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ROSS & CERINI

BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

57 SAINT JAMES ST WEST MONTREAL

July 2, 1947

fl
Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
Apartment Six A
29 Washington Square West
New York 11, N.Y

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt

Thank you for your letter of June 25.

I spent a day in New York State, most of the time at Plattsburg where I have spoken a number of times to Rotary and Kiwanis and had also one meeting at the large Teachers Normal School. At the border I was asked for something to identify me and I finally found I had one of your letters and when I showed it to the border official he was all smiles, said he thought you were one of the great women of the world, if not the greatest. I talked with some of the service club officials over the telephone and expect to visit one or more of them next Fall or Winter.

If there were a fraction of the number of people, who are advocating mere palliatives, advocating Equitism, it would not be many years before the world would see that short of the work-unit-dollar and mutual banking-which would abolish rent of land, rent of money and the profit incentive and monopolies, cartels, tariffs, patents and all the special privilege now rampant in capitalism, we cannot have real free enterprise, for then people everywhere would be well off and we would have permanent peace and security which we cannot have otherwise.

Next Sunday I speak at the Baptist Church in Point St. Charles, this city, the pastor being in England attending a convention. My subject will be "The Sermon on the Mount and Its Meaning for Today." I read your column with great interest in each issue of The Monitor. I have been wondering if you would like to have a small half-tone of the picture in '47 Magazine heading your column, the same as they have for mine? They are getting a new half-tone for my column. If you would allow me to do it I would be glad to have a negative made

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without any cost to you and at The Monitor they will make
mats as needed without any charge. It has long
been the custom of the house we shall have for you
to read regularly The Fundy Fisherman of Black's
Harbour, New Brunswick, and have seen interesting items
about visits to your summer home in that district. The
owners of that journal, the MacLean brothers (one now a
Senator) being interested in monetary reform (upon which
all worthwhile reforms await) They publish reports of my
addresses from time to time.

Yours faithfully

H. S. Ross

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I think you for your letter of June 22.

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

New York N. Y.
23 Washington Square West
Apartment 614
Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt

1945 S. 1st
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ROSS & CERRINI

Ross:-

I find Equitism a
trifle difficult to see in
relation to any general
adjustments at the present
time. I think it might
come about in the face
of a very great crisis.

I am glad to have an
opportunity to read your
paper & I will try to
understand it thoroughly.

I doubt, however if its
advocacy will be of much
use at the present time.

ROSS & CERINI

BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS

57 SAINT JAMES ST WEST, MONTREAL

May 16, 1947

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
Hyde Park
New York State

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt

I read "My Day" with interest in The Monitor and three other papers in which my Forum also appears.

I admired your great husband and also the splendid work for humanity you have been and are doing. You have proven that you are not afraid of new ideas so I am sending some material which will give you a very good idea about Equitism, first proposed by Warren Edwin Brokaw who died in 1945 at Del Rosa, Calif., about sixty miles from Los Angeles at the age of 84. His daughter, Vaughn, died during 1946. She had a thorough grasp of the Equitist proposal.

I met the Brokaw's when they lived near Seattle. His book "Equitable Society And How To Create It" is nearly out of print. Those of us who are helping to spread the idea gave most of the volumes to libraries and key people in different parts of the world. We loan a copy when we feel sure it will be returned. Would you like to read it? It took Mr. Brokaw twenty years to write it and it really is a mine of valuable information. He was an intimate of that great American, Henry George, and was selected by George to be editor of the national single tax weekly he (George) intended to issue. As you will see, Brokaw went beyond George and much deeper. It does seem quite clear that no one could go deeper than answering correctly the all-important question, namely: On what terms should one person work for another? And what could be fairer than to measure work (the common denominator in such a transaction) by a work-unit medium which gives us the merit incentive rather than the cruel, ruthless profit incentive?

As against all the other "isms" I favor capitalism, but would like to see it purified so that the world will have really, truly free enterprise- an economic system based on abundance rather than upon the faulty

artificial scarcity under our present system. I hope you will see that once the world adopts the Equitist way of life, automatically the objectionable features of capitalism will be abolished, namely, monopolies, cartels, tariffs, patents, rent of land, rent of money and the profit incentive. Is it too strong an indictment to call those objectionable features and ignorance the great enemies of humanity? When will it be realized that capitalists are not, on the whole, at fault, but that the rules of the game are at fault and too difficult for most people? I hope you will see that with an equitable medium of exchange and mutual banking the savings would be fabulous and such savings would make people everywhere perfectly secure and comfortable and we all of us (including we lawyers as I sometimes confide to conservative audiences) could afford to be honest which is almost impossible under our pagan system of today.

