

Freedom Matters

A Weekly Newsletter

Dane County, Wisconsin

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We are a free people in a republic, under a constitution which limits the powers of government to those necessary to secure the unalienable rights of each person to their life, liberty and property. Yet, when a legislature is in session, no one's life, liberty or property is safe. It's the curse of a democracy. That's why we have a republic instead. *Freedom Matters* dedicates itself to the fight to restore our republic. Most of the press and courts fail to do so. They've forgotten that freedom matters.

The Religion of Hans Nielson Hauge: Freedom from Oppressive State Regulations.

by Michael Byrne and Bob Bowman

In the October 18th edition of the The Mount Horeb Mail, reporter Mark W. Haebig closed his report on the public hearing about the Hauge church historic district with the following question: "One wonders what Hans Nielsen Hauge, preacher, son of a poor farmer and leader of a large religious revival movement in Norway in the late 1700 and early 1800's, would have thought of all the attention paid recently to the simple, yet dramatic log church structure in Perry that bears his name."

What an excellent and timely question, Mr. Haebig! We at *Freedom Matters* are so happy you asked! The short answer to your question is that he would have been shocked, saddened, and probably appalled!

Norwegian Hans Neilson Hauge was a skilled carpenter and repairman in his homeland. He was also the founder of a 19th century religious revival that drove his followers to emigrate. Hauge's religious movement openly rebelled against the oppressive state-dominated Christian religion of Norway. His was a popular movement, and became a powerful motivator for thousands of Norwegian immigrants who left Norway for the promise of a new life in America. Many of them settled in Southern Wisconsin, hoping to find not only economic opportunity, but also an atmosphere of religious tolerance and a government predicated on the principle that it should be limited to specific responsibilities and otherwise leave its citizens alone!

For the most part, the facts of the Perry case have been reported in the press in a one-sided way, with little regard for the established principles those Norwegians cherished. The little log church they built is no longer used, and has been declared a historic site. As it happens, key members of a historical society formed around the church live in the immediate neighborhood of the church and are putting up a fight to "save the church."

No one is threatening the building itself, although its log exterior was long ago covered with clapboard siding. No, this historical society has decided that Mr. Gehl is threatening the church just by proposing to build on his own land! This historical society has decided they have the right to determine what happens around it, not only on the parcel of land it sits on but also on the parcel owned by David Gehl alongside. Ironically, they have no problem with the placement of their own houses nearby but they have decided it's a big problem for Mr. Gehl to build one.

One thing that the writings of Hauge and his biographers spend considerable time on is the years of jail time Hauge spent because he refused to agree that the state government of Norway should in any way be involved with promoting a religion. He openly criticized them for attempting to suppress individual personal beliefs. Hauge knew that government had to steer clear of becoming overbearing or repressive, and his followers became so numerous they were a threat to the government so they tried to silence him by throwing him behind bars.

The emigration of thousands of his followers to America was a strong statement in itself, for it was in America where freedom from all that kind of politically motivated repression was expressly guaranteed by the United States Constitution! And private property is a linchpin of that constitution, a bedrock principle that society should absolutely avoid giving up.

Not only are the events swirling in the town of Perry a dangerous manifestation of a "government out of control," they are also a sign that it is time through the traditional American process of The Vote to renew our political leadership. It seems the current leaders have drifted toward establishing a new religion. This new belief system uses words such as "sprawl" and "historic" and "planning" to justify and thus codify what they believe to be the "truth."

As long as there is any breath left in our bodies, the writers of *Freedom Matters* will fight this new 'religion' in all its manifestations. Past issues have focused on this situation, and no doubt, future issues of this online op-ed newsletter will continue to enlighten the readership about the fate of David Gehl and his property rights defense.

"We Will Bury You."

by Bob Bowman

Thus spoke Nikita Krushchev, one-time czar of das kapital of government planning, the USSR. His warning to our country is coming true. Government planning sank the Soviet Union, despite which government planning is being ecstatically embraced by our American federal and state bureaucracies.

The Portland, Oregon area is the showcase for government planning in the United States. For 20 years, they've been at it. How has it fared? The majority in Oregon are now fighting it.

Here to tell us about it is Larry George, Executive Director of Oregonians in Action, the most successful property rights group in the United States. Larry was treasurer of the committee that successfully campaigned to pass Proposition 7 last year, a referendum requiring fiscal compensation to landowners for the value of their land lost to government regulations.

Larry will meet by schedule with interested officials Friday afternoon, November 9. That evening, he will speak to interested landowners and others at Jingles Coliseum Restaurant, 232 E. Olin Avenue, across from the Coliseum, at 7 PM. If you come to that meeting via the south beltline (U.S. 12 & 18), take the John Nolan or Rimrock Rd exits. We meet on the second floor, just off the elevator. Put it on your calendar. Come learn how to defend your property rights against confiscatory government regulations.

Attendance reserved to friends of property rights only.

Hear and speak with Larry George, Friday, Nov. 9 at 7 PM, at Jingles in Madison.

Readers' Bulletin Board. e-mail us your comments. Include your name, for publication by *Freedom Matters*

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