

militate against productivity, and which reward the waste-makers, is not the fault of that process between two or more people which is the market.

The authors pack their book with technocratic wheezes, but the outcome is a grand moral lecture from the green end of the political spectrum. Of course productivity has to be improved; waste

diminished; the resources of nature conserved. But if there is a systemic bias in favour of waste, the authors would do well to examine the way in which governments subsidise such practices with taxpayers' money (see Norman Myers, *Perverse Subsidies*, International Institute for Sustainable Development, Canada, 1998). **LSL**

## THE HENRY GEORGE CENTENNIAL TRILOGY

Vol. I An Anthology of Henry George's Thought

Vol. II An Anthology of Tolstoy's Spiritual Economics

Vol. III An Anthology of Single Tax Thought

Kenneth C. Wenzer (Editor)

Vols. I and II: £45, \$65 each; Vol III: £55, \$ 85

Review by JULIA BASTIAN

TO MARK the anniversary of Henry George's death in 1897, the Henry George Foundation of America has provided a fine trilogy of books that will cater for every student of economics in search of a better world. This remarkable work draws together the speeches, articles and letters that address George's most important thoughts on single tax policy and will become a trustworthy reference for study. It is all here. A primary source for Volume I is taken from *The Standard* newspaper (between 1887-1890) for which George was writing his most popular editorials on the many issues of the day, including land ownership, confiscation of land or how much ground rent the state should take. Easily located in the well ordered notes and clear headings are his numerous writings and speeches, both in America and overseas during his several trips, so representative of his vision of an economy that could create a 'spiritual commonwealth'.

One of the most famous admirers of George, Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy - Russia's Great Single Taxer - gets his own book. Volume II of the Trilogy encompasses Tolstoy's Russia and the influence that George's writings had on him. Tolstoy, already searching for a 'purified society' free of corruption and misery, was led to investigate the work

of the American social critic and reformer whose reputation had spread from a confident New World across the Atlantic to an exhausted, demoralised Old World. Tolstoy came to understand the Georgist philosophy not only as a practical solution to the Russian peasants' suffering and the maldistribution of land, but as a means to a higher morality for the nation. The story is told how Tolstoy becomes fascinated with George's single tax idea. Alas, Tsar Nicholas II refused to take Tolstoy's advice. Had he created a more just distribution of land by implementing the Georgist economic system in Russia, the Revolution might well have been avoided.

Volume III brings together a collection of scholarly writings, mainly by precursors of George, whose thinking along similar lines have helped to form opinion. Among those embracing his vision the Physiocrats stand out. This group of luminaries formed a school of economic thought under the leadership of François Quesnay and were active between 1755 - 1775. Their influence among intellectuals of the period was enormous but was unable to prevent the French Revolution of 1789.

Others were to follow with the idea of approaching economics on a scientific, theoretical or systematic basis and a dozen find their own chapters in

this interesting volume. Contributions from Thomas Spence, William Ogilvie, Tom Paine, Patrick Edward Dove and Herbert Spencer, for example, are accompanied by original essays written by present day Georgists which provide compelling and powerful commentaries on these past advocates of the single tax. To make the case for these great economists, Ken Wenzer has sought out some impressive writers and thinkers of today. Who better to profile Frank Chodorov than American economist, currently President of the Henry George School of Social Sciences in New York, Oscar B. Johannsen.

The pairings, which include Dr. Michael Silagi on Michael Flürsheim and the German Land Reform Movement, and Damon J. Gross on Max Hirsch, provide a set of portraits that are at once authoritative and impressionistic, pieces that add invaluable personal insight to the historical record. Fred E. Foldvary was so taken with his subject - Franz Oppenheimer - that he must have studied and digested the whole of Oppenheimer's extensive work on land tenure in Palestine.

The task of capturing all this energy was managed by Kenneth C. Wenzer who collated, annotated and edited the three volumes. Himself a leading scholar of Henry George, he makes it clear that it is not to George alone that this Trilogy is dedicated but to others who in the past, and still today, press for social justice. Could it be, he asks, that the single tax idea is in line with an innate natural law of progress, so clear that isolated social critics come separately to understand it?

But there is further to go. Writers today who strive to make the human condition more ordered and compassionate need to relate the importance of land tenure to economic justice throughout the world. They will do well to study these pages and every library should order copies. **LSL**

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