At an Anglican men's association during the question period, I was asked if I was a bit of a Communist and replied: "Oh, I am much more radical than that, as I am trying to be a Christian."

I am going to all sorts of audiences and really the reaction is very encouraging. My last address was to seventy members of The Swiss National Society here and just before that I addressed one of our Legions and am to go to a number of them from time to time and to many service clubs. During the past thirty years I have given at least 1600 addresses in Canada and in your great country to all sorts of audiences (as you are doing) without any financial profit but with a lot of satisfaction. Next I go to a church group of men and then to pay my fourth visit to Rotary of Malone, N.Y. State, quite a fine club for such a small town. My last address in your country was to Ithaca Kiwanis last June when I attended a 50-Year Reunion of my class (I took one year) at Cornell Law School. The Kiwanians took a great fancy to the idea and the daily paper gave my address good space. The publicity was handled by the leader of the largest Sunday-school in Ithaca, and he also superintended the business of the largest department store in Ithaca I discovered. The president of the club is an executive of the principal power (electric and gas) company in that part of their state.

Mr. Callander of Malone Rotary, who invites me, is the editor and Vice-President of the only daily paper and is not as afraid of new ideas as his boss, President Frank E. Gannett, is. However, he is broad enough to allow his editors a free hand. Mr. Gannett also owns The Journal of Ithaca. I had no idea of inflicting such a lengthy letter upon as busy a person as you are and would not dream of doing so except for the fact that I have a high opinion

of your integrity and good judgment and will be very delighted if you find that Equitism is morally and logically sound and will do what we claim for it, even if you cannot advocate it in your column or in your addresses.

I am very sorry that it was impossible for me to hear your address when you were here not long ago. I heard many favorable comments from friends.

I send a Forum containing my reference to your column. When I wrote I understood that your column was to be in the magazine section of The Monitor. I am glad that it is now appearing on the editorial page.

A group of working men, The Equalitarian Club, 1184 - 78th Avenue, Oakland, Calif., are getting out a little bulletin. They do all the work themselves after their days' work and are now sending out about 400 copies of each issue. They have been all through the labor movement of the I.W.W. They call themselves The Equalitarian Club. They had not heard of Equitism until recently. Someone in Detroit told them about our group and they at once wrote and have been using the material sent by some of our group.

Yours faithfully

Howard S. Ross

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Having known a number of Canadian Communists very well indeed for many years, I am bound to say that they work tirelessly and consistently for the common good in all local affairs, whilst in international affairs their outlook is shrewd and far-seeing, their aim being to shape such policies as would prevent war and promote in all lands the principles which guided the French Republic - liberty, equality and fraternity.

E. Grosvenor.

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destroyed.

EQUITISM— A Brief for Humanity

by

Howard S. Ross, a Member
of The Montreal Bar Association



Having studied economics intensively during the past forty years, I came finally to the conclusion that Equitism— as proposed by Warren Edwin Brokaw in "Equitable Society and How To Create It"— is the only system which covers the whole range of economic problems. Mr. Brokaw died December 8, 1944, in Del Rosa, California, at the age of eighty-four. His wife, also a keen student of economics, died some years earlier. There were two daughters. One, Vaughn, who carried on the work of her father as best she could at Del Rosa, has also recently died.

Those of us who have become convinced that Mr. Brokaw's solution would cut the vicious circle in which the world is travelling and give the world permanent peace and prosperity are doing our utmost to make this plan better known. During the past thirty years I have given, without financial profit, in Canada and the United States, at least sixteen hundred addresses on this subject before all kinds of audiences, including church and labor groups, forums, many service clubs women's clubs and university groups. We believe that the adoption of this proposal, as the result of thorough-going education and persuasion, will do away with war, monopolies, cartels, tariffs, racial and religious conflicts and the economic conflicts which are inevitable under our present faulty economic system. It will also eliminate the

greatest enemies of humanity, namely, rent of land, rent of money and the cruel, ruthless profit incentive.

Equitism will give the world real free enterprise. It will encourage individual initiative to the full. It is a fool-proof, automatic plan- and that is needed because the world has blundered along on the basis of artificial scarcity instead of on a just and workable basis of abundance.

Briefly, the Equitist proposal involves the adoption of a new monetary system. The basis of the dollar, or any other unit of account and currency, a yen, lira, etc., would be one hour of adult human work, work for work, hour for hour, or as Mr. Brokaw often put it, each person would give as much of his life as he received of the life of another.

Equitism seems to be the needed antidote to Socialism, Communism and all collectivist plans and it will give, we claim, all that the collectivists are hoping for and in most cases courageously working for.

