

An Open Letter to the Wall Street Journal

"Henry George has long since been forgotten" says Vermont Royster (WSJ 5/11). Such news should have been headlined by the Wall Street Journal and not buried in its editorial page. After all, those who have studied Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* at the Henry George School of Social Science here in New York City, as well as in its extensions and affiliates, throughout the United States and Canada could not help but be interested in learning that someone who, to them, is as alive today as when he actually lived has been forgotten.

Possibly it is because Mr. Royster has forgotten what Henry George said in *Progress and Poverty* about "overpopulation" that he resurrects that dreary pessimist, Malthus. Had he remembered, he would have recalled that the threat of 'overpopulation' is merely an appearance due to our unjust system of land tenure. By making the good earth the only means which man has of securing a living -- private property, a host of what appear to be inexplicable problems arise.

People are forced into the cities, much as they were in ancient Rome, for as land gravitates into fewer and fewer hands, the cities act as huge magnets drawing to them absurdly large numbers of people. With them come the problems always associated with huge numbers congregated in relatively small areas -- rise to the welfare state, which as did the Roman State, gives bread and circuses to the mobs to appease them. The bread of the modern all-knowing welfare state appears in such forms as social security and doles, while the circuses are such expensively fascinating spectacles as the moon shots.

Intellectuals gravely ponder the possibility of the "overpopulation" of the world, while millions upon millions of acres of land lie idle awaiting the inevitable increase in prices brought on by the efforts of other people, but for the benefit of society's noblest member -- the land speculator.

Henry George forgotten? Possibly by the intellectuals of both the right and the left, who argue interminably over how to alleviate the problems caused by man's unsound system of land tenure, but never bother to study it to see if, just possibly, there might be a connection be-

tween how man makes the good earth available to all for use and the problems of "overpopulation", poverty, and even war.

Could it be that possibly some day men will realize that two things should never be private property -- human beings and the land. The history of the world might well be summed up as the tragic story of the violation of this truism. Some day men may recognize that private property consists only of things made by men, whether it be a mighty blast furnace or a simple toy, for without the incentive to own that which he produces, men will not produce. But men, even if they wish to, cannot produce land. It is a gift of Nature to all men.

Probably the fundamental problem which has perplexed man down through the ages has been: *How to divide up the unequal opportunities of the earth among the equal claimants to them with justice to all?*

The Indian looked with amazement at the actions of the white man in making land private property. The Indian knew that the good earth was his mother, and as he said, "A man never sells his mother." But, then, the Indian was an 'ignorant savage', and the white man a 'civilized gentleman.'

Sincerely yours,
Oscar B. Johannsen

Joint Georgist Conference

A Joint Georgist Conference will be held at Conference Point Camp, Williams Bay, Wisconsin, beginning Friday, July 1 and ending on Tuesday, July 5. Cosponsors are Land, Equality and Freedom; the Henry George Foundation; and the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.

A balanced schedule has been planned with a program of top speakers invited by the co-sponsoring Georgist groups. In addition to separate business meetings and conferences, there will be planned social activities and free time for leisure, or other recreation at facilities nearby to Conference Point.

Those wishing to attend should contact Nadine W. Stoner - 1118 Central Ave. Beloit, Wisc. , 53511.

Whither Goest Thou?

It has been stated statistics and the Bible may be used to prove anything. Man lives in a world ruled by nature and natural law.

It seems to be generally thought that mankind has progressed from a very primitive to a high material existence. In doing so, he has used and is using natural resources, surely at times wastefully, and even destructively. In instances, no doubt, this has been to his own detriment and may be harmful to future generations. It is certain he has not been as prudent as he might have been.

While man has accomplished great things in many respects, his progress has been woefully inadequate in many ways. Extreme luxury has been achieved for many, while many other persons barely exist, many in conditions unfit for human habitation. Cities reflect exquisite splendor amid sordid squalor.

Recently, the President of the United States called attention to what has been termed "energy crises" and made proposals of what the Federal Government ought consider doing about it. Whether or not there actually exists a crisis, it may well be now is the time for a signal to give consideration to "Whither Goest Thou?".

