

## ITEMS FROM OUR OVERSEAS CORRESPONDENCE

*The International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade has supporters in many countries who send news and opinion from time to time. The wide scope of this correspondence is indicated by the following extracts from letters received, considerations of space permitting only a limited selection.*

## THE LANDLESS IN IRAQ

I arrived at the justice of land value taxation and freedom of trade many years before I got to know of the writings of Henry George a few months ago. Land values, bonds, paper money, and the like do not represent real wealth; they represent the total indebtedness of a community to some of its members. The injustice of such indebtedness can be realised when a new generation is born. Instead of inheriting the land and the improvements made upon it by previous generations, a child is born in a civilised country with a large debt on its hand increasing as the country in question is more advanced. In Iraq I estimate roughly that a child is born with £2,000 debt which represents the capitalised rent of the whole of Iraq *per capita*. The full application of land value taxation may prove to be a turning point in the history of mankind. In the Middle East, in particular, where the danger of communism is most apparent, it is possible that the Land Values Taxation policy would win over the masses and thereby save the Middle East for civilisation. For this reason Land Value Taxation is an urgent job in the Middle East and its far-reaching effects should be realised by all concerned. I have taken preliminary steps for the translation of *Progress and Poverty* into Arabic and shall keep you informed of further developments. Regarding the International Union I shall be very glad to become a member, and shall thank you to inform me of the steps to be taken for joining. When is the next conference taking place, and where?—N. E. Dangoor, Baghdad.

## TO MR. ATTLEE—FROM ILLINOIS

I must confess being greatly disappointed at the lack of progress being made by Mr. Attlee in our direction after the splendid and vigorous campaign you waged during the elections a year ago. I had looked for very much better results than appear to us here. All we have been able to learn thus far is that Mr. Attlee has taken over the Bank of England and the coal mines, paying the owners in full, and I understand he plans to buy off the landlords as well. All of which is contrary to the Henry George philosophy . . . Apparently Mr. Attlee is far more concerned about taking over private institutions that are operating efficiently than in liberating the land and making free trade. Unless he does these things and does them quickly, I see nothing but disaster ahead.—Arthur D. Foyer, Evanston, Ill.

## FROM A MANSE IN ALBERTA

I recall one of my Professors in the University of Toronto more than forty years ago who, in assailing Henry George's philosophy, told a class of beginners that 'this system involved government ownership of land with a complicated system of land agents.'

Apart from the fact that 'ownership' and 'property' are not synonymous terms, the conception of land as the property of the nation is perfectly alien to Henry George's philosophy properly understood and honestly interpreted. A man's wife and his family are his 'own' by the most endearing and indissoluble tie conceivable, but they are not his 'property.' The Hebrew's land was his own, but it was not his property. It was for this sacred, eternally true and imperatively solid fact and principle that Naboth and his sons gave their lives. (*Kings xxi. 13, 14*).

The function of a government as representing the community or the nation with reference to the land or natural resources of the country is not that of ownership or property but that of administration, like that of the executors of an estate for the benefit of the heirs. The land or natural resources of a country belong to or are the property of the Creator because they are the work of the Lord (*Ps. xciv. 5*). To the community belongs in proprietary right that which it creates, namely the portion of the wealth produced represented by the economic rent of land. There is no question of a double or dual proprietorship for the annual rental value of a piece of land is simply the bonus or premium which the community confers on the user.

With respect to the problem of unemployment, the very leprosy of our civilisation, how simple and yet how obscure are the fundamental facts and the essential elements in the diagnosis of this social and economic disease! All writers from Adam Smith to the present time agree that there was no unemployment in the initial stages of human

society, and that this immunity was due to the 'open frontier of free land.' Yet how few perceive that this 'open frontier' never should be closed, that land should be as free and available to labour and capital in the very midst of our great metropolitan centres as it is at the edge of the prairie.

In the emergence of values as industrial society progresses, the value which attaches to land differs in this respect from the value attaching to anything which is the product of human industry; it is an annual rental value as distinguished from the capital value which attaches to all products of labour. This annual rental value of land rises with the birth of every child and the arrival of every emigrant, but allowed to become private property it is capitalised, and the price of land erects a stone wall or an iron fence around all land, which is the basic cause of involuntary unemployment the world over. The just and effective way to preserve the open frontier of free land, ever available to labour and capital on equal terms is clear. It is to preclude the possibility of the rent of land being capitalised, by making it the source of public revenue and absorbing it for governmental expenditure. Upon the recognition of this fact and principle, and its practical and concrete application, depend the solution of our civilisation and the preservation of every social and economic element which makes it worthy of being called Christian.—Rev. D. C. McTavish, Telfordville, Alberta.