A system of mutual banking has been worked out and it is estimated that an Equitist pure dollar will be the equivalent of at least twenty-five of our tribute-paying dollars and that three or four hours per day of useful work, by each adult, will give abundance— equitably distributed— instead of artificial scarcity.

When the world realizes that it is the human power of satisfying human desires by exertion that is stored in products, that it is this power which we exchange and it alone, we can see that we must have a unit of comparison which will include nothing else before we can possibly have equitable exchange or work, with the natural resources passing in abundance to people everywhere, free of all

tribute on the part of anyone to anyone-- the natural resources merely holding the work.

Equitism is, some of us think, the answer to the age-old problem, namely, on what terms one person should work for another. Unfortunately, our present system chokes on abundance and thrives for a short time on artificial scarcity; then comes depression and war with all their horrors and the fabulous cost in lives, energy and money. There is no need of sacrifice on the part of anyone if Equitism is adopted because it will pay everyone to apply it; those of us who accept it as sound are confident it will be accepted when it is understood, after the required educational work has been done.

To many it may seem very Utopian. Yet someone said that the most powerful thing in the world is a great idea when its time has come. The best definition of Utopia I have heard is Premature Truth. It has been well said that real progress is the realization of Utopias.

With all special privilege and exploitation gone, it will be as easy for one as for another to get an abundance of economic goods. It should not then be so difficult for us to be honest and kindly to others, regardless of their race and creeds. Equitism would be a practical application of the best precepts of true religion-- a real exposition of the Golden Rule.

Until understood, Equitism seems to most people too simple and logical to be attainable. Probably this is because it lacks the checks and balances, not to mention the mystery so plentiful in conventional economics. It is not surprising that people find it difficult to understand how Equitism will automatically solve the money question and the land question, how it will remove the incentive to seek to exploit and the incentive to seek profit to the detriment of human welfare--

and yet pay well for everyone everywhere! Under Equitism for the first time the true law of supply and demand will have free play, when people exchange their work, hour for hour, and on a voluntary basis as against a compulsory basis as under all collectivist systems. Equitists believe there are just two classes of things in this world: those which exist through the exertions of persons, and those which exist regardless of the exertions of persons. The latter we call natural resources; and most people will admit that they are morally the gift of nature to all of us, that is, they belong to no one.

Work may be embodied in natural resources, but that does not alter the fact that originally they belonged to no one. Men came to "own" them, as Rousseau saw, only by turning a clever usurpation into an irrevocable "right". I hope you will agree that the reason we "exchange" is to get more natural resources with less work. Not many will admit that they wish to get more work from others for less of their own. If we had a thoroughly just system-- which, of course we do not have at present-- exploitation of workers would be a thing of the past.

If we can get more from nature in one way than others can, and others more in another way than we can (with equal work) each of us would get more from nature by exchanging equitably-- hour for hour of time worked-- than either of us can now. For on the present basis we pay others and others pay us not only for human work but also for the natural resources in which the work is embodied.

When one sells or exchanges according to quantity or quality of goods (priced by the conventional processes of supply and demand) one is charging for the natural resources in which work is embodied. For example, if a man growing corn works half his time on

each of two locations, and realizes half as much per acre on one as on the other, then sells both harvests in the same market, he gets the same for his work on each and in addition gets as much for nature's extra yield on the latter. The latter payment is ground rent.

But if you and someone else exchange on the work-unit basis, each gets the same for the work and nothing for nature's extra yield. That yield goes to the consumer as a gift from nature, which it really is. Thus, each one pays for the work of production the sale price of the product, but nothing for the natural resources in which the work is stored. Equitists believe that if work-unit money is adopted so that every dollar is issued solely for an hour's adult work, promising acceptance in return for an hour's adult work, then no one can receive money for anything but human work or have to pay for anything but human work. No one can then own for an income.

If free enterprise is unsound- and it is all too easy to prove it is very unsound- and if Socialism and all collectivist plans are also unsound, as Equitists maintain, the alternative of highest value seems incontestable: a work-duration unit which will give the world freedom from fear and want for the first time in the history of humanity.

Tel:
Circle 7 - 0236

THE
BLACKFRIARS'
GUILD

New York Chapter

May 1, 1947

Mr. H. S. Ross
Barrister and Solicitor
57 St. James St. West
Montreal, Canada

Dear Mr. Ross

I am very sorry for this long delay in answering your interesting letter, but producing shows just off Broadway and carrying a number of radio programs have my correspondence far behind.

