



A Philosophy Unfolds

EDGAR BUCK

Mr. Buck, who is a native of Wales, is a solicitor by profession and is married with one daughter. He is a member of the United Committee and a tutor of the Henry George School. His main interest outside School work is gardening.

IN THE YEAR 1927 I was 21 years old. This was the year in which the depression in Wales reached its deepest. The year before saw the general strike. Memory of it gives of riots, overturned cars, police baton charges. Then followed frustration, unemployment, bewilderment.

It was also the year that I joined Eustace Arthur Davies in his law practice in Cardiff. He was not only a lawyer but also the Honorary Secretary of the Welsh League for the Taxation of Land Values — quite a mouthful.

His enthusiasm expressed itself in almost a one-man propaganda unit. The League had an Executive Committee, but its decisions, in the main, directed the Secretary to send out masses of leaflets and circulars. I recall directions that circular letters be sent to all miners' lodges, church organisations, Trades and Labour Councils and the like. These were sometimes numbered in thousands, and the only equipment to deal with them was an old flat duplicator.

By a process of delegation this work came to me; sore hands, inky fingernails, innumerable envelopes, endless lists. Henry George in *Progress and Poverty* prophesied that the cause he propounded would find those who would suffer for it. It seemed to me that this was the fulfilment of that prophecy.

In those days the Liberal Party, which before the 1914 war was knowledgeable and active on the land question, had been eclipsed. The Labour Party was in the ascendancy, but, except for a small minority, it saw only the "capitalists" as the enemy of labour, and only nationalisation of industry as the cure for economic ills.

In the years that followed I became familiar with the philosophy of Henry George, but only in its propagation. To be frank I had a living to make, and I concentrated on my profession.

Eustace Davies never felt like that. His heart was in the Great Reform. Nevertheless he modestly prospered and by 1939 we were in partnership together.

The inter-war years were frustrating ones for the Movement. Minor successes came only by special efforts, but in the middle of the period came the Snowden Budget of 1931, which provided for a tax of 1d. in the £ on the capital value of all land, vacant and developed. These

provisions were gone again before the ink was dry; repealed by the so-called National Government which, I feel sure, came into existence much more because of the land taxation provisions, than for anything else. Gone was the chance of reform for another decade. Then followed the years of the war, which took me away.

Returning, the first necessity was making a living, and hard work in my profession was essential. Steeped as I was in the work of the League, I thought then that the reform it was advocating was necessary, but my enthusiasm did not go beyond that. Nevertheless, as I watched the policies of the political parties become more and more administrative and give less and less attention to basic economic factors, I began to question.

In about 1955 Dr. Fred Jones, Fred Giggs and I started a Henry George School in Cardiff, and this has gone from strength to strength. My tutorship has done more for me than for the pupils. In the closer study the dawn broke. Realisation came that all wealth was nothing but the product of land with labour applied to it, and that those who could monopolise land could exact a share which would increase with the need for land, and this in turn would increase with increasing activity. Such was the upsurge in the post-war years that this process became not only a matter of economic theory but plain for all to see.

These years have seen labour at its most ingenious. Its productivity with the machines it has constructed has leapt forward. It has benefited to some extent — to a startling extent compared with 1927 — but to a far greater extent has it benefited those who have monopolised land.

The proportion taken in land values has increased many times over. Still increasing, it leaves proportionately less of the wealth produced to wages and interest. Economic disaster is held back only by still further ingenuity of labour and to some extent by inflation of the currency. But the day will come when the continued pressure for land will enable those who hold it to take so great a toll that what is left will not be sufficient to renew capital goods and maintain labour. Then will come unemployment again.

Not only did all this become a matter of conviction in

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Availability of Credit: Trends in Costs, Prices and Wages: The Pattern of Growth and Distribution of Industry: Trends in the Standard of Living: The External Balance of Payments: The Production of Goods that would otherwise be Imported: Production for Export and Export Markets: The effect of Customs Tariffs and other forms of Protection on the Disposition of Resources and on the Broad Objectives Stated Above.

It is not expected that the Committee will be reporting in a hurry.

Farmer Pallett's Acres Turn to Gold

—Daily Mail, May 3.

A NURSERYMAN talked last night about his £4,500 smallholding which has suddenly become worth more than £80,000.

Mr. Ernest Pallett's nursery at Cheshunt, Hertfordshire, has leapt in value because of the Government's decision to allow building development in the Green Belt.

In the Commons last night Mr. Frank Allaun (Labour, Salford East) accused the Government of giving Lea Valley farmers — like Mr. Pallett — a "golden handshake".

Mr. Pallett is holding out against land speculators for as much as he can get. He said: "I'm certainly not selling yet. I'm waiting to see what other offers come in. I've had several offers — including some worth more than £80,000 — for my eight acres. I bought the land for housing development. You see I've been in the building trade myself. I suppose you could say my land is worth as much as I can get. Since buying it in 1944 I've cultivated part of it." Mr. Pallett's land was worth about £500 an acre before the Government's decision to bite into the Green Belt.

Mr. Allaun posed the question of a possible leak when he raised the matter in the Commons last night. He said: "Certain gentlemen were sniffing around the Lea Valley inquiring about land in the area before the Housing Minister made his announcement." Mr. Allaun added: "I understand there is one man in the Lea Valley lucky enough to own ninety acres so that he woke up next morning with property worth £720,000."

NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHERS

WE much regret the necessity of having to publish LAND & LIBERTY bi-monthly. We shall revert to monthly issues as soon as circumstances permit. Meanwhile, double issues will contain additional pages.

FRANCES VERINDER

WE ARE SAD to record the death of Frances Verinder, who died in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, on April 29.

She was a daughter of Frederick Verinder, who was Secretary of the English League for the Taxation of Land Values for many years. Frances Verinder was a devoted Christian, and spent her whole life in the service of others. Educated at Tottenham High School, she gained the Drapers' Company Scholarship to London University, and after gaining her B.Sc. degree, was successively mathematics and science mistress at Lady Holles' School, Hackney (1907-1915), mathematics teacher at St. Swithin's, Winchester (1915-1932), and Principal of St. Cyprian's Girls School, Cape Town, until her retirement in 1953.

Moving to Port Elizabeth, she devoted her time to the service of the non-Europeans, teaching in Sunday Schools, serving on school committees and coaching for the University.

She took an active part in the Black Sash movement until failing health prevented her.

Although always fully occupied with the needs of others around her, she maintained her interest in the Georgeist movement by correspondence and by subscribing regularly to the Land Value Taxation League.

She will be greatly missed by those who depended upon her, and by her surviving sisters, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

PERSONALLY SPEAKING

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me, the remedy too was clear. As the earth and its fullness is the Lord's, and as he has given it to all his children, they without distinction must have the benefits.

This, it was clear, could be achieved by taking land values by way of taxation for the benefit of all; consequently abolishing taxation on labour and capital. This would promote a great step forward, because by also taxing vacant land, it would be brought into use and the holding of it out of use would be rendered impractical.

On the financial side it is not, I think, generally realised that the whole annual land value of Great Britain must now approach the annual budget of the country.

There is a philosophical side too. I have come to know that no person born into this lovely world is a stranger here. Providence gives abundantly, repeatedly and punctually, free as the air itself. The situation which has arisen, and which obliges the labourer to give some of his wages for his natural bounty, denies the divine intention. Obviously it must be corrected.

So deep is the present system entrenched, however, and so many privileges does it buttress, that it will need strong men to persist steadfastly in the reform. In humility I pray that I may be counted in their number.