

Intellectual Malnutrition

AN EVIL ARISING FROM THE DEPRESSION
THAT IS MORE SINISTER THAN
PHYSICAL STARVATION

By JOHN LUXTON

ONE of the most important developments of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was the science of nutrition. Up to now we have come to understand the truth of the saying that man is what he feeds upon, and as time goes by we are learning more and more about the wise use of food. The laws of nature, having contrived out of several elements obtained from the earth and air a living substance called protoplasm, also endowed that substance with the ability to continue its existence by means of fresh supplies drawn from the material world. But in the course of centuries the various forms of life in which protoplasm manifested itself developed certain likes and dislikes. The reasons for such development are not the concern of this article. It is sufficient to say that they developed in response to certain natural laws. So it came to pass in our day and generation that certain foods would have certain effects upon certain people, also upon domestic animals and plants. To keep in good health, to be physically fit, means that we mortals must have a diet suited to our individual needs. Livestock raisers and growers of plants must know the requirements of animal and plant tissue or they fail. Undernourishment means failure, probably extinction for individual, species, or race. Undernourishment does not necessarily imply a lack of food. Very often it means the wrong kind of food. From the knowledge we now have undernourishment is no longer the result of ignorance. It is the result of economic conditions, it is the inability to obtain the proper foods because of the inequitable distribution of wealth.

With the growth of education in the world and with the spread of knowledge it is but natural to suppose that mankind would accept the truths discovered in the study of nutrition as it has come to accept sanitation. Of course, here and there, one may find sections where, because of isolation, superstition, or blind obedience to some outworn theology, the truths of nutrition are unknown or ignored, but in the march of human progress such localities are becoming fewer. Therefore, if malnutrition exists in any large degree it is due to inability to prevent it by the use of proper food. When this happens due to a famine, drought, inundation, or to a shipwreck or mine disaster, the end for many may be death by starvation, but such deaths would not impair the health nor the morals of the rest of the human race, nor any large part of it. The cause would be clear to all and all would accept it as a regrettable accident, such as will happen in spite of every precaution we might take.

It would not be accepted as something to expect as a regular thing. But in no way, physical or mental, would the rest of humanity be injured. Tissue would keep on growing according to the plan of nature, and minds would develop according to environment and heredity. The worst that can be said of physical starvation is that many, perhaps thousands or millions may die and be over their troubles. And it may have its good points as when it drives people to rebel against intolerable conditions. The French Revolution was caused by starvation as much as by anything.

As the physical tissue needs food of the proper kind upon which to grow and from which to draw energy the mind of man needs food of the proper kind in order to grow and make deductions and thus fit the physical man into a society composed of other physical men endowed with minds. And what sort of food does the mind of man require? It requires a food that will enable the man to meet all situations in which other men figure. Is it to be a food that will cause him to ignore the rights of other men and seek the advancement of himself and family? Is it to be a food that will make him efface himself in the presence of others, forget his obligation to defend his own rights and those of others, and quietly accept the state of slavery or of subjection? Or is it to be a food that will make him jealous of the rights of man, all men, of the blessings of liberty and democracy, of man's right to live upon the earth as a heritage from his creator? We who believe implicitly in the truths put forth in the Declaration of Independence and in the principles laid down in the Constitution of the United States believe that the proper mental food for a free people, for all men in fact, is food that will stimulate us to a greater faith in liberty and democracy, in the inalienable rights of man as enunciated by Thomas Jefferson, and in the undisputed right of every man to draw sustenance from the earth of which he is a part. And what is democracy? If our mental food must stimulate a greater faith in democracy let there be no misgivings as to the meaning of the term. And likewise let us consider liberty.

Democracy is that state in which every man has the right to live his own life as he sees fit provided he does not interfere with the right of every other man to do the same. Liberty can be but the carrying out of democracy.

Considering the mass of literature from the pens of college professors, statesmen, so-called economists, and laymen in general, with which our newspapers and magazines have been crammed during the past five years and the great mass of radio addresses by the same persons are we getting the nutrition for the intellect that will meet the requirements that we have laid down for the mental growth of man? Let us consider some recent attempts to provide the mind of man with intellectual nourishment and see if the diet is suitable for a people who aspire to freedom of thought in a world of men.