You asked me something about myself and the Order of which I am a member. The O.P. behind my name is Order of Preachers founded by St. Dominic and called the Dominicans. I am from Providence, Rhode Island and the Dominicans have a college there so I suppose that is how they caught me.

Although I see no prospects in the near future of going to Montreal, I should be very happy to see you if you are ever in New York because I feel that in spite of our erratic correspondence we have many things to talk over.

I do wish you success in your Equitist movement.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) Urban Nagle, O.P.

(Reverend) Urban Nagle, C.P.

April 22, 1947

Mr. Eric A. Johnston
Motion Picture Censor
Hollywood
Calif.

Dear Mr. Johnston

A few years ago I wrote you about Equitism and your letters were very kindly and sympathetic, even though the idea is, at the moment, what one might call 'premature truth'. I am sending you some leaflets. Hope you will find time to go over them. I am going to all sorts of audiences and really the reaction is quite satisfactory. I am stressing the idea that Equitism supplies the economic mechanism to make the Sermon on the Mount work in all our human relationships and particularly in business. I think you will see that if the world adopted the work-unit-dollar, according to time, work for work, hour for hour, with mutual banking, that automatically a great miracle would take place. The following objections to capitalism would be removed:-

Monopolies, cartels, patents, tariffs, rent of land, rent of money and the profit incentive and that would mean that the world would have free enterprise and avoid the inherent weaknesses in socialism and communism or any of the collectivist plans. It seems to some of us that the reason why most Christians

do not believe the core of Christianity, that is, the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, are sound, is because of the too prevalent idea that to adopt such principles would hurt the people who now have much. We have had some very good people making the figures and it can be shown that the savings alone would be fabulous. Think of what would be saved with war out of the way- and of course there would be no incentive to war once an equitable medium of exchange is adopted- since it would give the world a basis of abundance rather than artificial scarcity as we have it at present. Personally, I favor the Capitalist system because I can see that when those objectionable features are removed we would have real free enterprise, which I certainly favor and you do also. It is estimated that three or four hours a day would be ample if all adults did their share of the ordinary work of the world, and I am sure everyone would be delighted to do so once they had a taste of equal freedom, equal opportunity, with the equally free people of the world cooperating to carry on the work of the world.

I think you will agree that at least two-thirds of our activities now are not only useless but harmful. Think of the billions it costs to watch each other, to book-keep each other, to carry on insurance of all kinds! The cost of Civil Service, of police, of the Courts. Think of the cost of the lawyers of the world, all of course quite necessary under our present system. We feel that the capitalists who operate our present system are not to blame; it is the rules of the game that are at fault; for these capitalists do not know how much they should have or

when their business may fail because of factors over which they have no control, and of course that is becoming more serious every year with Labor struggling to get as much pay, with shorter hours, as possible. Think of the situation at present with our public men doing their best, trying to satisfy their voters and do the best for their country, and of course trying to do their best for their own future and who can blame them for that? As you know, most of the legislators who go to Washington seldom return to their own home city or state but end up with some position that the government has given them and that is looked upon as quite all right. Think of the lawyers who go into the different departments, as for instance the Department of Justice, and get to know thoroughly the weaknesses of, for example, the anti-Trust Laws and after a few years leave the Government employ and seek service with prominent corporations, so that they may use the knowledge gained as civil servants to help the corporations, and who can blame them for that if the strong incentive is there which impels them to take such a step? And then think of the fact that during all these years with thousands and thousands of dollars being spent by the Department of Justice before hardly a dozen cases of anti-trust litigation have been at all successful! One well-known writer stated recently that probably not more than half a dozen cases were ever successfully prosecuted. But, again, why blame the business people who struggle to do their best for themselves and their families? Of course it is almost too much to ask business people to think of the consumers, their customers, but it is an encouraging sign that now there is even talk of that being seriously considered.

President Truman's last address asking for reduction in prices and that the consumers should be considered is a real step forward is it not?

I reviewed a book recently entitled "The Sermon On The Mount and Its Meaning for Today". The author, a professor at one of your theological seminaries, makes a very strong case for the adoption of the principles of the Sermon on the Mount. I reviewed the book and wrote him about Equitism and he wrote in part as follows:- "I appreciate very much your kind comments on my book on the Sermon on the Mount and the references which you are making to it in your numerous addresses. I was glad also to have the information about Equitism of which I had not heard before. We do need to think very seriously about applying the Christian principles to our economic life and you have a solution which deserves our consideration. Hoping you will be spared to spread your message for many years, I am, cordially and sincerely yours.."

