

## Correspondence

### MISTAKES OF PROF. WHITEHEAD

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

A word might be added to the excellent review of "Adventures of Ideas," by Alfred North Whitehead, that appeared in the Sept.—Oct. issue of LAND AND FREEDOM, to show how easy it is for a philosopher to fall into conventional errors when dealing with political economy. Thus Prof. Whitehead uses the familiar example of the shocking factory conditions in England in the early days of the Industrial Revolution to prove that "the mere doctrines of freedom, individualism, and competition, had produced a resurgence of something very like industrial slavery at the base of society."

The assumption that individualism was on trial at that time is of course absurd. The enclosure of the commons had tightened the grip of land monopoly, and the factory workers were the victims of this invasion of individual liberty. A system based upon privileges, the very antithesis of *laissez-faire*, must bear the responsibility for the enslavement. The workers were not free because the natural alternative of self-employment on the land had been taken away from them, an alternative that would have enabled them to exact higher wages and the safeguards that became the object of factory laws.

Prof. Whitehead believes (p. 44) that a "directive agency" is required to help mere individualistic competition to produce a satisfactory society, but being blind to the part that land monopoly and trade monopoly play in the economic world, he is either unaware of the argument for equal freedom or does not consider it worthy of attention. In common with many so-called economists, he ignores a fundamental factor in the problem under discussion. This leads him to suppose that "such sharp-cut notions as 'the economic man,' 'supply and demand,' 'competition,' (are) in process of dilution by a close study of the actual re-actions of various populations to the stimuli which are relevant to modern commerce."

Commerce produces different reactions under restraint and under freedom. History furnished numerous examples of the attempt on the part of governments to ignore the natural laws, but the price has always been oppression and strife, a price that is being paid today by unfortunate populations in many parts of the world.

It is the hope of those who still believe in equal freedom that, with the removal of privileges and monopoly, competition would produce in society the desired equilibrium. Although Prof. Whitehead is of the opinion on page 70 that compulsion is necessary to overcome anti-social tendencies, on page 105 he points out that "the worth of men consists in their liability to persuasion," and on page 213 he quotes Plato's final conviction "that the divine element in the world is to be conceived as a persuasive agency and not a coercive agency."

The test of any economic system must rest finally upon its power to win universal acceptance, and therein lies the strength of the ideas developed in the 18th century by the Physiocrats and Adam Smith, and clarified by Herbert Spencer and Henry George. Unlike Socialism or Fascism, the demand for equality of opportunity must repudiate violence, and depend upon justice and fair play to win approval. Its platform, the earth, is the only one broad enough to hold the entire human race.

Southwest Harbor, Maine.

FRANK W. GARRISON.

### ACTIVITY IN CALIFORNIA

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

For several years past the real estate boards of California have been engaged in an able and skillfully managed campaign, as they claimed, to relieve real estate from its "burden of taxation." They interested with them some of the farm organizations and also succeeded in entrapping the state organization of building associations and other bodies. Altogether they presented a very formidable appearance. In carrying out their plans a determined pressure was brought to bear upon state officials and the state legislature. The result of all this was

that two of the state officials, the comptroller of the state and the head of the State Board of Equalization, gave their names (Reily—Stewart) to an amendment of the State Constitution which was duly submitted to the people in June and carried by a considerable majority, the people not being clearly informed as to the nature of the measure upon which they were voting. This amendment, although containing some apparently good features, had as its real object the limitation of taxation upon real and personal property to an amount not to exceed one-fourth of the sum appropriated for all State purposes and with power in the legislature to authorize the counties and cities to limit their taxation on such property to a similar one-fourth of the amount of their appropriations.

Of course the net result of this would be to make necessary a transfer of taxation, for the most part, from the shoulders of those who may be called the "possessing" classes on to the shoulders of the poor.

That this statement is correct is shown by the fact that the legislature, anticipating the adoption of this amendment, provided California with a two and one-half per cent retail sales tax, which tax for several months has been in operation.

The realtors and their assistants overplayed their hand, and the citizens of the State of California have learned through daily experiences just what this sales tax means, for it was indeed presented in its most objectionable form and without disguise. The state of public feeling is such that it has seemed to a number of those really acquainted with the subject of taxation that the present was the most opportune time imaginable for the pressing of real reform in taxation.

