

The Individualist

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Getting Used To It

THEY SAY that when you have been in jail a long time you get used to it. You may even come to like it—in a way. We wouldn't know. We have never been in jail—that long.

But however it may be about jail, it does seem that way about freedom—the other way around. People who have never known much about freedom, or have not had much of it for a long time, don't seem to care. They come to take it, not having freedom, as a matter of course, just as you can come to take being in jail as a matter of course—if you can.

Here is an example. A few weeks ago Secretary of Agriculture Brannan appeared before a Congressional committee to ask for increased crop controls. Stating that rigid marketing quotas are now applicable to only six major crops, he begged that the list be extended to cover practically everything raised down on the farm—meat animals, poultry and eggs, fruits and vegetables.

No member of the committee pulled a gun. No member made a move to throw him out. No member, so far as we know, more than tut-tutted. There have been no popular uprisings throughout the land, no indignation meetings, no hue and cry about red-blooded Americans being deprived of their rights and liberties. Some protest may make itself heard by the time this composition appears in print, but thus far no eardrums have been split, nobody has been churned up except a few old fogies like ourselves who believe freedom is something to be fought for and cherished.

And yet, a more sinister spectacle would be hard to imagine. Here was a high administration official urging, with presidential approval of course, and with the respectful attention of a group of the highest-level lawmakers of the land, that this so-called free country deliberately surrender another large portion of its freedom, that it make another advance down the fateful road that took Russia to where she is and is leading Britain to where she is going, the road that leads to the extinction of freedom and to the iron-fisted tyranny of the bureaucratic state.

We'll bet that if Patrick Henry had been there, the Secretary of Agriculture would have been deftly and expeditiously removed from within his cuticle, his carcass tossed in the incinerator and his quivering hide hung from the nearest lamppost to be seared, scorched and withered in the hot scorn of public opinion. But there was no Patrick Henry, no skinning-alive, nothing for the incinerator or lamppost, and no hot scorn.

See what we mean? They get used to it after a while, used to having their freedom chopped away from time to time in huge chunks. For the truth is that most Americans—those born since the turn of the century and now fortyish or less—don't know much about this thing called freedom. They haven't had much firsthand experience with it. By the time they were old enough to think for themselves—those of them who had something to think with and were not too lazy to use it—World War I was upon us, with a lot of government plans and controls that were necessary, so we were told, to make the world safe for democracy. Maybe they were—but they didn't. But they did put a crimp in our freedom, a big one.

After the war came the depression. A lot of people were out of work. We couldn't let 'em starve, could we? So a fresh lot of controls and plans were cooked up by the bureaucrats who hadn't had the gumption to see the depression coming but who had plenty of ideas, all economically unsound and contravening our freedom, for ending it. Next came World War II, and unemployment was ended, not by government efforts by the preparedness program and the draft. The war brought more plans and controls, all necessary, we were told, as war measures.

And now the war is over—in a manner of speaking. But the plans and controls are not over—not in any manner of speaking. What we have now, plus what we will have if Secretary Brannan gets his way, would make what we had following the first World War look like vacation to a school kid. It is all done in the name of Democracy—Russian brand, we'd say, not Jeffersonian. And nobody seems to care—or almost nobody.

It must be true. After so long you get used to it; you don't mind any more. You may even come to like it.

The Gentleman From Pennsylvania

Dear Sir:

Enclosed find my check for \$1.50 for which please renew my subscription to THE INDIVIDUALIST.

You are publishing a very interesting and provocative paper. Not since the days of Col. Watterson of the Courier Journal have I been privileged to read as stimulating and enticing editorials as you are producing. They indicate not only humor and insight but sound understanding of economic problems, and I sometimes wonder why it is that Single Taxers are making such an infinitesimal splash in the reservoir of public opinion. Your editorial

"According to Mark" may be a partial explanation.

Your leanings and sympathy seem to be toward the Republican Party and somewhat hold in contempt the Democrats. For this I can see no historical basis. I just missed voting for Governor Cleveland in 1888 and since those days the Republican Party has been in control of both state and federal governments practically without interruption until 1933. And prior to the days of the formation of the Republican Party back in 1856, the forebears of the present Republican Party were using their political and governmental power to establish the welfare state, limiting it of course to the favored few, as note Alexander Hamilton and his tariff program back in the Administration of George Washington.