Professor Leo Wolman of Columbia likes the work-unit-dollar. Of course the difficulty is that everyone has so many entangling alliances and is so busily engaged from day to day that the individual cannot give such a fundamental proposal any time, even although it is believed to be morally and logically sound, particularly when there is no financial reward. It does look as if making this plan better known can only be done by people who are very keen about real reform, so it will have to come slowly, but those of us who are working at it can see that it will come surely- that is because it is so fundamental.

I am beginning to wonder if there is any possibility

at all of a movie of me giving one of my addresses on Equitism so that it could be sent around to all kinds of groups? I am sure the churches would be interested, universities and forums here and abroad. I hate to think of my having to give this up because of my age and I would like ~~it~~ is at all possible, - to have such a movie, if some producer could be persuaded to have it done. All I would expect in payment would be some modest remuneration from the royalties. I could send you many, many letters referring to my addresses which show how well they have been received.

Last June I was at a 50-Year Reunion of my law class at Cornell University; I took one year there which counted when I attended Dalhousie University Law School at Halifax, Nova Scotia, where I got my degree. While at Ithaca I spoke to the Kiwanis Club there and if anybody considered taking hold of this idea they could write to Mr. H. S. Huntley who was then the President of Kiwanis. He is one of the chief executives in the Light & Power Company for the large district around Ithaca. He and some of the others write very nice letters and had their paper there give very good publicity. They also sent some notes of my address to their International Kiwanis Magazine at Chicago, with a suggestion that perhaps some time they would use the material. I suppose I have spoken to as many service clubs in Canada and your country (and in most cases more than once) as anyone now living. Probably I have spoken oftener than anyone at the different service clubs.

I have not forgotten about your great interest in Russia on your visit there, and I would like to know whether you

think that if the one hundred and seventy-five millions of Russians, the fine people who do the work of Russia and who are under the control of the six million Communists, would favor Equitism if they knew about it? Of course the question would be- how can the plan be gotten to those people?

It is interesting to see that so many people are now advocating that our democratic way of life must be made much more attractive than it is for all of us. If we of the democracies are to be the leaders, we certainly cannot be real leaders unless we set a good example.

I have found that most audiences today appreciate a reasonable amount of humour, some satire, some irony so long as it is not offensive. I have developed that to quite an extent and that really does help me very much with the different audiences, and in the event of having a film would, I believe, hold the ordinary run of moving picture audiences wherever English is understood, and there would also be the possibility that it would be worthwhile having a film showing other speakers using my material in other languages. Perhaps some time it might be possible to have my address broadcast over the international service of each Canadian broadcasting system. No doubt you are doing the same in your country, that is, broadcasting in foreign languages.

If you can find the time I hope you will tell me something about your work. I have read something from time to time about it, but perhaps you would send me a few notes that I could use in my Forum. I am sending you an article from our weekly Standard about the visits of the people from Vancouver to Bellingham in your home State. By the way, I am wondering if you

know Dr. Frederick W. Roman who is Director of Associate Forums, Limited, 2101 South Gramercy Place, Los Angeles, and who is trying to produce better world order by presenting speakers of a high calibre? He is in fairly close touch with the universities of California and is a Regent of the University of California. He is going to publish some Equitist material during the summer. He has the following Forums: Pasadena Town Meeting, Parliament of Man, Los Angeles; Glendale Forum, World Today Forum, Los Angeles. Some years ago when I spoke on Equitism at the University of New York he was my chairman. When he thanked me for my address he said to the students: "As you know, I am not considered to be a very religious man, but I feel that if Jesus had been present here this morning and had heard this address he would have been very delighted."

With all good wishes,

I am,

Yours faithfully

/EG

Encls.

FRIENDS OF DEMOCRACY, INC.

**137 East 57th Street
New York 22**

Mar. 19, 1947

**Mr. Howard S. Ross
57 St. James St. West
Montreal, Canada.**

Dear Mr. Ross

I have just accepted a tentative engagement to speak in Montreal on May 15th and the first item on my agenda in Montreal other than making my speech is to have a visit with you. I have a number of questions that I want to ask you about Equitism. So far as I understand it, I agree with the ultimate aim of Equitism. What is not clear to me at all is the methods that are to be used to implement Equitism. These are matters that we shall discuss when I see you in May. In the meantime, may I say that I talked to one of the lecture agencies here and did not receive a very satisfactory response in re the matter of lectures by you on Equitism. However, after I have met you and had a chance to chat with you, I may be able to sell one of the lecture agencies on the idea of arranging a tour for you in and around New York. I anticipate meeting you in May with a great deal of pleasure.

Yours for the democratic way of life.

(Signed) L. M. Birkhead