## TAXATION IN JAMAICA

In Jamaica the bulk of public revenue comes from import duties. This is in spite of the fact that—due to a 'minimum valuation' of £20 on land, and the fact that many people own only a quarter or half an acre, and the tax on this unjust £20 valuation being 6s. or so—the small settlers often actually pay the rent value in yearly taxes. If only a fair valuation could be set on land, and then the taxes from all other things, beginning with improvements like houses and going on to duties on building materials, etc., could be taken off and piled gently on the land, I believe it would save Jamaica. That, and proper compost heaps and, of course, the grace of God. We have a new Government as you know, and a 'small settlers' party known as the People's National Party with Norman Manley at its head. I believe the time is ripe for a great leap forward.—Mrs. D. Simmons, Jamaica.

\* \* \* The Government Commission appointed by Governor Huggins issued its able report in 1944—see our issue of December of that year—recommending Land Value Taxation but the new Government has failed to act. Let it be hoped that the People's National Party, which is pledged to that reform will be able to use its influence to that end, after the next election if not before.—EDITOR, LAND & LIBERTY.

## CONDITIONS IN THE TRANSVAAL

There have been in the past few months a couple of strikes, first the white mine workers, and then the native mine workers; neither lasted long. The mine workers were not striking against the 'capitalists,' but because they had internal troubles in their trade union. Both Australia and the United States of America have had serious labour difficulties as you no doubt know. There is, however, a degree of unemployment manifest here; whether this is due to the change over from war to peace and the difficulties incident thereto, or whether it is the start of the post-war depression, is somewhat doubtful. I am inclined to think that we are not going to have the usual post-war boom, followed by the usual post-war slump. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that there is now a post-war boom, but, owing to the efforts of all the governments to prevent inflation, etc., the post-war boom is being enjoyed only by the less scrupulous people operating on the black markets, the ordinary man in and out of business is not sharing this boom, but will in due course bear his share of the slump.—H. T. Levett, Johannesburg.

## "THE SAME APPLIES HERE"

You have probably read of the mess we have here with the Office of Price Control and 'scarcity' in a land of plenty. If the facts were published here of black market rackets in building materials, etc.,

it would make interesting reading, but just as long as land is sold for \$5,000 per acre and will only produce less than \$1,000 per acre, what else shall we have but chaos? Veterans are invited to take up loans to purchase a home at much inflated prices after having fought for the land of the free, liberty and so forth, and in England I note that there are more controls now than the two Dictators ever thought of. Truly a State ownership of everything except one's thoughts. The same almost applies here after years of sacrifice to defeat the very thing they slowly installed under the guise of emergency, government grants, etc.—*Albert R. Gould, California.*

#### CANADIAN EXPECTATIONS

It was a real pleasure a few months ago to again have the opportunity to talk with Mr. Ashley Mitchell, while he was passing through here, and learn a number of things which we all often think of and would like to be fully and currently informed on, but seldom or never have the occasion to broach. We were glad to read in the October issue of *LAND & LIBERTY* of the resolution by the Manchester City Council 'that the General and Parliamentary Committee should call a representative conference of rating authorities to consider the advisability of joint action to secure powers from Parliament to levy a tax on Land Values.' We over here sincerely hope that the matter is followed up and pushed along as fast as it is possible, also that the M.P.s may soon adopt this measure so that it can be laid before the House of Lords without much if further delay. We consider that if this becomes law in Great Britain and the 250 odd municipalities over there have good results, it will be the thin edge of the wedge towards obtaining followers in many other places all over the world.—*Oscar Boelens, Montreal.*

#### A BOSTON CRITICISM

I am amazed, as would be anyone in this country, that your people should consider such Planning as doing an injury to land values, as something for which compensation should be paid to the landowner. We have enjoyed what I suppose is the equivalent of Planning for some years; we call it Zoning. It was devised and is used for preserving land values from the injury that might come from ill-advised development. For example, a residential district might suffer injury from an incompatible commercial or industrial use of land within or near it. The restriction of such use is regarded universally as within the police powers of our states and as preserving or safeguarding the property values of the cities and towns. No-one here would think of compensating a landowner for a zoning restriction imposed on his property. I will send you a copy of the Zoning Law of the City of Boston and the Zoning By-Law, as it is called, of the town of Wellesley, that you may see exactly what we mean by zoning. Perhaps your Town and Country Planning is different.—*J. R. Nichols, Boston, Mass.*

#### GOOD INSTRUCTION IN CALIFORNIA

Early in November, I was meeting with a small group in San Diego and got two of those present to send subscriptions to the International Union. They will no doubt reach you in due course via the Schalkenbach Foundation in N.Y. The San Diego branch of the Henry George School of Social Science is in the capable hands of Mrs. Bessie B. Truehart and is one of the few branches functioning on a wholly self-supporting basis. In a relatively short time, Mrs. Truehart has organised study classes which meet in various parts of the City regularly and which are growing steadily in numbers and popularity. The H.G.S.S.S in Los Angeles is also growing, with classes not only in many parts of Los Angeles, but also in several of the suburbs, such as Pasadena, Glendale, Alhambra, Long Beach, etc.—*J. Rupert Mason, San Francisco.*

