the revolution, "not even half owned the land which they worked, while fifty per cent of the cultivated land was in the hands of a very small proportion of large landowners, representing less than 0.56 per cent of the total amount of landowners."

The strong democratic currents which led up to the land reform were prompted by Mr. I. C. Bratiano, who went on the sound principle that "the land must belong to him that works it."

Finally, pressure became so tense that the King of Roumania in