Acting upon this belief, there was presented to the State Federation of Labor, meeting at Monterey, a resolution which, omitting the "Whereases," in its final form read as follows:

"Resolved by the California State Federation of Labor that we demand such a constitutional amendment as will forever prevent the imposition of any sales tax, either direct or indirect, increasing the price of commodities, will repeal so much of the Reily—Stewart amendment as limits taxation upon property generally, and an amendment which will lead to a progressive reduction and the final extinction of taxation upon improvements and all forms of tangible personal property, including the crops and fruit trees of the farmer and all he has to buy, of the results of our industry."

This resolution was introduced by Mr. Jost, a delegate from Palo Alto, favorably reported by a committee of which Mr. John F. Dalton of Los Angeles was a party, and unanimously adopted after a discussion in which Paul Scharrenberg, the Secretary of the Federation, and Jackson H. Ralston, who had been invited to address the convention, took part.

With this condition existing, and at the suggestion of representatives of different organizations in San Diego and Los Angeles, an initiative amendment was prepared to be submitted at the election of next year, which covers four points:

1. The repeal of the recent sales tax law and forbidding any like attempt in the future in any guise whatever.
2. Doing away with so much of the recent Reily—Stewart amendment as limits taxation upon property to one-fourth of the amount of the appropriations and it empowers the legislature to carry this out as to counties and cities.
3. At once exempts \$1,000 of the assessed value of the improvements on any homestead from taxation.
4. Provides for a progressive abolition of county, city and taxing district taxation upon improvements and tangible personal property. This to be at the rate of twenty per cent per annum for five years, at the end of which no such taxation would exist. The same rule is directed to be followed by the state.

There are other provisions to make this effective but not calling for particular comment at this time.

This proposed amendment received the unanimous approval of a large meeting of people interested in tax and land reform of the city of San Diego, and like favor at the hands of a very representative and

enthusiastic gathering of reformers of Los Angeles, which later took place on October 1.

As a result of the foregoing, a committee has been appointed with a view to carrying on statewide agitation, which committee will from time to time be added to. For the present, Mr. George W. Patterson, of No. 2422 N. Alvarado Street, Los Angeles, is the chairman, and Mr. A. J. Samis, No. 1945 Landa Street, Los Angeles, is acting as Secretary-Treasurer.

The amendment is now in the hands of the Attorney-General of the State, who is under the law charged with the duty of preparing a descriptive caption which must appear on all initiative petitions. This work will be done within the next week or ten days, and petitions will shortly thereafter be circulated, and by the time the next number of LAND AND FREEDOM is issued, this most important campaign will be in full swing.

Can this campaign be successful? In my mind, California offers believers in real progress a better opportunity for success than it has ever presented on any previous occasion and one the like of which may not come again in twenty years. The people are so thoroughly disgusted with the sales tax that they will gladly welcome anything promising a relief from it and the inauguration of a real reform in taxation. The realtors have so far overworked their success that there is a general revulsion of feeling, of which we have a right and can properly take advantage. This should be worth to our proposition many tens, perhaps hundreds, of thousands of votes.

We have today the official backing of the State Federation of Labor. It is difficult for the moment to fix the exact membership of this organization—it is growing so rapidly. It is certainly not less than 130,000 to 135,000. All of its subordinate bodies are open to our cause on the action of the State Federation, and we can, I think, rely upon an almost unanimous vote from the membership.

Despite these most formidable factors, we cannot alter the fact that we are facing determined, skillful and powerful forces. The real estate speculators will have the banks strongly allied with them and will have tremendous newspaper support. It is difficult to point out any considerable newspapers whose aid can be counted upon, and several of the leading ones we know in advance are owned by people possessing enormous areas of speculative lands.

These obstacles to success always exist, and if they are to deter us, then we may well despair of ever making any progress. For my part I believe there is sufficient force in truth and in the logic of our situation to carry us forward to success.