The basic philosophy of the Whigs and the Republican Party came into full fruition in the days of Mark Hanna and William McKinley, his stool pigeon; and during the entire period the Republican Party showed nothing but utter contempt for those who do the world's work and which you rightly point out as an important factor of the production of wealth. I remember the days and even as late as 1915 that the standard wage for the great mass of ordinary labor was 10c to 12c an hour here in the north and, of course, it must have been much less in the South. No one with an open

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mind can review the history of the treatment of the laboring forces during the reign of Republican control with other than utter condemnation and shame, and why any one would hope that anything good would come out of a group with a background, history, tradition and training such as characterized the Republican Party since the days of U. S. Grant is beyond me.

While it is quite true that the Democrats have frequently gone astray and much has happened during the Roosevelt Era that does not square with basic fundamental democratic doctrine, yet when the Democrats came into power in 1933 there existed an economic condition in America that required drastic action, and I think that President Roosevelt and his associates did a remarkable job in 1933. True, much was done that was in violation of sound economic and true democratic principles, yet I have observed in my lifetime that in the presence of disaster the rules of logic and morals are not consulted in order to prevent the spread of calamities.

And so it occurs to me that the Single Taxers would have given a much better account of themselves and would be in a much more formidable position today to make their contribution towards a sound public opinion if they had recognized the basic principles of the party founded by Thomas Jefferson, and sought to control and guide the destinies of the nation with the Democratic Party as their political instrumentality.

As I view the history of the Roosevelt Era, the Democrats went astray in 1933 and, of course, depending largely upon the wage earners as their voting strength, they permitted their political and legislative actions to be swayed by the group that furnished their voting strength. This is simply in keeping with orthodox politics, and until the leadership of political parties becomes more enlightened and selfless, this must be accepted. Hence the greater reason why Single Taxers ought to be in the forefront of political activity, and I for one feel that the Democratic Party would be more amenable to right thinking, conduct and behavior than the Republican Party.

Let us not forget that in spite of our hatred of Roosevelt and his conduct, not until he came into power did labor receive anything approaching its fair share of the national income. Awkward, of course, has been the method by which this has been achieved. Of course the present labor policy has been all out of line with sound

economics and true democracy, so why not join the party that does normally seek to correct the injustices that prevail in our economic setup? Besides, let us not forget that it was Roosevelt's Administration that did more toward the conservation and reclamation of the natural resources than all the other administrations combined.

Charles R. Eckert

Beaver, Pa.

Despite the compliment he pays us, we must dissent from some of the views set forth in the above letter from the Honorable Charles R. Eckert, former congressman from Pennsylvania.

We are partial to neither party. Good things and evil may be found in both. Each has its ignoramuses and self-seekers, but each, too, has at all times had in its ranks men of character, determination and goodwill, diligently serving their country according to their lights. Though their lights were frequently dim, that doesn't stamp them as scoundrels or crooks, or their parties as meriting blanket condemnation.

The wrongs of labor—for which the codding that the organized one-fourth of it has received in recent years in no way atones—have been due to economic ignorance rather than political intent, with the two parties equally to blame. But that lopsided legislative atrocity, the Wagner Act, was the Democrats' odious brat, and not the Republicans'. More than once on the floor of Congress has Mr. Eckert himself, with eloquence and unanswerable logic, urged consideration of the Single Tax as a way out of our social and economic ills. His pleas fell on deaf ears—and the Democratic ears were just as deaf as the Republican.

Mr. Eckert errs in saying, ". . . since those days (1888) the Republican Party has been in control of both state and federal governments practically without interruption until 1933." Woodrow Wilson, James M. Cox, Al Smith and Franklin D. Roosevelt were governors, and Wilson a president, prior to 1933—and none was a Republican. As for Republican governors in the South since carpet-bag days, we could name them on the fingers of one hand—if we could remember their names.

We admire Franklin D. Roosevelt profoundly for the magnificent fight he put up against almost devastating physical impairment. We cheered him when, in his first presidential campaign, he said, "It is my pledge and promise . . . that rigid government economy shall be forced by a stern and unremitting administration policy of living within our income."