In *Harper's Magazine* for August, 1935, there appeared an article entitled "Chemistry Wrecks the Farm." The first paragraph says that the farm is the nation's "largest single business still remaining" in private hands and that it is about to die because of chemistry and technology taking over control of agriculture. This is true enough, a scientific revolution is taking place. This provides food for thought and is supported by fact. And in a smaller way agriculture has been undergoing control since the first plow was made. The history of industry will show this. The farm in the United States has been changing in aspect ever since the first settler broke the first sod. The agricultural methods of the European were different from those of the Indian who raised corn and squash. Indian agricultural methods had to give way to the more progressive ways of the immigrant, but it is also true that the settlers learned a thing or two from the aboriginee so that in one decade slightly more American agriculture was quite different from the agriculture of the old world. With the extension of roads into the backwoods, the harnessing of mountain streams throughout New England, and the improvement in plows and wagons, the farm in America continued to change. The cotton gin, McCormick's reaper, the gang plow, the tractor, the various bureaus of the Department of Agriculture, certainly revolutionized farming in America. Superficially the farm of yesterday resembled the farm of our grandfathers but our grandsires would have been lost if a premature resurrection had brought them to the farm again after ten or more years in the grave. We might go on, but the foregoing facts are enough to show that the wrecking of the farm as we know it is to be expected in a changing world. Why then should we bother when there are more important things to do for man's happiness and the race's progress? It is true that the race will last as long as the food supply holds out and the article in question does not suggest that there will ever be a scarcity of food. The changes are now more swift than formerly because we have progressed further, we have more wealth of knowledge because of the intellectual strivings of the human race in the past. The forward movement of industry has accelerated each generation as the speed of a falling body is accelerated in ever increasing degree as it approaches the center of gravity of the earth. To suggest, even in veiled language, that agriculture was an industry, fixed and unchangeable until this day, when the facts are otherwise, is to present an unwholesome diet for mental growth.

But this is not all that is untrue in this first paragraph. The farm is referred to as "the final refuge from a mechanized and goose-stepped civilization." The insinuation is that we must accept the mechanized and goose-stepped civilization after the farm is a memory. Upon the authors' say-so we are to take mechanization and goose-stepping as accepted facts. No other alternative is suggested. Man might ask if no other way out were

possible if the words "final refuge" did not stand as a detour sign to his thought tracks. Such mental food is adulterated. Why should the terms "mechanized" and "goose-stepped" be coupled as literal Siamese twins? Is it logical to think of mechanization as something to take refuge from? Are machines, are any time or labor saving devices, enemies of the state of society known as democracy and the condition known as liberty? Superficial thinking believes that the machine condemns man to unemployment, poverty, and finally, support by the state. The intent of the inventor of any machine is to release labor from the imprisonment of toil without end, not to separate man from the need of a certain amount of toil to sustain himself. To reduce the amount of energy and shorten the time needed for man to produce enough to satisfy his wants, thus freeing him to develop along cultural lines as his fancy determines, is the purpose of any machine. That the purpose has not been carried out so far is because we have not developed sufficiently to know that "man shall not live by bread alone." When all trivial jobs have been reduced to machine tasks, and no man or group of men can appropriate to himself the benefits that should be enjoyed by all men, there will be no voice raised against mechanization. We shall not need to be advised to accept it as the inevitable,—we will welcome it as a blessing, a gift of the intelligence of man. We shall seek no refuge from mechanization.

As for goose-stepping we can not accept it and remain worthy of the name of men. Call it regimentation, communism, social planning, economic planning, social security, cooperation in a cooperative state, call it anything you will, it will remain a denial of liberty of body, conscience, and intellect. It will be a denial of democracy, a subservience to the ideals of Hitler and Mussolini. Such a condition of slavery is far more despicable, far more destructive to man's soul than the bondage of the Hebrews in Babylonia and Egypt and the chattel slavery of the negroes in America, for neither the Hebrews nor the blacks became slaves of their own free will. When it is suggested in an article published in a magazine read by the elite of the higher intellectual circles that this is a goose-stepping civilization, as if it were settled for ever by all men, when in fact it is the delirium of but a part of the human race, we will not say that the wish is father to the thought but we do say that such mental food is unfit for a people who love liberty.