So believing, for one, I urge our friends everywhere to give us all the assistance in the way of money, counsel, and literature of which they are capable. If we all do our full share to help on the California campaign and make no egregious blunders, success is assured, and I can conceive of no more gratifying thing that could happen than to have the State of California the first state to offer a real approximation to the carrying out of the doctrines laid down by Henry George, who spent nearly all the years of his life under its skies.

May I add that while no title has yet formally been chosen for our movement, a suggested title which has met with considerable approval is that of "Common Sense Taxation Constitutional Amendment Campaign Committee." We are not going to concern ourselves with general theories, except so far as they necessarily enter into discussion. We shall hope that the campaign may be for that simple thing which is so rare and yet so appealing to everybody, the exercise in respect to taxation of plain common sense.

Palo Alto, Calif.

JACKSON H. RALSTON.

#### MORE ABOUT GEORGE H. EVANS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

In your Sept.—Oct., 1933 issue of LAND AND FREEDOM is an article concerning George H. Evans, "A Forgotten Land Reformer." It might be of interest to you to know that Samuel P. Orth has given

George H. Evans a page in his "Immigration and Labor," published by the Yale University Press.

Undoubtedly, Mr. Orth would have devoted more than a page to this "Land Reformer" if it had not been for the condensed form of his book.

Colorado Springs, Colo.

ROBERT BENSBERG.

#### WE SHOULD NOT HAVE MADE THIS ERROR

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Thank you for the promised correction about the date of the first Single Tax convention held in Texas. I wanted the record kept straight, and didn't want you Yankees to think Texas is so far removed from the world's activities that we don't know what is going on. Single Tax is old stuff in Texas. The ink was hardly dry on the first issue of "Progress and Poverty" when it was on sale in our book stores, and there is where H. F. Ring ran across it. Texas has produced more than her share of Single Taxers. Houston alone produced two apostles whose work is known on both sides of the Atlantic—H. F. Ring who wrote "The Case Plainly Stated"—a title given by Henry George himself when he printed it in the *Standard*, and Joe Pastoriza who made the Houston Tax Plan known everywhere. They are both long since dead now, Ring dying in 1915 and Joe two years later after he was elected Mayor by a majority that gave the grafters a jolt they haven't forgotten yet. Both were mighty good friends of mine. I am getting old now—69 next December, and there are only two of the old members of the Log Cabin S. T. Club left—Jas. Charlton, our County Treasurer, and myself. He is older—86 last April. Every time I open LAND AND FREEDOM the first thing I see is some old timer gone. But the H. G. School! That was good reading. Thank God there will be some new blood to take up our work when we pass out. I guess my subscription is about up now, so I am enclosing a check. I can't pay for as much reading as I used, to but LAND AND FREEDOM will be the last for me to give up.

Houston, Texas.

P. W. SCHWANDER.

#### FARMERS AND FARMERS

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

You'll be interested in a talk I had today with a storekeeper to whom I tried in vain, to sell some goods. Conditions are bad, he said, because the farmer isn't getting anything for his product. Inflation is the only thing that will help the farmer. More money, that's what the farmer needs.

It turned out in the course of our conversation that this merchant was a "farmer." From previous experience with these "merchant-farmers" I knew what he meant. He had a farm that he rented out to a tenant. There was no use in correcting him; I had tried to do this before but I learned that these landlords here still claim they are farmers. They were actual farmers a few years ago and the fact that they have ceased to work the land and that their only connection with it is to collect rent and pay taxes does not seem, to them, any reason for not calling themselves farmers.

Now, this man gave me some interesting data. The rental he receives—and this seems to be the average for farm lands in Iowa—is six dollars per annum per acre. His is a corn farm. The yield this year was fifty bushels per acre. The present price is twenty-five cents per bushel. The tenant therefore, has earned a gross of \$12.50 per acre. Therefore, the tenant is paying almost fifty per cent of his gross income for the use of the land.

Out of the \$6.50 per acre which the real farmer has left he must pay for the labor of putting the corn into the ground and taking it out, hauling to market, selling-commissions, and what-not. In addition the lease for the farm provides that a certain portion of it shall be set aside for hay or other non-productive crops. This clause is put into the lease so that the tenant shall not work the land barren in a few years. While the tenant gets something out of his portion of the land in the way of feed for his cattle or horses, it is non-productive as far