We yelled again when he promised to cut federal payrolls by 25 per cent. People

said he was crazy, he couldn't do it. He wasn't crazy, and he did—for a while. And he warmed our heart when he declared, "The doctrine of regulation and legislation by 'master minds', in whose judgment and will all the people may gladly and quietly acquiesce, has been too glaringly apparent in Washington during these last ten years. Were it possible to find 'master-minds' so unselfish, so willing to decide unhesitatingly against their own personal interests or private prejudices, men almost god-like in their ability to hold the scales of justice with an even hand—such a government might be to the interests of the country; but there are none such on our political horizon, and we cannot expect a complete reversal of all the teachings of history."

We applauded, too, when he said, "I have warned the country against unwise governmental interference with business. It means casual, dangerous tampering." And what a home run he slammed out when he declared, "Taxes are paid in the sweat of every man who labors . . . Our workers may never see a tax bill, but they pay in deduction from wages, increased cost of what they buy or in broad cessation of employment."

But all that was before Roosevelt had accepted the teachings of John Maynard Keynes, who wrote in one of his books, "I conceive, therefore, that a somewhat comprehensive socialization of investment will prove the only means of securing an approximation to full employment." It was under the Keynesian influence, no doubt, that Roosevelt proclaimed as our national policy—probably the most astounding statement ever made by an American president—the thesis that the state owes its citizens a living. Also, it was before the New Deal president had succeeded in finding the master-mind he had thought did not exist. And when at last he found that god-like creature, lo and behold he was it.

In our opinion Roosevelt did more to lead the country down the road toward socialism, and to condition Americans for thinking along Marxist lines, than did all his predecessors in office combined. Thomas Jefferson, founder of the Democratic Party, believed in severely limited federal government. It would take a stretchier imagination than we possess to ascribe any such sentiments to the current crop of Democratic bigwigs.

We know a good many Single Taxers but not a one—a real one who is familiar with Henry George's magnificent Ode to Liberty—who doesn't hold largely with the basic philosophy of Jefferson rather than with its New Deal counterfeit. We don't

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know why "Single Taxers are making such an infinitesimal splash in the reservoir of public opinion." We, ourselves, are doing our darndest, but all too often our splash resembles a ripple in a teaspoon.

But it was nice of Mr. Eckert to couple our name with that of the great Henry Watterson, and who are we to question his judgment on that point? "Marse Henry" was an outstanding figure in American journalism. And, goodness knows, there aren't many of us.

A Grand Book

LIBERTY: A PATH TO ITS RECOVERY, by F. A. Harper. The Foundation for Economic Education, Irvington-on-Hudson, N. Y. Cloth-bound \$1.50; paper cover \$1.

This book is the best of its kind to appear in years even though it doesn't go into sufficient detail as to how liberty is to be recovered, and attempts in one instance to refute its own irrefutable arguments. Samplings will show.

"The individual has no bounden duty to serve some intangible 'common good' or 'society,' in violation of what seems to him to be the best thing to do; one's obligation is to his conscience, and to the Supernatural Order as he interprets it, rather than to abdicate this responsibility and attempt to shift it to others in political office or to some abstraction in the form of some organization; no person, under guise of these conjured abstractions, has the right to obligate another person to something or to someone unknown specifically to him; and any person who attempts to do so is an imposter attempting somehow to gain power for himself in exchange for the promise that he can free another from unavoidable self-responsibilities." Washington, D. C., please note.

And this: "It should be perfectly clear that if all persons have the right to the product of their own labor, they cannot in addition have claim to any of the product of another's labor." And again, "If one should have the right to the product of his own labor—the foundation of economic liberty—it follows that he should have the right to do with it as he pleases." And finally, "When once the power of the free choice in the spending of their incomes has been abandoned by the citizens, and these economic rights surrendered to the government, their liberty has gone with it." Nothing could be truer.

Under anarchy, we are told, liberty might be complete—but only if all persons were perfect. Since they aren't, "For

liberty to be at a maximum there must be some government, or otherwise have the same functions performed by some other means," even though "Government is, by definition, design and intent, an agency engaged in force."

So there you have it: what a man makes belongs to him, and we must have government. But government must be paid for. How? That is where the author skids. Pointing out that the 1947 government take of 29 cents from each dollar was the equivalent of a taxpayer working three and a half months for the government for nothing or the complete enslavement of some 42 million persons, he asks, "How much of the 29 cent part of the dollar, taken for governmental costs in the United States in 1947, would be allowable under liberalism?" and then comes up with the astounding answer, "A guess is that only a small part of the 29 cents, perhaps even less than 5 cents of it, would qualify under liberalism, if we ignore the cost of existing contracts which originated in illiberal acts."

