

# THE FIGHT FOR JUSTICE: A MISSION POSSIBLE!

BY THE EDITOR

THIS JOURNAL was first published 100 years ago, in June 1894. It was called *The Single Tax*, a name that bluntly told the world that there could be no compromise over either social justice or economic efficiency. Over the years, the name metamorphosed into *Land Values* before eventually becoming *Land & Liberty*, but the mission remained the same.

On the front page of the first issue, the monthly journal declared itself "to be up and doing in the good cause of Land Restoration".

Throughout the world, from the Americas to the colonies of Australasia, the advocates of the policy articulated by Henry George in *Progress and Poverty* were vigorously exposing the flaw in industrial society: the privatisation of the rent of land.

The Scotsmen who launched *The Single Tax* knew that Britain had a special role to play in the global fight for justice. They declared: "Our work will be to keep our question and what is being done with it the wide world over well to the front, and to guide the loose ideas abroad on the land question generally".

The editorial policy of *Land & Liberty* remains dedicated to that objective. In the past 100 years, there has been a vulgarisation of the Georgist philosophy. *Land and Liberty*, however, preserves the purity of the principle: the rent of land is the legitimate source of revenue for the public. And taxation is theft of people's earned incomes. *Land & Liberty* will continue to fight for social justice. Its horizons remain global. Its staff will continue to do all that is humanly possible to help our sister organisations to promote a deeper understanding of the terrible injustices that flow from the privatisation of the rent of land.

With this issue we celebrate the centenary by honouring a proud tradition. We do so, by resolving to become even fiercer champions of the fiscal policy which, if it were honestly implemented, would lay the foundations for ridding the world of poverty and war.

Our fiscal policy, because it is comprehensive in its ambitions, is frequently demeaned as a "panacea". The people who use that epithet have no solutions to the problems of the world; and they are motivated

by the sole desire to prevent a change that would, in fact, disturb their complacency and begin to achieve the results that we all desire.

We are realists. We know that the problems are so deep-seated that they demand profound solutions. It took a simple genius like Henry George to recognise that this one "sovereign remedy" - the re-socialisation of the public revenue (land-rent), and the re-privatisation of earned income (wages and profits) - was a precondition for accomplishing the widespread change in behaviour and attitudes for which the world cries out.

The world has been able to retain the values and institutions of the past, and postpone radical reform, because it was not confronted with the ultimate consequences of the failures of the past. But unless we are now hell-bent on collective suicide, it is no longer possible to avoid change. For the world is now challenged by two acid tests. One is the havoc being caused by environmental damage and the pollution that is threatening our natural habitat, and with it, the survival of *Homo sapiens* as a species. The other is the prospect of nuclear war.

There is no effective way to combat these evils without creating the conditions for a decent society, one that recognises the rights of every man, woman and child. Put simply that means we have to banish the condition of landlessness on earth: a condition that afflicts Western civilisation just as much as the majority of the peoples in the Third World, who are more directly dependent on the use of land for their livelihoods. Unless we achieve this result some people will one day choose weapons to try and recover their birthright which will destroy the basis of social life.

The obligation on the advocates of the Georgist philosophy is a terrible burden, one that eclipses all other duties. The message has to be taken out into the streets and into the centres of power. People must be given the choice which at the present time they are being denied.

*Land and Liberty* has the honour to share in that mission. It is one that we will not betray.