The rest of the article states some facts that are unassailable, and some theories that have not been proved. In regard to the latter we again have an adulterated menu. With synthetic food and raiment, dyes and drugs, one would take it as a proved fact that we can do without plant life. The essential materials for a beefsteak, a pair of shoes, a rubber tire, a tent, a bottle of gin, or a bottle of attar of roses, would be obtained in the laboratory from ores and sands and clays taken from the earth. Some of these articles and many others have

been manufactured successfully in the chemical laboratory. We do not know what would be the effect of synthetic food upon the human body. True it is that we are quite capable of producing food containing all of the elements found in plant and animal food and in the right proportion and without waste, thereby making it possible to carry a whole day's rations in a small pill bottle. And we can do this without recourse to any plants or animals. But we have never tried such diet upon the human race in sufficient amount to know whether man has arrived at that wonderful state of intellect when he can dispense with all life but human. There are strong reasons for suspecting that there is a mysterious something developed in the chemical laboratory of the leaf, under the influence of solar radiation, that is essential for the activation of living cells of protoplasm in plant and animal life, and without which life can not continue. This mysterious something is not subject to chemical analysis, therefore is non-existent chemically. Synthetic food can not obtain this by chemical action. Yet the authors of the article insinuate that we are on the eve of synthetic production of life-continuing material. The most that can be said truthfully is that we have learned many things about the secrets of food but still have much to learn. Any statements that claim more than this are merely speculative. Such intellectual diet, while misleading, is not as dangerous to the mind as that which suggests that liberty is a thing of the past and regimentation the next step in man's development. But we can not permit one theory that the authors state as a proven fact to pass unchallenged. It is the rejection of Ricardo's Law of Rent.

The authors claim that Ricardo's theories were upset immediately by changes that came about. They very graciously admit that his theories were without fault over a century ago. They base their astounding claim upon the fallacy that production in the future "will have little relation whatever to the land itself." Is it possible that in this day and generation there is any intellectual so dumb as to suppose that land in the economic sense will play but a small part in production? Let the learned gentlemen tell us where in the synthetic age the materials will come from if not from the land, and where will the synthetic laboratories, workshops, and storehouses be located if not on land? And where will the ultimate consumers of the synthetic products set the soles of their feet, if not upon land? And if the answer be nowhere, and how can it be anything else, we would like to know whether all lands would be of equal value for the purpose mentioned, or whether some lands would be poorer and some better. If the latter is the answer then we say beyond all possibility of contravention that some land will yield more economic rent than other land, and that this will not be due to anything man may perform as an individual, but will be due to man collectively and to the natural features of the land. Ricardo's

law of rent may have been based upon agricultural land but it is natural law and applies to all land used by man. It is as true today as when first brought to the attention of thinkers. And because it is true those of the human species who control land are able to collect of the product from those who use it. All of which is perfectly proper if all mankind benefit by the use, but if certain individuals or groups are the sole beneficiaries of the toil of others upon their lands then is mankind reduced to the status of slave and slaveholder.

Such intellectual food as the above is disastrous to the race in that it seeks to justify the cause of all evil among men in civilized societies, the private ownership by a few men of natural resources from which all men are compelled to draw the physical nourishment for their bodies. And when such diet is presented by men occupying high positions in intellectual circles the full extent of the disaster is comprehensible to even the slow witted. By propaganda we were urged into a World War when we had arrived at the necessary mental state for it. By propaganda we are being led into a mental state that will prefer perpetual slavery to a liberty that we were approaching gradually. The authors of this amazing article are Wayne W. Parrish, formerly a journalist on the *Herald Tribune* of New York, and Dr. Harold F. Clark, professor of Economics at Teachers College, Columbia University. It can be seen that false doctrine coming from such men will be accepted by the general mass of magazine readers and by those moulders of the youthful mind, our teachers, who take summer courses and extension courses to make themselves better instructors and citizens. The damage done to the young mind that falls a prey to such teaching is irreparable.

In the same number of *Harper's* appears an article by Stuart Chase who is reputed to be a writer on economic subjects. It is entitled "The Parade of the Gravediggers." It is an attempt to justify the New Deal by showing up the critics of it as self-interested individuals who refuse to recognize the fact that the old prosperity regime of the G. O. P. is gone forever, and who still believe in all the fallacies of the former economic era. In seeking to justify the violations of the spirit of freedom and human rights by the present administration at Washington, Mr. Chase does not hesitate to use language that so befuddles the mind that one could not be blamed for getting nothing at all out of the article. Also he does not shun fallacies but hugs them to his breast as if part of himself. This article is to be part of a book in which he includes other articles published in the past, and of which the kindest thing we can say is that the author is mistaken more often than he is right. We can say that whatever Mr. Chase's article seeks to explain does not explain economics. Take his definitions of Capitalism for example.