How, in heaven's name, if a government grab of 29 cents in the dollar is wrong, can a grab of 5 cents be right? If forcing a man to work three and a half months for nothing is wrong, isn't forcing him to work two and a half weeks equally wrong save in degree? If it isn't nice to enslave 42 million persons, is it nice to enslave 7 million? If what a man makes is his own, has either the government or an individual the right to take *any part* of it from him by force? Nuts!

The author points out, and rightly, that we can recover our liberty only by abolishing special privilege, but he never mentions the greatest special privilege of all, land rent going into the pockets of private landlords; and he ignores the fact that the public collection of land rent would put an instant end to that special privilege and, at the same time, enable the government to meet its legitimate expenses without taking from any person a single penny-worth of what he produces.

Under the present stupid system, private landlords are getting something for nothing—to the tune of fifty billion dollars a year or so. The people at large are getting nothing for something—to the same discordant tune. Landlords individually have nothing to do with creating land values; the community collectively has everything to do with it. Let the community take for community purposes what the community alone creates. Then the most monstrous special privilege of all would be knocked into a cocked hat, and the public expense would be met without producers being robbed. Then, and only then, would what

a man makes be truly his own. And he would make plenty because unemployment would disappear with the adoption of such procedure. That is the *real* way to the recovery of our lost liberty.

Don't, however, get the idea that LIBERTY: A PATH TO ITS RECOVERY is anything but a grand book. It is so good that every lover of liberty should read it, so good that everyone negligent of liberty should be *required* to read it.

Brevities And Levities

SPEAKING OF FUNNY LAWS—nobody was but we will—it is illegal to get on a streetcar in Gary, Indiana, if you have eaten garlic within four hours. If that law were applied to New York City and included buses, most of the buses in certain sections of the town would be empty most of the time. The old-time versifier was right when he wrote:

*An apple a day keeps the doctor away;
An onion a day keeps everybody away.*

Garlic would have been a stronger word, but maybe he couldn't find anything to rhyme with garlic—except colic.

REPORTING General Eisenhower's return to his job as president of Columbia University, The New York Times says, "Yesterday morning he was back at his desk at the university. In the afternoon he played golf. University officials said General Eisenhower would divide his days in that fashion for a while." A nice fashion, we'd call it. But perhaps the General won't play golf every afternoon. Perhaps some days he will play all day.

IN THE SUNSHINE STATE of Florida there is agitation for a one-cent increase in the cigarette tax, the proceeds to be used in the fight against tuberculosis. We are not excited. In the first place, we are off-and-on smokers—though more often on. In the second place, we don't have tuberculosis. But if somebody wants to do something about dandruff—that might get our vote. We are about ready to stop smoking anyway.

*Should savage fate upon you pounce,
And leave you crippled, sore, bereft;
It's not your pain nor loss that counts.
But what you do with what is left.*

NOT NEW—BUT TRUE: (1) You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift. (2) You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong. (3) You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. (5)

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You cannot lift the wage earner by pulling down the wage-payer. (6) You cannot keep out of trouble by spending more than your income. (7) You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred. (8) You cannot establish sound security on borrowed money. (9) You cannot build character and courage by taking away a man's initiative and independence. (10) You cannot help men permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves.

Going To The Dogs

PEOPLE HAVE OFTEN SAID we would go to the dogs. They were right. We did, a few weeks ago. We went, that is, to the dog races—which is the same thing. It was our first time but we learned much, and now you shall have the benefit of our experience—if benefit is the word for it.

The Sarasota Dog Track—Sarasota is a suburb of Bradenton, according to Bradentonites—is set in a lovely little park where every prospect pleases and only man is vile. On all sides grow the typical trees of Florida—the moss-draped and spooky-looking liveoak, the long needle pine where the eagles nest, the booted cabbage palm which looks from a distance as though its trunk were latticed in, the gracefully twisted cocoon palm—there were a lot of twisted cocoanuts in the grandstand, too—with here and there a stately royal palm, the flamboyance of a flowering royal poinciana or the unbelievable blue of a jacaranda tree in full bloom.