A section of Central Park, New York City, is beautified by a number of memorial and honorary trees dedicated to the memory of notable men. There on October 29, the anniversary of his death, an oak tree was planted to commemorate Henry George. Dedication addresses were given by his granddaughter Miss Agnes de Mille, by Lawson Purdy, who was president of the Department of Taxes and Assessments for eleven years and now heads the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation under whose auspices the tree was planted, and by Commissioner of Purchases Albert Pleydell. During the ceremony, which was broadcast over the municipal station WNYC, Mrs. Anna George de Mille unveiled a plaque describing Henry George as 'Philosopher and Economist Author of *Progress and Poverty*' and she placed a laurel wreath at the foot of the memorial.

Dr. Bernard Ascher, Haifa, is congratulated on the first prize he has won in a competition held by the Palestine Broadcasting Service. He now contemplates a radio play for the P.B.S. in the form of a discussion in heaven between Henry George and others, perhaps in the Linklater style. Dr. Ascher's great industry as a writer includes his recent contribution to *Dawar*, in Hebrew, on Co-operative Production and the Price of Land; a long and instructive communication to the Bulletin of the German League in Berlin for Land and Liberty and he has gathered materials for an article on the capital value and the annual value of all land in Palestine apart from improvements. Last named would suit well for a paper at the next Conference of our International Union.

The September number of the *Roman Forum* (Los Angeles) reports at full length the radio address over Station KFVD, given by Mr. F. W. Roman, on September 3, the 107th anniversary of the birth of Henry George. The speaker's references to the Mosaic Law, the doctrines of the French Physiocrats and the democracy of Jefferson, Franklin, Paine and others, helped to a fuller realisation of Henry George's life and work, and his service to humanity.

Mr. C. Le Baron Goeller has provided from his publishing centre at Endwell, New York (noted for its steady flow of leaflets and tracts with textual quotations from Henry George's works) a compilation of his own entitled 'The True Story of How Civilized Man Makes a Living.' In this brochure of 24 pages the reader is introduced to the study of Political Economy in a simple and arresting way and so that he realises how essential it is to have a clear understanding, particularly of the nature and function of economic rent. Helpful diagrams illustrate the general argument which is that the problem of the distribution of wealth is solved justly and with the preservation of Liberty if but the laws which a true Political Economy reveals are faithfully observed. Mr. Goeller's brochure is obtainable from him at the price of 25 cents.

#### REV. CHR. NORLEV

THE Danish Henry George movement has sustained a heavy loss by the sudden death of Pastor Chr. Norlev, one of the three members of the Justice Party in the Danish Parliament. The tributes paid to him in the Danish papers of all shades of opinion speak of him as a man who stood high in the regard of his fellow citizens for his ardent devotion to the cause of human freedom and the brotherhood of man. He endeared himself with all with whom he was associated in his life's work, and in his pastorate in Vangede, near Copenhagen, he was especially beloved. He entered Parliament in 1943, but long before that, as writer and speaker with the faculty of giving expression to his views with unusual simplicity and charm, he had rendered giant service. Brought up as a carpenter, he was the first lay preacher to be appointed in Denmark, his first mission in Asko in 1922, later he was parish priest at the Gethsemane Church in Copenhagen, and in 1931 he took over the large pastorate in Vangede. For many years he was secretary of the Christian Social Union. His was a spirit which, as the President of Parliament, Mr. Bomholt said in his in memoriam address, burned for truth and righteousness, and as his colleague Dr. Viggo Starcke said, his work for the Justice Union, in the political arena, was a natural and essential side of his religious faith and service among the people. That is shown in his latest book, *Jesus of Nazareth*, seen from the modern social point of view, for which incidentally a Dutch translation is being prepared and which we hope may yet appear in English. He was one of the most industrious pamphleteers and contributors to the press for the Henry George movement. His British friends will remember his attendance at the International Conference in London in 1936, and the illuminating paper he gave on the Problems of Population. He was in constant communication with *LAND & LIBERTY*, and, in fact, one of his last letters was that written to us in hospital as he was recovering as he had hoped from a serious operation. His funeral was attended by a great throng of mourners, and with them and the family in their bereavement we are joined in all sympathy.

Mr. Norlev's place in Parliament is taken by Mr. Knud Tholstrup, nephew of the late Mr. Peter Larsen, whose contribution as translator of several of George's works and authorship of much of the literature of the movement is well known.