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FREEFOLK

PUBLICATION OF THE COMMONWEAL SOCIETY
FOR ECONOMIC EDUCATION

ADVOCATING

THE TOTAL ABOLITION OF ALL TAXATION, THE
COLLECTION OF THE FREELY OFFERED AND
AUTOMATICALLY ADEQUATE GROUND-RENT.

WE BELIEVE

THAT THE FUNCTION OF GOVERNMENT
SHOULD BE LIMITED FIRSTLY TO THE PROTEC-
TION OF EQUAL RIGHTS OF ALL PEOPLE, AND
SECONDLY TO PROVIDING COMMUNITY SER-
VICES EXPEDITIOUSLY AND WITHOUT PUBLIC
DEBT.

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SOCIETY FOR ECONOMIC EDUCATION

COMMONWEAL

PHILOSOPHIC BASIS OF CALL

FOR FREE LAND (contd.)

Spencer's fixed principle was that "Every man may claim the fullest liberty to exercise his faculties compatible with the possession of like liberty by every other man." in other words, "Every man has freedom to do all that he wills, provided he infringes not the equal freedom of any other man."

From this point of departure Spencer argues firstly equal rights to life and personal liberty, and secondly equal rights to the use of the earth as follows: - If we all have equal rights to pursue the objects of our desires and the use of the earth is necessary thereto, then we all have the right to use the earth, provided we allow others the same liberty, and conversely no-one should be able to use the earth in such a way as to prevent all others from using it, since this would be to demand greater freedom than other people.

Property in land is therefore not just, for if a person may claim to own one part, he may claim to own other parts and eventually may claim ownership of the whole earth. By doing this he would deny others their equal rights. This would bring us to the absurd position that only claimants to land-ownership have a right to live on this planet and people without such claims are only on earth by the permission of others of their kind, and "men who cannot live and move and have their being without the leave of others, cannot be equally free with those others."

Spencer examined the origin of land titles and saw that they began in "violence and fraud and cunning". They were written with the sword, not with the pen. He decided that this is not a good basis for any kind of title and rejected the claim that purchase gave a good title to land, for a person can pass on no better a title than he himself has, and no matter how many times the title changes hands it is still defective.

(Contd. inside back cover)

PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS CONTD.

Does time grant a good title to land? Spencer disposes of this question by asking at what rate per annum does a wrong grow into a right, and if a title becomes perfect after one thousand years, how much more than perfect will it be after two thousand years? It must be denied that custom or legislative convenience can make land titles good since justice denies individual ownership of land and dictates that the right of mankind at large to the earth's surface is always valid.

Spencer continues by asking if use can grant a title to land. Suppose a person squatted on free land and cleared then cultivated, does that give him a title to the land? All he has done is to change the type of plant the land produces. Even if a person should claim that he has made the land useful, whereas previously it was not, it does not seem logical that by scratching over a few inches of top-soil he is now master of a pyramid whose apex is the centre of the earth, and whose base is the area claimed. The conclusion is that use of land can give a title to labour-products only, not to the very source of wealth which must still belong to all men.

Would it be right to divide the earth among all men? If we decide on a division of equal value, how is it to be attained? What will happen when the value of an area increases and another decreases? Suppose all the earth is divided amongst all the people, where is the portion for the next child born?

Surprisingly no-one really does believe in the absolute ownership of land. In law, lands are held in stewardship for the public benefit, and should the public interest conflict with private property in land, as when a landholder forbids a road-building crew to proceed, the community uses its powers of expropriation. If we decide that the claims of individual ownership must give way, then we imply that the right of the people at large to the soil is supreme

and self-supporting, some become frustrated and become involved in drug use and crime.

A young man, asked on T.V. why he participated in the looting during the recent black-out in New York, made this statement; "I have no job, I have no money, and I can't get anything". A tragic situation in the midst of abundance. The case for equal rights to the use of the earth is as strong as ever.

Gunnar Jeberg.

SNIPPETS

Joey Smallwood ex-premier of Newfoundland in his final speech before leaving politics said; "God created me to be a leader." This shows a sickness of mind which is to be found in those who thirst to order and control the lives of others.

Bureaucrat interviewed on radio said that a person who quit his job voluntarily would not be denied unemployment benefit provided he could show "good reason." Voluntarily is good enough reason for me. I hate the idea of censorship of motive.

Radio news reporter read out; "Most Canadians lack a sense of will to deal with inflation effectively". Your will and mine can't stop the Trudeau gang spending new money into circulation to the detriment of the value of the money already circulating.

