

HENRY GEORGE AND HIS PRECURSORS

A correspondent, who is a university lecturer in economic history, recently asked for information about the sources from which an historical account of Henry George and his teaching could be obtained. The following information given in reply may be of interest to our readers generally.

There is a fairly extensive literature about Henry George and his teaching, not only in English but in many languages—notably Spanish, German, French and Danish.

The most complete bibliography which I know is that prepared by the New York Public Library.

The most comprehensive book on the whole subject yet published is Prof George R. Geiger's *Philosophy of Henry George*. It gives an account of George's life, his economic and social philosophy, and the extent to which it has been put into practice.

On the biographical side the most important works are *The Life of Henry George*, by his son, and *The Prophet of San Francisco*, by Louis F. Post.

There are two papers given at our recent London Conference which you will probably find particularly interesting—those by Mr Lange and Mr McEachran—as they bear upon the historical background of Henry George's thought.

Another book I should mention is *The Single Tax Movement in the United States* by Arthur Nichols Young (Princeton University Press), which is helpful on the historical side, and is well documented.

On the economic side, among the most important works are *Democracy v. Socialism* by Max Hirsch (a book of great originality and power), *Natural Taxation* by Thomas G. Shearman, *The ABC of Taxation* by C. B. Fillebrown, *The Economic Basis of Tax Reform* by Professor Harry Gunnison Brown, and *Social Service* by Louis F. Post.

In this connection I may mention that Henry George had some eminent precursors in the economic field, although he did not know it. The principal of these were H. H. Gossen, *Entwicklung der Gesetze des Menschlichen Verkehrs*, and Léon Walras *Theorie Critique de l'Impôt, Etudes d'Economie Sociale*, etc. In Spain there was Alvaro Florez Estrada, *Curso de Economia politica*, in South America Andres Lamas, *Rivadavia y la Legislacion de las Tierras Públicas*, and in France there were of course the physiocrats (see especially the reply to Voltaire's *The Man with Forty Crowns* attributed to Condorcet), and more recently Albert Maximilien Toubreau's *Répartition métrique de l'Impôt*. There were also some English writers on the same tack, such as Spence, Ogilvie, Paine and Dove. (Reprints of the writings of the first three are collected under the title *Pioneers of Land Reform* in Bohn's Popular Library.)

Gossen's book, which was very scarce, was I believe reprinted in Berlin in 1927.

Léon Walras' *Etudes d'economie sociale* has just been reprinted (R. Pichon et R. Durand-Auzias, 20, rue Soufflot, Paris).

Patrick Edward Dove's *Theory of Human Progression* is Part I of a work to which he gave the title the *Science of Politics*. An abridged reprint is stocked by the Henry George Foundation. The second part is called *The Elements of Political Economy*. It is very scarce.

Another interesting work is Sir John Macdonell's *The Land Question*, published in 1873. He must have been one of the very few persons in this country who

had read Henry George's first small book, *Our Land and Land Policy*, published in San Francisco in 1871.

As to the practical application in legislation throughout the world of Henry George's proposal there is a great mass of information. Some indication of this will be found in the papers presented at the Conference of the International Union for Land Values Taxation and Free Trade.

F. C. R. D.