

RIGHT TO WORK

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There is much talk these days about the Right To Work, in fact, I believe about seventeen states have passed Right To Work laws.

I was wondering whether the real question is the "Right To Work" or, should the question be --- does anyone have the right to prevent another from working? At present there is an estimated three to four million unemployed.

On April 15, 1955, James Lawrence, a young ex-paratrooper, robbed a dry cleaning company in Brooklyn, New York, then gave himself up to the police. He stated that his young wife and three children had no food for over 48 hours. Men work to eat. Men and women walk the streets every day begging for work.

Webster's Dictionary, 1940, tells us that work is "physical or intellectual effort directed to some end. Result of mental or physical labor; labor, employment, to be occupied in business or labor. Perform, act, be in a state of severe exertion; to make by labor; manage to carry out.

Inasmuch as this study comes under the science of political economy (often called the bread and butter science), I think it best to define some of the terms that must be used in this discussion.

Political Economy: The science of the nature, production and distribution of wealth.

Labor: All human exertion in the production of wealth.

Wages: That which labor produces, return for exertion.

Wealth: All material things produced by human labor for the satisfaction of human desires, having exchange value.

Land: All the material universe outside of man and his products.

Capital: Wealth used in the production of more wealth.

Our Declaration of Independence says in part: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these, are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

What does unalienable, inalienable mean? Webster's Dictionary, 1940 - "that cannot, or should not, be alienated, surrendered, or transferred to another".

Reget's International Thesaurus defines unalienable as "absolute, positive, definite, unchallenged, unchallengeable, indefeasible, unalienable, or inalienable, imprescriptible, unimpeachable, inviolable, sacrosanct".

What does the Bible say about the right to work - and land? St. John 8-32: "And you shall know the truth and the truth will make you free."

Genesis 3-19: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread."

Psalms 113-B, 16: "Heaven is the Heaven of the Lord, but the earth He has given to the sons of men."

Leviticus-25-16, "The land also shall not be sold forever, because it is mine, and you are strangers and sojourners with me."

Isaiah 65-21, "And they shall build houses and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and eat the fruit of them. 22, They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for as the days of a tree, so shall be the days of my people, and the work of their hands shall be of long continuance."

The above quotations are from the R.C. Bible, the location is slightly different in the Protestant Bible in some instances but the words are practically the same.

Natural Law - By Henry George - In part: "That is to say, the general perception of the sum of related parts or system, that we call nature, does not include the idea of the originating will, or first or final cause of all. That, we conceive of as something essentially distinct from nature, though animating nature, and give it another name, such as Great Spirit or Creator, or God. Those who contend that nature is all, and that there is nothing above or beyond or superior to nature, do so, I think, by confounding two distinct conceptions, and using the word nature as meaning what is usually distinguished by the word God. We all, indeed, frequently use the word nature to avoid the necessity of naming that which we feel to be unnamable, in the sense of being beyond our comprehension, and therefore beyond our power of defining. Yet I think that not merely the almost universal, but the cleverest, and therefore best, perceptions of mankind, really distinguish the ship, or other machine, that we personify, from the will which we recognize as exerted in its origination and being.

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul."

Oscar H. Geiger: "Natural law is the uniform occurrence of natural phenomena in the same way under the same conditions. The law of attraction of gravitation is a natural law. We know that, because it acts the same at all times under the same conditions."

John Stuart Mill: "The expression 'Law of Nature' is generally employed by scientific men with a sort of tact reference to the original sense of the word law, namely, the expression of the will of a superior - the superior, in this instance, being the ruler of the universe."

The Right to Work laws passed by the several states are aimed at the labor unions, and through ignorance or indifference make no effort to give people the "Right to Work". In the early nineteen thirties when twelve to fifteen million workers were unemployed, do you think the labor unions would not have put those people to work if they could? No other group have jobs on reserve either. Men work to gratify their desires, and man's desires are unlimited. All wealth comes from the land. The only thing necessary to give man the "right to work" is to free the land. When the land was freer than it is now, my grandfather settled on land in northern New York, built his house and other buildings, fed, clothed and housed his family of nine from the land. In the early western days of the 1800s land was free (except for the pirate land grabbers), there was no large organized enterprise, labor organizations and no unemployment. The people had a "right to work" on the land.

