

# Passing of Louis F. Post

LABOR - January 21, 1928

Former Assistant Secretary of Labor, Single Tax Advocate and Humanitarian, Dies at His Home in Washington

The death of Louis Freeland Post in Washington last week deprives the liberal thought of America of a wise guide and counsellor, and it is not easy to see who will take his place.

Mr. Post had an active life. Born in Vienna, New Jersey, on November 15, 1849, he was well past the allotted three-score and ten when death claimed him.



LOUIS F. POST

Eminent Writer and Economist Dies in Washington at the Age of 79.

Printer, lawyer, candidate for office on forlorn hope tickets, editorial writer, editor, Federal official; he had a variety of experience that a man of action might envy, and that seldom comes to a man of thought. Diverse as was his work, he undertook no task that he did not perform well.

#### His Highest Service

But it seems to those who have followed his career for a generation or more that there were two periods in which his services were greatest.

For 15 years—1898 to 1913—he and his devoted wife edited and practically wrote *The Public*. This was a

weekly magazine published at Chicago, and probably the best organ of liberal thought America ever has known.

Its circulation was comparatively small—but select. It went to editors and editorial writers; to public speakers; to lawyers who had some interest in matters beyond their immediate practice; and none who read it went uninfluenced.

#### Disciple of Henry George

It preached the single tax, for Post was a disciple and devoted friend of Henry George. But most of all did it preach liberalism, democracy, intellectual hospitality.

A model of clear thought and clear writing, and of frank, inquiring courage; *The Public* was a tower of strength to the struggling progressivism of its day.

In 1913 Mr. Post quit the editor's chair, and came to Washington as Assistant Secretary of Labor in the Wilson administration. As "Billy" Wilson's second in command in a new department, and one with more than its fair share of troubles and problems, Post did not lack for work; and the gratitude of workers all over the land shows how well he did that work.

#### Best Official Work

But his best official work was done in the deportations delirium that began in 1919, following the World War.

Engineered by the detestable A. Mitchell Palmer, then Attorney General, whipped up by labor-baiting corporations, private detective agencies, and those professional hundred per cent Americans whose patriotism is of the sort described by Dr. Johnson—"the last refuge of a scoundrel"—the country was swept by a "red scare."

The law provided that alien anarchists found in this country could be deported; and thousands of foreigners, the great majority of them innocent, were arrested for banishment.

#### Saved Luckless Aliens

Post had the ungrateful duty of certifying these aliens for expulsion. He hated the law, but he had sworn to enforce it, and kept his oath. But he could, and did, insist on evidence that the arrested person was an anarchist before marking him for deportation; and that simple precaution saved thousands of luckless foreigners from being shipped back to their home lands.

He was viciously attacked for his handling of these cases, but he routed his foes at a famous hearing before a Congressional committee, and remained in office until the close of the Wilson administration.

"They rest from their labors, and their works do follow them." Often are those words so fittingly applied as to Louis Freeland Post.