The members of the local smart set were out in full force, and before the afternoon's proceedings were over a couple of them were full enough to want to do a few laps around the track themselves. Candid friends dissuaded them with the argument that the track was for greyhounds, not rum hounds.

Ourselves, the everloving helpmeet and your reporter, were as sober as a judge—but not half as smart. The judge told, after each race was run, which dog *had* won. That made it official. We told, before the race was run, which dog *would* win. That made it expensive. The judge knew what he was talking about—and got paid for it. We didn't—and didn't.

Entered in the first was an elongated canine named Reddy Sue. Since the everloving helpmeet's name is Sue, Reddy Sue looked like a logical bet. But Fate was against us. Unlike Reddy Sue, the everloving helpmeet Sue is not built for speed, due to architectural design. Moreover, before leaving home, she had, as usual, paid no heed to our warning, "Look, Lightnin,' you'd better shake a leg; it's later than you think." On top of that, we had to stop for gas for Priscilla, our 1941 Chevy, still faithful and willing but creaky about the joints and no speedster.

So, what with one thing and another, we arrived a little late at the scene of festivities. As we made our way prayerfully toward a betting stand, determined to plunge two dollars on Reddy Sue, the bell rang, the window was slammed shut—and our gambling career was still ahead of us.

Now, over the years, we have lavished our affection on numerous mutts of dubious and assorted ancestry, and always, we are happy to say, with ample compensation. That's one of the nice things about a dog. If he loves you, he'll tell you so—and you know he means it. But, aside from the obvious fact that some dogs can run faster than other dogs, and that the front end of a dog is almost certain to get under the wire ahead of the other end, we knew less than nothing about dog racing. We still do. Even so, Reddy Sue was a good hunch. In the parlance of the track, she win easy, paying \$23.80—but not to us.

Wintersong, in the second race, struck a sour note—and we were two dollars down. Do, in the third, did, paying \$8.80—and the sun shone again. Drone, our choice in the fourth, lived up to his name but short of our hopes—and the unearned increment started to shrink. Miss Pitts in the fifth turned out to be a miss for sure. The unearned increment had fled, and with it our plans for a new wing for the wrenhouse. Scattered Arms, our selection in the sixth, cost us another two bucks, and we were in the red once more.

Your reporter, being often up a tree himself, liked Nicodemus in the seventh. The everloving helpmeet liked a hound called Little Bonus. We compromised and played Little Bonus. Nicodemus won pulled up, paying \$10.60. Little Bonus paid no bonus. There was a moment of tension. And then we decided, the everloving helpmeet and your reporter, that we could still be friends. We joined hands and softly sang, "Let Bygones be Bygones Forever," and, for an unrequested encore,

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these, got left again." No dog was going to come between us, what after twenty-five years and all. But let us draw the curtain of charity over the rest of the sad tale. Suffice it to say that when the day was gone, so was nine dollars of our money—and the addition to the wren-house would have to wait.

The smartest individuals at the track that afternoon were three or four American egrets, handsome four-footers who stood motionless as white statues or stalked with majestic grace in the shallows of the small grass-bordered lake within the enclosure, stopping occasionally to gobble up a fish that couldn't swim as fast as he'd thought he could. The big birds didn't pay to get in, they had their meals free, and when the ceremonies of the day were over they winged their leisurely way home with never a thought of the aching void a departed nine dollars can leave.

On the dumb side, and well on, were the greyhounds. All their lives they chase a stuffed rabbit being jiggled up and down on the end of a stick as it is yanked around the track ahead of them without learning that they can never hope to catch it and that it wouldn't be any good to them if they did. But at that they don't pay to get in, they don't buy programs and tipster sheets, and their care and keep, which is of the best, costs them nothing.

Dumbest of all were the customers. They pay their way in, buy everything there is for sale, lose their shirt betting, winning only often enough to be lured on to losing their other shirt, and have to feed themselves—when there's money enough left for that purpose.

Maybe the bunny isn't so dumb. True he is only a cotton rabbit and has no brains but he doesn't pay to be there, he never gets caught, he doesn't try to get rich playing a sucker racket, and he gets free rides.

So-o-o, let our experience be a lesson to you. Unless you are a stuffed rabbit or a great American egret, stay away from the dog races. If you don't, you are certain to—go to the dogs.

The Individualist

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