Providing food, clothing, shelter and many other things for man's existence and enjoyment, preceded "government". Government cannot produce these things. It can and does hinder the production of them. A limited amount of government is probably necessary in this imperfect world.

Finkelstein Appointed Director

Mr. Philip Finkelstein, presently the Director of the Center for Local Tax Research, was appointed the Director of the Henry George School of Social Science at a meeting of the Board of Trustees on May 12th.

Mr. Finkelstein has served in the Mayor's Office of Administration of New York City as Deputy Administrator, and was a Professor of Political Science at Brooklyn College.

He will not only continue to carry on the research work of the School but will be responsible for its academic activities.

In addition to his duties at the School, he will also be conducting classes in the Graduate School of Social Work at Adelphi University.

It may be highly desirable at this time when we know government has not and cannot solve the problem of "good living conditions" for all people, to consider something which thus far has been tried only on a very limited scale. No doubt, to some extent legislation, taxation, law enforcement, controls, monetary manipulation and all the other palliatives which have been tried, and failed, will be tried again. Again they will not succeed.

Is it not the sensible thing to try something which offers a possibility for improvement in the economy --- which accords with natural law --- a change in our land tenure system?

Yes, a halt ought to be called. There is the possibility of adjustment of our economy which would not only go far toward the solution of the so called "energy crises", but would serve to bring our economic system more into harmony with natural law. This would narrow the gap between extravagance and want. It would not solve all of the many problems which exist, but it holds promise of greatly relieving many of them. It should be given the opportunity to prove it will "work".

John T. Tetley

Incentive Tax League Organizes in New Jersey

An informal organization, the Incentive Tax League of New Jersey, is being organized. The objective of this group is to bring about the elimination of all taxation on improvements to real estate in New Jersey.

While there is nothing in the New Jersey State Constitution which would prevent this objective from being achieved, it does require enabling legislation so that the individual communities may remove the taxes on improvements.

Dr. Herman Lazaar, Arthur Hoffer, Mrs. Schnarr and John T. Tetley constitute the initial members of the Organizational Committee. Additional persons will be added to the Committee, and it is expected if all goes well, the League will have its first meeting in mid-September.

The Organizational Committee requests the names of persons wishing to affiliate with the League. Communications should be sent to the Incentive Tax League of New Jersey, P.O. Box 637, Woodbridge, New Jersey 07095.

New Social Group Organized

About 50 guests and graduates of the Henry George School were present at an informal get-together in the School's lounge on Tuesday evening, April 19th. After a short refreshment period, Mr. Paul Nix, the President of the School, delivered a few remarks. He reminded the group that possibly those who had taken the Fundamental course might have found it represented a turning point in their lives; not so much in the sense of a change in their careers or personal fortunes, but rather in the sense of a more acute perception of what is going on locally, statewide and federally.

One of the advantages of having a grasp of the fundamentals is that a better evaluation of any proposals made on items such as tax reform,

minimum wages, social security, price controls and energy crises can be made. But, it is not only a better understanding of political legislation that is possible, but also that a sounder knowledge of broader questions is obtained.

Mr. Nix urged that each one discuss his new knowledge with his friends. He cautioned them, however, not to expect instant converts. All of us have a vested interest in our own opinions so those of others must be respected. To be overly enthusiastic may lead one to be labeled as a fanatic.

He also suggested that letters be written to newspapers; that they be brief and factual, but not to expect overnight enthusiastic approval. As teachers are always at a premium, Mr. Nix encouraged

those interested to take advanced courses in order to qualify for the faculty.

He particularly emphasized that if the nation is to escape from the muddle it is in, inasmuch as dependence on politicians is futile, an educated electorate is needed. And to attain this end, one thing which all of us can do is to acquire as good an understanding as is possible of the fundamental principles of the free society which Henry George envisioned.

The group enjoyed the social gathering so much that it was decided to organize and to meet on a regular basis on the third Tuesday of each month to discuss the problems of the day as related to George's philosophy.