Rt. Rev. Msgr. L. G. Ligutti, of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, Des Moines 12, Iowa, bought a tract of land for his followers where they built homes, grew food and supplied their needs as far as practical from the land on which they had a "right to work", when not otherwise employed.

Father Liguitti: "The land is God's greatest material gift to mankind. It is a fundamental source of food, fiber and fuel. The right to use such elemental source of life and development is essential for human welfare. No law or contract is superior to natural law. A fundamental human right is not to be denied or rendered ineffective by any legal ordinances, apparent right or obligations."

Oscar H. Geiger: Rabbi, teacher and philosopher tells us - "Of all the laws in the field of social science, the most fundamental and far reaching (and perhaps, therefore, the least understood in the science of Political Economy) is the law of equality; the law that, being of like kind, like origin, like needs, and like means to supply those needs, men are equal and have equal rights to supply those needs out of the only source from which those needs can be supplied, the earth. And the most flagrant and vicious violation of Natural Law is the appropriation of land, which denies man free access to the earth and enables its appropriators to dictate the terms under which the landless may remain and produce on the earth, which the Lord, their God saveth them."

In primitive times when man produced everything by hand without the aid of capital it kept him busy all the time to provide his needs. Now, with modern capital, a very few hours or, perhaps minutes a day would provide not only necessities, but luxuries.

The new machines and power to operate them, the farm tractor drawing gang plows, harrows and seeders to prepare the ground and plant the seed. One man will accomplish more today than twenty could with horse power.

The modern combined harvester is even more proficient. The cotton picker, cotton gin, spinning, weaving - all of these operations are revolutionized to a degree almost beyond our comprehension.

I was reading the other day of a monster machine that bores its way into a vein of coal under ground and conveys the coal to dump cars in one operation.

Fishermen now have an electric device by which they can locate a school of fish. They no longer waste their time dropping their net groping for fish, they know where the fish are. This is true of practically every branch of production.

Machines do make jobs, but, if it took as long to make the machine as it would to complete the original task there would be no advantage in making the machine, except to displace man. It is an economic axiom that man gratifies his desires with the least exertion.

Not only farmers need land! Every human being must have land on which to live and move, and there should be only one title to land - its personal use.

At present the share-cropper must give from one to two thirds or more of his crop for the privilege of working the land that God gave freely to all. The Van Rensselaer estate is a sample of how some of the titles were acquired. Given to friends by foreign royalty who never even saw the land that they gave away from the people. When Columbus discovered America he claimed all the land for his sponsors. We are told that when Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama he walked out into the Pacific Ocean and claimed all land bordering that ocean for the Spanish Crown. What chance would the mass of the people have under those conditions? Only slavery. Are those conditions to be perpetuated forever?

A labor paper dated November 19, 1954, said in part: "Man does not have an absolute right. Right to work is a relative right and is related to the other rights of individuals and groups."

Is it a matter of relation that man has to eat, or die? If a man has a right to live, then he has a right to work and earn, or produce his living. And if he has no right to work, then he must beg, or steal. (Which do you prefer?) Begging is humiliating, a violation of man made law, and stealing is a violation of the law of God and man. To join a labor union does not guarantee work. During the 1930s, millions of union men were idle. Before organized enterprise and labor organizations, man produced his living from the land, and if the land was open to man's use and he is able and willing to work, he need not go hungry today.

You marvel at the modern streamline air conditioned train, oceanliner or multimotor airplane, consider how each and every part of these monsters were taken from the land and shaped into their present form for transportation over land, sea and air, for the gratification of man's desires. And still, with all this mechanical skill man walks the streets, his wife and babies hungry while he is begging for work. His brothers wrangle over who will exploit him, talking about the "Right to Work".

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