The Right to Strike There is no such right. Only individuals have rights. A strike involves a denial of the right of the individual to work or not where, as, and when he thinks fit

THE PALESTINIANS' Right to a Homeland. People do not have a right to be herded into arbitrary national groups. They have an equal right to the use of all the earth along with people of all colours of skin and social allegiance.

GREETINGS

Since the resumption of publication of FREEFOLK, many letters have been received expressing pleasure that the message of economic freedom was being taken up again. To those subscribers who have sent a donation, we give our thanks and promise to keep the message pure so that it would be immediately comprehensible to an "uneducated" person as t a Ph. D. or even a humanoid inhabitant of an earth-like planet in some distant galaxie.

Our message is simplicity itself, - "To the producer belongs the product." To the fisherman belong the fish he catches; but if another man makes his nets, or his boat, then the net-maker or boat-builder will ask for a share in the fish caught. To determine how much belongs to each, the economic laws of freedom apply. When boat-builders can earn significantly more than fishermen with the same labour, then some fishermen will begin to build boats, but the excess of boats built will by free competition cause a lowering of return to boat-builders, and an increase of return to fishermen until a balance is reached at which fishing and boat-building offer equal returns. "To the producer belongs the product" means that there can be no such thing as property in whatever is not a labour-product. Land is not a labour-product. Human beings are not labour-products. Therefore land is not property; human beings are not property.

The body politic, or state, is an abstract concept, and as such is incapable of productive effort, as is a sphere, or a musical cadenza. The state did not make people, the state did not make land; therefore the state cannot own people, the state cannot own land.

However, when people get together, as they naturally will, they are able to produce more than the sum of the labour-produce of all the individuals. Co-operation is responsible for this surplus. Co-operation is most effective where there is the greatest density of population, and the

co-operative surplus is donated to the person holding title to occupation of a population-favoured site. The title-holder is not responsible for the surplus accruing. It is a gift like the gentle rain that falleth from heaven. The public donates the surplus by its presence. It can withdraw the surplus by ceasing to frequent the favoured area.

The public produces the surplus that appears as a "windfall" at sites. Therefore to the producing public belongs the product, properly known as "economic rent" or "ground rent".

When all holders of land pay its rent to the public treasury, they restore what the public gave them in the way of advantages of production or enjoyment. They have a duty to do this, for by so doing, they shed all advantages conferred upon them by their exclusive occupation of sites. Every human being then occupies an equal status in relation to nature's bounty.

This is our message. It may be called "simplistic", - as simplistic as the assertion that a flea on a rat caused bubonic plague; - as simplistic as the assertion that thunder and lightening were not due to the gods at war, but rather manifestations of static electricity. We address ourselves to simple people, - people who believe in truth, honour and justice, for it will be from these people that a movement to purge a world swamped by oppression, crime, and moral filth, must arise.

A basic economics course is being conducted at the home of Gordie and Jeannie McIvor in Aldergrove. Prospective tutors are leading alternate sessions. Rick Olson is coaching an individual student. Are you doing anything we can report in our next issue?

The Editor,
Sir;

Thousands of young people who are finally out of school are presently experiencing how difficult it is to find a place on the face of the earth where they may work in order to support themselves.

On their travels in search of a job they pass by large areas of unused land which others, who came before them, have titles of ownership to. The owners are waiting for people to increase in number so that the demand will correspondingly increase, for it is a fact that human beings must use land or die. With increased demand, title-holders can command a higher price for access to a piece of the basic resource that everyone must use.

During the waiting, or "ripening" period, there is no activity because it pays the owner to do nothing. And when the time comes to transfer the title to someone who wants to start some kind of production, access to the land is made very difficult by the price barrier.

A single example will illustrate the situation. In 1960 a building lot could be bought in the suburbs of Vancouver for \$1,200. This would amount to approximately 25% of a tradesman's yearly earnings at that time. Today a comparable lot costs \$30,000. \$30,000 represents eighteen months gross earnings for a tradesman. As a consequence of the high price of land, the number of unemployed is growing and so is the burden on those who do work and pay taxes.

It is a great injustice to be deprived of the opportunity to work in order to support oneself. Nature furnishes sole opportunity in what she holds in and on the earth. The only thing lacking is access to those resources which were freely provided for everyone to use and enjoy.

The young job-seekers do not realise this. They go to school for 12 years and emerge not knowing the most basic principle of life in society. Being unable to identify the barrier that prevents them from becoming independent