He speaks of the system under which we have been living as being "roughly identified as capitalism." The

workers, making it necessary for the owner to reinvest or spend his share to maintain equilibrium in the system. He means the industrial system though he thinks he means Capitalism. This spending and reinvesting, according to Mr. Chase, both put men to work, and thus provide purchasing power, again to be divided 30-70, in an endless spiral. It all seems very plain to Mr. Chase, and unfortunately it will seem so to thousands who read the article and have never had any other mental food to choose from, that the owners must reinvest because they can spend but a fraction of their income, and that this reinvestment "results in more plant capacity which demands an expanding market."

There are three fallacies in the above explanation. One is the dividing of income between owner and workers. Under such a division 30-70, whether sanctioned by the law of compound interest or not, is ridiculous. As owner the owner is entitled to nothing. He is entitled only to what he produces, either by his services or for the use of his capital. Allowing ten per cent for the use of his capital, and ten per cent is very liberal and based upon artificial or false interest and not true interest, then twenty per cent is too much for the services of one man when his workers must share seventy per cent. Suppose the income was \$100,000 a year and he employed fifty workmen. By Mr. Chase's formula the owner would get \$10,000 interest, \$20,000 for wages or services, and each of his workmen would receive an average of \$1,400. We have no doubt that this is actually so but it is all wrong. The owner's services could never be worth fourteen times as much as the average yearly earnings of his employees. But Mr. Chase has forgotten rent. We assume that by income he means what is left after all deductions are made for rent, taxes, insurance, and incidental expenses such as donations, etc. In that case he is making his employees pay his rent and taxes, paying them wages equal to seventy per cent of what is left. Thus we have the inequitable division of 30-70. If the owner shared the rent and taxes with his employees, as he should since he is the owner, the distribution would be more like 15-85 if the owner gave services. Then he would get \$5,000 for his services while the average wage for his men would be \$1,700 per year. Deliberately ignoring the part of production that goes to the land owners for no service whatever is done for the purpose of winning the minds to a conception of state ownership or control of industry. The vast amount of wealth that is diverted from labor and capital to the owners of land can not be spent by the landowners nor can it be consumed by them. It has resulted in a division of income for the United States that Mr. Chase does not mention; eighty-five per cent of the income goes to five per cent of the population. If five per cent of the population are normal individuals this means that they have families, so that eighty-five per cent of the income goes to support twenty per

cent of the population. This means that eighty per cent of the population must get along on fifteen per cent of the income. Furthermore, the eighty per cent includes all wage earners from day laborers to corporation presidents, and all government officials. This constant drain of so much produced wealth to so few of the people will result in ruin no matter how much of the wealth is reinvested. This comes about because the figures mentioned are not constant but move further apart with each new production, so that proportionately the poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer.

Now let us look at the fallacy in Mr. Chase's explanation of Capitalism. It is the old wages fund theory, that men are paid wages out of capital. The spending and reinvesting both put men to work and thus provide purchasing power. So men could not begin work until somebody spent something and nobody could buy until somebody spent something! Very simple! For a long time now it has been known that men go to work in response to a demand. When there is a demand for goods owners of plants will attempt to supply that demand. Men will not reinvest when there is no demand. And the spending, according to Mr. Chase, could never be more than thirty per cent from the owners, most likely but a fraction of one per cent. It would have to come from those who receive the seventy per cent to make it profitable to reinvest. So the men who want to produce the articles to meet the demand of the people able to purchase really put the capital to work. Mr. Chase puts the cart before the horse. When do people stop spending? When they can not produce? And when do they stop producing? When production becomes unprofitable because of high land rents. Then purchasing power ends. And just as soon as industry can get land cheap enough to produce without loss industry employs capital to assist it. Labor creates its own wages as it goes along. The employer is in debt to labor until he settles the account in pay envelope or by check. Labor is never in debt to the employer unless wages are advanced before production starts. Thus labor employs capital and capital does not employ labor. And once labor has the opportunity to create its own wages it starts purchasing. Thus a spiral starts in the opposite direction from Mr. Chase's

Mr. Chase's third fallacy is contained in these words: "The new investment results in more plant capacity which demands an expanding market." So American business, or any other business, is accustomed to going ahead with preparations for producing vast amounts of goods and then setting out to make a market? Does Mr. Chase really believe this? We doubt it. Business men who do work upon such theories usually wind up with a court order pasted on the front door and an unpleasant session in a United States District Court in which all details, personal and otherwise, are thoroughly

ired for the benefit of creditors. The sound business men wait until the market demands the expansion before enlarging the plant. Then if they are forced into bankruptcy it is because of the fickleness of human nature as expressed in fads such as those of dress and adornment. This last fallacy is a very dangerous one to allow to persist. It leads to war, privation, loss of liberty, and causes a stop in the onward march of the human race toward its final goal that may last for centuries and entail endless misery.