Public Transit and LVT

Dr. William Filante, President of LEAF (Land, Equality and Freedom) wrote the President urging him to use his leadership to encourage the development of public transit systems as a means of helping to alleviate the nation's energy problems.

Such systems, Dr. Filante stated, would help to solve local communities' transit problems as well as to reduce drastically energy requirements, pollution and cost-of-living.

He pointed out that such systems could be established "without subsidies by simply using the principle of local assessment of increased land values." He argued that a major improvement, such as a public transit project "results in an increase in surrounding land values that exceeds the cost of the project." By taxing such land value increases, the entire expenses involved could be recovered without the necessity of other nuisance taxes, as sales and income taxes.

Dr. Filante believes sending communications such as his to leaders of thought is an excellent means of spreading an understanding of Georgist principles.

241 Complete Fundamental and Advanced Courses!

A total of 59 adult students completed the course in Progress and Poverty held in the New York School this past Spring.

In addition, 47 adults took advanced courses. These were The City, State and Region, Money and Banking, and Man and His Land.

The High School Program consisted of 135 teenagers. Their work in the School, which gave them new insights into the theory of land value taxation as well as some grip of Henry George's ideas, is credited toward their graduation from their respective high schools.

So much interest was evinced by those who completed the various courses, that it is expected that in the Fall, additional courses will be given based on other major works of Henry George.

Altogether, a total of 241 youngsters and adults completed the fundamental and advanced courses.

CHIT/CHAT

The Food and Drug Administration is attempting to sweeten its ban on saccharin. As soon as it was found that some Canadian rats, after ingesting huge quantities of saccharin had apparently acquired cancer the FDA - America's Don Quixote - mounted on its charger ready to do battle with the windmills of businesses which dared to sell a substance so detrimental to the health of rats. But alas for the FDA. It received salty communications from millions of diabetics and others who could not stomach sugar and no honied words from the startled bureaucrats lessened their wrath.

Congress, ever alert to being on the side of a popular issue, and itself an authority on all kinds of artificial stimuli, has been casting a wary eye on the FDA, so the embattled red-tapists are now trying to sugar-coat the ban by promising to make saccharin available in drug stores. Presumably, if one purchases saccharin in pharmacies by means of a prescription, while one's disposition won't be any sweeter because of the increased cost, one should not fear any danger of cancer. It is not that any human has ever been known to have suffered this grave disease as a result of imbibing this artificial form of sugar, but rats have, so what is not good for rats is obviously not good for people.

The FDA's proposal may not meet with the people's approval, for while it is true that wealth distribution is the aim of the government, the people have a reluctance to seeing the pharmacists and physicians made wealthy at their expense. It is a truism that once a bureau is established its life is eternal. But isn't it possible if more bureaucracies would institute such brilliant rulings as the FDA did, that they

might be laughed out of existence? Is it too much to hope?

A public spirited homeowner, energized by the President's speeches on the patriotic virtues of conserving energy went forth to do his bit by installing solar energy to heat the water in his home, only to meet his Waterloo at the hands of the tax assessor. While it would have taken him eight years to break even, nevertheless he contracted for the improvement until he discovered that it would add \$90 to his property tax levy. This was asking just a bit too much for patriotism, not to mention that the \$90 might have been more than it cost him to heat his water annually. He cancelled the contract and is now leading a fight to exempt such improvements from tax assessment valuations.

If only the President would make more speeches on the duty of conserving the consumption of all goods, then the nation's homeowners might find themselves allied with the Georgists. As the homeowners strove to make the suggested improvements of the President, they would become so infuriated with the tax assessors as each improvement resulted in higher assessments, they might join in a fight to eliminate all taxes on improvements. If nothing else came of it, the heat generated in the fight, might easily be sufficient to heat the nation's homes, even without solar energy. Right on, Mr. President!

Do you know which two documents have contributed heavily to our government? No, not the Constitution nor the Declaration of Independence: rather, Forms 1040 and 1040a!

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