

selves upon reflection. There are innumerable matters of deep interest about which known Georgians of ability can write in a way never before attempted, i.e., presenting the facts before the enlightening background of a Georgian philosophy, more by suggestion than by direct propaganda for Georgeism, revealing to what degree the land problem, as we understand it, is the father of most of the folly and distress to which our poor is heir. . . .

"The foregoing suggests that dynamic authors, with special knowledge and something new to say, would receive encouragement to present the Georgian viewpoint. The History of Mankind needs re-writing from that viewpoint in order that the great mass of the people shall be permeated with the Georgian philosophy. There will be plenty of work for the men of the New Pen-Age to do, and still more for the readers. . . .

"Thus, by scientific method, and armed with modern and efficient weapons (including the spiritual equipment of the Georgian philosophy) can be created the—

"New Democracy, resting upon the enlightenment of large masses of people, sustained by the eternal vigilance of an enlightened and active minority, whose purpose is not to stir up discontent or strife and strikes, but to enlighten those about them. Movements of a small group of men have done much towards saving civilization in the past, and such Movements as this Liberty Readers' Book Club, may well become the means of saving our civilization."

South Africa

At Johannesburg, there is at work a Georgeist organization, called the Farmers' and Workers' Party. The chairman is F. A. W. Lucas, and the secretary is Mather Smith. The official organ, *The Free People*, tells us something of the aims of the Party:

"In February, 1936, four men, and three of them very poor men, seeing that none of the existing political Parties had any intention of tackling the root causes of the ever increasing poverty in our land, decided to start a new political party on their own. Since then, the Gospel of Deliverance has been preached right through South Africa, and has been accepted by many."

The Party leaders are at present active in spreading economic truth to the masses of unemployed that collect at the Labor Bureau in Johannesburg, looking for jobs. Mr. Lucas points out to them the absurdity of capable men having to parade up and down with placards marked "We Want Work" (and "Ons Vra Werk"), and he urges them to demand the cure for unemployment as presented by the Farmers' and Workers' Party—which is, of course, the Georgeist reform. The Party leaders report that their appeals are well received.

An Appeal for Action

By HENRY J. FOLEY

I BELIEVE that the time is ripe for the formation of a society to work toward placing the principles of Henry George on the statute books. Not that we can hope to change the laws this year or next, but to work intelligently and unitedly and everlastingly until the law is changed, whether it be in ten years or a hundred. The purpose is to capture and put to work the energies which have no outlet now except in hopes and prayers, and in describing to one another the beauties of the Single Tax. The grains of powder which now give us interesting fireworks displays could be massed in a cannon which would batter down the walls of monopoly and privilege.

The aim of the society:

1. To spread the simple doctrine that rent is the creation of society, and that the appropriation of rent by individuals, and the resulting taxation, are a double form of robbery.

2. To coordinate the efforts of Single Taxers who are now unacquainted with one another, and to get concerted action which will (ultimately) bring our desires to the attention of legislatures, and thus bring Single Tax out into the open and make it a live issue.

3. To enlist in the cause the dissatisfactions of those who do not understand the land question nor the rent question, but who are complaining bitterly of the government restrictions and government confiscations which we know are the results of the present land system; the ten millions out of work and helpless, the industrialists hampered with a thousand forms of taxes, with "5,000 laws and 17,000 regulations," and pressure groups organized to save themselves from government at the expense of other groups.

The only thing which will bring in the Single Tax is the placing of a law on the statute books, abolishing taxes, and decreeing that all ground-rent shall be collected for the public revenue. This change in the law will not be made until the people demand it, and they will not demand it until they understand that the private appropriation of land rent by individuals is legalized robbery, making prosperity impossible.

Single Taxers have spun the doctrine through all the mazes of economics and philosophy and ethics and religion. Not that we have settled the questions. We still dispute on the fine points of interest, the exact definition of rent, whether rent enters into price, and a dozen other questions, while "all this poor world really needs" is the knowledge that the legalized theft of the rent is the cause of its miseries.

These questions are fine things for the education of teachers, and in books for the intellectually inclined, but they should be left to these fields, and the programme of Single Taxers should be rigidly held to the collection of rent for public expenses. I believe that Single Taxers should unite upon this one fundamental. The man who believes in this is a Single Taxer no matter how he regards any other topic on earth, and he should be a member of the proposed society.

This fundamental fact is simple enough to be understood by every man who has to pay taxes on his house, on his income, and on his cigarettes. It should get the ready assent of every one except the men who make a living by keeping the world out of work, and they are a negligible minority at the polls. But we shall have to keep the programme as simple as that. At the same time, it is broad enough to take in every believer in the doctrines of Henry George, and it offers a field of action wide enough to enlist all the energies of all Single Taxers regardless of their ideas on the moot questions which have divided them and distracted them, and rendered them impotent.

An organization based upon the demand for equal liberty, and the restrictions of the powers of government to protecting those liberties, should be able to secure the enthusiastic approval of the vast majority

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of American citizens. *And it would automatically include the Single Tax as its first objective.*

There is nothing in the proposed society to militate against the activities of any other Single Tax organization such as the Henry George School. There is more work awaiting us than all the societies together can accomplish, and we can cooperate with increased efficiency and better results for all. Recruits to this society will be interested in the schools which can give them a deeper insight, and all Single Taxers will find in the society the machinery by which they can put their enthusiasm to work. There is no good reason why any Single Taxer should not be a member of the society.

