

THE EAST SAINT LOUIS RACE RIOTS

Condemnation of the conduct of the Germans in Belgium would seem like rank hypocrisy in East St. Louis, where the massacre of unoffending negroes has startled so many who want to see the world safe for democracy. But those who see in it only a manifestation of racial division are far enough from a true apprehension of the causes that have given rise to it. The importation of negroes into East St. Louis to take the places of workmen of white skin—the old slavery in a new form—is the occasion for this outbreak of savagery.

If that brilliantly edited organ of the colored race, the *Crisis*, as well as other papers of the same class, would but note this fact, it would help to clarify their conception of certain social phenomena. The emancipation of the colored race was but a half-way emancipation. When we struck off the chains of chattel slaves, we brought them as workers into immediate competition with their white brothers. With a somewhat lower standard of living the competition for employment presented itself in a very formidable and threatening aspect. The superficial fact of a difference in color merely accentuates the antagonism of two economic groups; certain latent racial aversions inherited as historical or political traditions, serve as emphasis. But the basis of the division is not purely racial. Any mere physical characteristic, eyes oblique, hook noses or club feet, if generally possessed by a group of laborers with a lower standard of living, would separate them quite as positively into an obnoxious group, and subject them to the same discrimination at the hands of the lawless and vicious.

That this is not the whole question may be conceded. But that it serves in part to explain the deplorable occurrences in East St. Louis, as well as many other manifestations of race prejudice, is a fact which should be of interest to those working for the emancipation of the colored race.

In this connection these weighty words are to be considered. They are from an article by Prof. Jerome Dowd, of the University of

Oklahoma, in the January number of the *Journal of Negro History*:

"A country where there is an abundance of free land—in such a country it is impossible for one man to secure another to work for him except by coercion; for when a man has a chance to use free land and its products he will work only for himself, and take all the product for himself rather than work for another and accept a bare subsistence for himself. On the contrary, where all the land is appropriated, a man who does not own land has no chance to live except at the mercy of the landlord. He is obliged to offer himself as a wage-earner or a tenant. The landlord can obtain, therefore, all the help he may need without coercion. Free labor is then economically advantageous to both the landlord and the wage-earner, since the freedom of the latter inspires greatly increased production. From these facts and considerations, verified by history, it may be laid down as a sociological law that where land is monopolized, slavery necessarily yields to a regime of freedom."

GETTING VACANT LAND INTO USE

At the 1916 session of the Alberta legislature, the tax laws were amended so that the local authorities may compromise (subject to the approval of the Provincial Minister) arrears of taxes on vacant subdivided areas, provided the lot plan is cancelled and "land which is not and may never be required for subdivision purposes, put to some use whereby it may be an asset to the community."

Discussing this legislation the Department of Municipal Affairs in its report for 1916 says:

"Many of our rural municipalities, which include territory adjacent to cities and the larger towns, have had their records burdened with uncertain assets in the shape of arrears of taxes on subdivided areas which should never have been subdivided and were only of use as farm land. Under the added powers above mentioned, many owners of subdivided areas have been issued clear tax receipts on payment of a sum amounting to a good deal less than the outstanding taxes. As such a compromise has always been approved sub-

ject to the cancellation of the plan of subdivision, the result has been to bring under production and cultivation a great deal of land that had been withdrawn from use as farm land for the purpose of making it subdivision property. This doing away with such subdivided areas will be beneficial to the community in many ways, not only by enabling the municipality to have a better idea of its real assets, but also by bringing under cultivation good farm lands that had been lying idle. This result could hardly have been brought about in any other way, as the taxes which had accumulated in many cases amounted to more than the land was worth, and if tax enforcement proceedings had been carried out and the land sold for taxes, the municipality would not have been able to get all taxes due from the returns of the sale, and arrangement of payment by compromise settles the matter much more quickly and as a rule with a loss to the municipality which is more than counterbalanced by the bringing of the land into a state of production."

"LA PRENSA" ON THE SINGLE TAX

Translation of the first and last paragraphs of an editorial appearing in *La Prensa*, the largest and most influential daily of Buenos Aires, of March 19, 1917:

"Forty years have passed since Henry George, the celebrated North American sociologist, gave the world his book, "Progress and Poverty," which has attained the greatest bibliographical success of the century, and which, translated into the principal languages, has diffused among all civilized peoples his powerful analysis of the prevalent economic theories and definitions. In this work, the socialization of the land is presented as the basis and solution for every tax system in the world which today gravitates upon the activity, the labor, and the wealth accumulated by humanity.....

The practical application of the Single Tax upon the land free of improvements, as a substitute for the whole enormous load of taxes, tariffs, excise rates, licences, permits, etc., which fall upon all the activities of our life, may be the solution that the country longs

for, and so we believe that the public authorities ought to place in the hands of distinguished Argentine economists and thinkers the study of this important system of taxation in order, by this means, together with the data that would be officially collected, to arrive at definite information and well-founded opinions, which will put the government in a position to take the decisions that might be the logical corollary."

AN INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE

The Women's Christian Temperance Union which under the leadership of the late Frances E. Willard, did splendid service in the cause of sobriety, has never gone on record as declaring that intemperance is the cause of poverty. Nor has it denied anywhere or at any time that poverty is one of the causes of intemperance. In fact, Frances Willard, herself a Single Taxer, while not relaxing her work in opposition to an admitted evil, was not blind to the real and intimate association of these two problems of poverty and intemperance, and knew indeed their true relation. In view of this consideration it is not a little surprising to find the treasurer of the Lockport, N. Y., W. C. T. U., writing the following communication to Mr. Benjamin Doblin, the secretary of the N. Y. State Single Tax League:

"At a meeting of the W. C. T. U. held this week, your communication concerning a lecture by your field Sec'y., Mr. Morton, was passed upon and by vote I was instructed to reply to the effect that as this topic has practically no bearing upon our line of work, and as our time and energy are needed for other things which do pertain to it—we could not arrange for a lecture—either now, nor for a future date. Sincerely,

FRANCES W. GRAHAM."

The extraordinary brusqueness of this epistle called forth from Mr. Doblin the following reply:

"Dear Madam:

We regret to learn from your communication of recent date that the members of the W. C. T. U. in Lockport regard the subject of economic justice as one in which they take