

Formosa, N.J.
April 16 1944

Mr. Lawson Purdy, Pres.,
and Co-Members of The Executive
Committee of The Schalkenbach
Foundation;

Mr. Purdy has requested me to read the MS. that was submitted by Judge Halston and to report my views as to whether the Foundation should sponsor its publication.

Ever, with my cooperation or consent will the Foundation sponsor the publication or distribution of that which addresses Socialism in any way or to any degree. It is true that one partial exception must be made. In that Mr. George himself made one or two slips that might justify the association that some of his proposals are talented, but for this the Foundation is not responsible. Mr. Schalkenbach having left his money for the distribution of Mr. George's works, admittedly the best extent for the purpose, and there we must take as they are.

But Judge Halston deliberately, purposely, as a self-admitted Socialist-- though a Socialist-limited-- makes detailed proposals that are directly contradictory of the ~~entire~~ basic principles that form the Foundation of the Science of Economics. The only hope of our nation or our civilization is to bring our organic laws and institutions into harmony with the natural laws governing the production and distribution of wealth, with which laws the Judge gives no indication of being familiar.

The Judge warms us against the uncertainties of how far a feared (justly feared) revolution may go, once started; but there are no uncertainties as to how far the evils of Socialism will be carried, once started. For every step in a wrong direction inevitably demands, and will get, two more to support it. Thus we find ourselves, not drifting, but racing, toward that which we so deplore in the European nations-- which fact itself can be traced to the first Socialist acts of our Government, which acts Judge Halston boldly applies, and endorses. We are doomed unless our entire course be diametrically reversed-- which reversal means the abandonment of those Socialistic institutions and practices to which the Judge gives his endorsement and support.

The Judge laments the fact that Georgists do not favor cooperation with Socialists.-- an impossibility as to those Georgists who fully comprehend the basic principles underlying the proposals of the latter. A thief bent on crime, and an officer bent on preventing crime may chance to walk a block, abreast, and even with shoulders touching; but though their bodies may be in juxtaposition they can in no logical way be considered as "going together". The Socialist would accept the Georgist's program as to destroying private property rights in land, but only as a step in the destruction of all private property rights, whereas the Georgist would destroy property rights in land as the only method of recognizing and protecting those same private property rights in all other things.

The line of distinction between the two propositions and the principles which underly them, respectively, are as clear-cut and fundamental as between any two things in the world, and to seek to confuse them, as Judge Halston does, can be explained only by taking it for granted that the Judge does not understand Economics; a full knowledge of which science is essential to an intelligent attitude toward the questions which he raises. What would be thought of a mathematician who proposed to make compromises with the multiplication table?

The principles of Economics are as exact as those of mathematics. Indeed, Judge Halston has omitted from his list of reasons for the backwardness of Georgist progress the fact of our having accepted

the class most needed in that process of education necessary before the political stages;— those who are thoughtful, analytical minded, and who must refuse to accept proposals or doctrines that are self-contradictory. For instance, the Judge speaks of interest having declined. He is necessarily using the term to mean commercial interest, confining it with economic interest, the latter being but one of the items making up the heterogeneous mass that is commercial interest. Nobody ever yet has been able to at any time ascertain what the trend of true interest is. While commercial interest is tending upward or downward, real interest may be tending in the opposite direction, or remaining constant.

Judge Talston makes some very good suggestions as to methods of procedure in the process of nationalizing the land, and his condemnation of taxation as the method to be relied on in accomplishing this result is most excellent. But his fear that certain classes of land could not be administered by Government without the Government itself going into socialistic activities is quite unfounded; anything and everything desired could be covered by the terms of the lease granted by Government.

150. The Judge's condemnation of the "step-by-step" method as heretofore tried is admirable; but there is a "step-by-step" method that would be free from all the objections that he raises;— the adoption, by stages, of a program of land nationalization presented and adopted in advance, in its entirety. That would permit parity/opportunity for adjustment without any of the proper objections to the heretofore tried method of "putting something over" on the people by getting their support to a "step" without being fully aware of its being but a step toward the complete end sought. "Honesty is the best policy", ever, in relation to matters enduring.

Sincerely yours,

George L. Ruddy