It is of no value to look further into Mr. Chase's menu or those who prefer canned thinking. The rest of his article is as bad as the parts we have pointed out. Is his meat fit for the intellect of a free people who wish more freedom, or is it fit for abject slaves of monopoly? The sad thing is that Mr. Chase's articles hold prominent place in our most respectable magazines and newspapers and are read by many thousands of our best minds. His sphere of influence is immense and his power for evil is immeasurable.

(To be Concluded)

Henry George and Public Borrowing

ONE of the common defenses of the New Deal program of continuous public spending has been the statement that "we spent billions to fight the war, why should we not spend billions to fight the depression." While the quotation is much similar to saying that since "we got drunk during the war, why shouldn't we get drunk again during the depression," such an answer is an expression of wise-acking sentiment rather than one of reason.

Fortunately, more than fifty years ago a noted economist wrote an answer to this query that is irrefutable in its reasoning and is more timely today than when it was written. Henry George, who back in the 80's was a candidate of the Labor party in New York for mayor and who was almost elected, wrote the answer in his book, "Protection and Free Trade." (Then follows a lengthy quotation from page 9 of the work cited.)—*Arizona Daily Star*, Tucson, Ariz.

WE may be confident that the life of this brave son of a free and generous nation will be chronicled in its annals in letters of gold. Nay, beyond the limits of his native land Henry George will be known and respected as one of the hosts of God's servants, who desire to glorify Him in the eyes of men by establishing among them a reign of happiness, of justice, and of universal peace.

RABBI GUSTAV GOTTHEIL.

WHEN in all trades there is what we call scarcity of employment; when, everywhere, labor wastes, while desire is unsatisfied, must not the obstacle which prevents labor from producing the wealth it needs, lie in the foundation of the industrial structure? That foundation is land.—PROGRESS AND POVERTY.

The Enclave Law in Tennessee*

WHEN the Legislature of Tennessee adopted an Act amending the Charter of the town of Collierville, (Tenn. Priv. Acts 1933, page 1257), this legislation attracted considerable attention, not only in the United States, but abroad.

This Act authorized the town of Collierville to operate "an enclave of economic ground rent," by acquiring land at tax sales, or otherwise, and leasing the same for a period not exceeding ninety-nine years. Improvements on such leased lands are exempt from municipal levies. Only the "single tax on land values" could be assessed by the municipality on the lands thus leased.

At the time of the passage of the Enclave Law, tax delinquency in Collierville, while not extensive, as compared with similar Tennessee municipalities, nevertheless existed.

Under the Enclave Law, the town was given the right to take title to lands. Thus Collierville became a potential purchaser for every tract of land in its corporate limits on which the taxes were delinquent.

Almost immediately, one of the effects of the passage of this Act was to stimulate the payments of taxes by delinquents. Nor was this tendency retarded by the passage of another law by the General Assembly of Tennessee stopping temporarily the filing of suits to enforce the tax liens, or removing penalties and interest when pending tax suits were settled. Collierville had no tax suits pending at this time.

The so-called Craig Moratorium Tax Act, and another similar law, expired of its own limitations in 1936. Now, for the first time since the passage of the Enclave Act, Collierville could proceed to file tax suits with the objective of acquiring lands on which to operate its municipal enclave of economic ground rent.

About the middle of February, a tax bill was filed by the town to compel payment of all delinquent taxes on lands and buildings in Collierville.

Only eighteen taxpayers, in this town of more than one thousand population, were delinquent at the time of the filing of these suits. Few towns in America can today show so little tax delinquency.

Since the filing of these suits, already more than one-half of those sued have paid their taxes. In all probability the remaining delinquents will pay their taxes before the suits can be prosecuted to conclusion, and the property on which the taxes are levied can be sold to the town for delinquent taxes.

At the present time, Collierville has only one lot leased

*This article is printed for the purpose of acquainting our readers with a very important movement now under way in Tennessee. Hon. Abe Waldauer, Memphis, will, we imagine, be glad to answer any inquiries from officials of other towns or cities who want information.—Editor LAND AND FREEDOM.