I suggest that Single Taxers solicit their friends to join, and thus start by individual work. When our numbers are sufficient we can collect the funds necessary for mass meetings, press campaigns, radio, and lectures to such groups as manufacturers' associations, merchants, and civic groups. A good speaker might even hope to induce some of these groups to join in a body, as the only way in which they could ever hope to secure the benefits for which they have come together.

The reader is asked to suggest a name for the society, a name which will not label us as a brand of land reformers or tax reformers, but which will attract those who still believe in human liberty and in the right of men to live their own lives and to own what they have worked for.

I should be glad to hear from those who feel that there is room for such a society, and who would help in forming it.*

* Mr. Foley's address is 88-25 173d Street, Jamaica, L. I., N. Y.

Single Tax—A Misnomer

BY GEORGE C. WINNE

WHAT is the goal of the followers of Henry George? It is to spread his gospel of abolishing taxes in order to create equal opportunity. Do the words "Single Tax" suggest such an inspiring message? What greater virtue has a Single Tax over the present system of multiple taxes? Does not the thought of a tax produce resentment, a thing to be avoided, shunned, curtailed or reduced? It is an odious thing. Does the term "Single Tax" give a true description of a great social advance for equal opportunity, a great step forward, to eliminate undeserved poverty, from which flow so many social ills? How can those who are uninformed feel an inspirational impulse when we suggest a Single Tax? To many, a Single Tax suggests another fiscal innovation, which may be heavier and more burdensome than a diversified form of taxation.

Can we say the community-made rental value is a tax? If I earn a certain compensation, can it be considered a tax? If a group of people, which we may choose to call a "community" earn a certain compensation from one member of the community, can it be considered a tax? A person who has paid a rental for occupying a certain plot of land is only paying that rental because other persons also desire the opportunity to occupy the same plot of ground. If one or more persons would not compete for the privilege of occupying a certain plot of ground, it would not have a rental value. It is only the presence of people competing for that privilege that will give the land a rental value.

We may define a tax as "a charge or pecuniary burden laid upon persons or property for public purposes; a forced contribution of wealth to meet the public needs of government." That which we strive for is foreign to that purpose. We are not endeavoring to meet the needs of the government. We are endeavoring to meet the needs of the individual. The desire of the individual is to have equal opportunity.

We do not suggest making a forced contribution. Why then should we place our philosophy in an improper classification? If it is not a tax, why should we call it a tax? Our doctrine has

none of the characteristics of a tax. Our principle is to abolish taxes, retaining not even a Single Tax.

Taking the full community-made rental value for community purposes is not an idealistic theory, but a realization of a means whereby an equal opportunity may be granted to man to use natural resources for the satisfaction of his desires. In order for man to satisfy his desires he will be obliged to apply his mental and physical labor to reduce a certain portion of natural resources to possession or to further advance that which someone has reduced to possession. What does he have to pay for the privilege of reducing a certain portion of nature's resources to possession? Only that which he individually has not created, but which he has collectively created with other men. The presence of a society of men has created markets and exchanges, not any individual man. The competitive rental-value of the use of a certain plot of ground may be readily determined by the mere competition for the privilege to use it.

So let us strive for the abolition of all taxes. It sounds good. It has a sales appeal. It will gain adherents. It is a truer characterization of that for which we strive.

BOOK REVIEWS

FINANCING ECONOMIC SECURITY IN THE UNITED STATES

BY WILLIAM WITHERS

Columbia University Press, New York City. 210 pp. Price \$2.75.

This volume, by an Economics Professor at Queens College, attempts to survey the problem of economic security in the United States. Its publication could be justified only if it were written with special skill (and it is), with fresh intelligence, and with a sound interpretation of the problem of relief.

In a circular accompanying the book, we learn that another Assistant Professor of Economics, at Columbia University, considers the book "illuminating," and believes that the author "carries his erudition lightly and has written a refreshingly clear and lucid book."

As a factual account of the sorry mess called Federal Relief, Professor Withers treats the subject with reasonable thoroughness. As a study of the causes and cure of the problem, the book is barren and of little value. This is particularly true because of the inexcusable failure of Professor Withers to enlighten his readers on the basic principles of taxation and the profound influence they exert on the problem of unemployment and insecurity. The question arises: can we expect a Professor of Political Economy to give us light, when he himself is in darkness?

Cautiously, he informs us that unemployment is the main cause of economic insecurity. He writes (p. 4):

"In the depths of the depression in the early thirties, probably from fourteen to seventeen million Americans, about one-third of the working population, were unemployed. Even in 1937, when business conditions had markedly improved, unemployment was still estimated at from seven to nine million."

This reviewer would pause here to make a few important observations. For instance, how has the Federal Government attempted to cope with a problem of such magnitude? Has it sought to ascertain the cause of unemployment? Has it any conception of what unemployment really is? Has it ever considered why the Pilgrims who landed here in 1620 never suffered such a problem? Or why savages, today, in darkest Africa know no such problem?

The Federal Government has spent over twenty-five billion dollars since 1930 in its vain efforts to solve the problem.

With what results?

Along with the unsolved employment problem, we are now suffering: