

Is it not the want of the things that work produces on the part of those willing to do reasonable work. Why is there such want?

I need not point out that while a few of our people have more wealth than is wholesome for men to have,—for great fortunes have been growing here faster than ever before in the world's history,—the masses of our people do not have wealth enough to give them the comforts, the leisure, and the opportunities of development that in this stage of civilization ought to be possible to the humblest; that most of us by working hard merely manage to live, and must stint and strain and worry; that many are becoming criminals, tramps, and paupers, and many are eking out an existence by charity in one form or another; that children die when they ought to live; that women are old and worn when they ought to be in their prime of womanly beauty and charm; that men are aged physically and stunted mentally and morally when they ought to be in the highest development of their faculties; that many who ought to have wives feel too poor to take them; that many who ought to have husbands are cheated out of the fullness of the life for which nature intended them. What a pitiful possibility does this represent for the average American citizen?

We want more wealth. Why, then, do we not produce more? What factor is short? Where is the limitation?

But instead of invention and discovery stopping, they would only have begun. What checks invention and discovery today is poverty; what turns the very blessings they ought to bring to all into curses to great masses is that fundamental wrong which produces that most unnatural and helpless of all objects, the mere laborer—the human being feeling all the wants of a man, having all the powers of a man, yet denied by human laws all access to or right in that element without which it is impossible for human powers to satisfy human wants. To what as yet undreamed-of powers over natural things man may rise, in a state of society where, the forces of production being unhampered and the natural opportunities for production being unmonopolized, there shall be work for all, leisure for all, opportunities of full development for all, the inventions and discoveries of the century just closing afford but hints.

The cause of poverty is not in human nature; it is not in the constitution of the physical world; it is not in the natural laws of social growth. It is in the injustice which denies to men their natural rights; in the stupidity which diverts from its proper use the value which attaches to land with social growth, and then imposes on industry and thrift taxes which restrain production and put premiums on greed and dishonesty; injustice and stupidity which ignores the true rights of property and turn governments into machines by which the unscrupulous may rob their neighbors.

What to Emphasize in Teaching the Philosophy of Henry George

BENJAMIN W. BURGER OF NEW YORK CITY
AT HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS

I HAVE often wondered why a reform, eminently just as ours, should be so long delayed in finding common acceptance. Looking back over the pages of history at other great reforms, now happily accomplished, the mystery becomes more understandable.

Chattel slavery, the ownership of one human being by another, was abolished in this country a short seventy years ago. As we look back, we wonder how anyone could have justified slavery. Yet we know that not only did it have stout defenders, particularly in the South but men of the cloth quoted Scripture to justify it. Four years' bloody war was necessary to end it in the United States; it has not yet been abolished throughout the world. In Ethiopia, Arabia, Liberia and Central Asia there are today 5,000,000 slaves.

Today we look back upon slavery as an obvious evil and wonder why a handful of delegates from the slave and free states, sitting around a table, could not amicably have arranged to abolish it without the terrible expense misery and suffering of prolonged warfare. Human slavery, we say, was an obvious evil. But no more obvious than the present industrial slavery which permits a small number, purporting to own the earth, (which is not a product of human labor and therefore cannot be owned) to rent it to us before we may live and work.

The obvious things in life escape us. The disenfranchisement of woman, another obvious evil, was abolished only after years of persistent agitation. What more obvious than that women are affected by the political, social, and economic conditions surrounding them, and therefore have an *inherent right* to participate in making laws? Yet it required one hundred years intensive agitation to secure this simple right. There are still millions of men, and women too, who look with disfavor upon woman suffrage. That women have not yet made the best use of their newly acquired right is beside the point. They have a right, an *inherent right*, with their brothers, fathers and husbands, to determine the conditions under which they live and work and raise their children. They had to fight long and hard to acquire that right. In the same way, we wonder how cannibalism, and other terrible practices of our hoary past could be defended. Yet we know there were those who justified them, every one; cannibalism, slavery, witchcraft, woman disenfranchisement, absolute monarchies and, in modern times, war, religious strife, race hatred, vaccination, capital punishment, misappropriation of land rent, and many other wrongs.

How can we explain this? Well, one answer is that

he obvious is not always obvious to those who live in the midst of the evil to be corrected; the obvious is not always obvious to those who participate in the evil, and are its immediate beneficiaries. Only a handful, fired with the divine faculty of imagination, conceive a world free from injustice, strife, suffering.

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Fate has ever been unkind to rebels against injustice. Most people, even if uncomfortable, object to being disturbed. They are victims of inertia. Their attitude, sub-consciously, is, "if you ask me to work, I'll hate you; if you ask me to think, I'll kill you."

Our reform must contend with still another difficulty. It is a fundamental reform. It is truly radical in that it probes down to root causes. *We assert that those who labor shall receive the fruits of their labor.* We fear not to be called radicals. Anyone who knows his Latin knows that the word radical comes from the Latin *radix* meaning root. (A radish, for example, is a root vegetable.) What more rational way to correct an evil than to probe down to its root causes? For it is only as you abolish root causes that you truly cure.

Imagine a dentist trying to cure a toothache due to an infected root by polishing the crown, or filling the cavity, and ignoring the root condition. The great revolution in medicine during the past half century has been in the field of ascertaining and removing root causes of disease. The wise physician no longer prescribes pills for headaches or stomach-aches; or operations for internal disorders. He seeks to ascertain the *causes* of the headaches or disorders. By removing these causes he knows the effects will, in due time, disappear, provided, of course, there have been no organic changes.

In criminology, we have not yet learned this great truth. An economic system, under which we must surrender part of our wealth for mere permission to live and work on the earth is a system which deprives men and women of their *inherent right* to earn their daily bread and forces many into crime. Then the law condemns the victims instead of correcting the conditions which produce them. "The Law," said Charles Dickens, "is an ass."

We have then the indisputable fact that our reform is fundamental, and most people lack the patience and ability to think problems through to their basic causes. Palliation is quicker. Fundamental reform takes too long. (Curiously, while few can see the relationship between the misappropriation of our land rent and involuntary poverty, the first objection they hurl at us when we present our philosophy is, "How will your system abolish poverty?")

The inability of people to think the problem of political economy through from cause to effect explains the vogue of Socialism which expends itself in palliating the *effects* of poverty instead of ascertaining and abolishing its

cause. Socialists offer as plasters to ease the pains of poverty, caused by injustice, maternity insurance, old age pensions, workmen's compensation, state milk for babies, inheritance and income taxes, and nostrums to share wealth.

To stop those who claim to own our earth from robbing both Labor and Capital is no essential part of the Socialist Platform. They would rather treat fifty limbs of a tree than cure the diseased roots. Socialists fail to see that two factors produce wealth, while three factors divide it, AND THAT if they stopped that basic wrong, there would be no need for their little palliatives. That the Socialists do not recognize the fundamental importance of the land question will be readily apparent when we examine their platforms, city, state, and national. Some years they advocate the public appropriation of land rent; other years they ignore it. Their stock in trade is protestation, denunciation, and palliation.

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Essentially, we believe in freedom; freedom for the individual to express himself, limited only by the equal freedom of every other individual. The supreme value of mankind is the human individual, and the human individual can realize himself only in free and creative co-operation with his fellows. Only in a free society can men produce most efficiently, most abundantly, and express their noblest selves. Our viewpoint is that of Diogenes, who, when asked by Alexander what the King could do for him, proudly replied, "Only keep out of my sunlight."

Today, liberty has been surrendered by 500,000,000 people, to whom Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin and other dictators falsely have promised economic security. "The love of liberty," wrote Hazlitt, "is the love of others; the love of power is the love of ourselves." We perceive that freedom must be a chimera where a few can charge the many rent for our common mother, the Earth. Now, the Socialists believe that government may become a good substitute for freedom. Let the Great Father at Washington, or Albany or at the New York City Hall mail us \$200 Townsend checks on the first of each and every month; or proffer us cash when we are unemployed, or arbitrarily fix prices for food, rent, and wages, say the Socialists. We believe these attempts to interfere with natural law must fail, and failing, must lead to coercion, because, basically, they are unsound.

The present government at Washington shares the Socialist's viewpoint. When Mrs. Roosevelt, an excellent woman, observes the West Virginia coal miners living amidst squalor and poverty and lacking the necessities of life, she says, "Let's transfer these unhappy people to more congenial surroundings. Let's send them to the country or ship them to Alaska." It never occurs to her whether they will be more successful in their new surroundings, nor why they have been unable to earn a

living in their old surroundings, which just as sadly cry out for development. It never dawns upon her that land values are going to arise in the new locations whence these people, like cattle, have been shipped, which will enable a few to rob industry of the biggest part of its wages. These land values are going to be a liability to the new settlers, and a first charge on their industry, and an asset only to those who, legally, may misappropriate them. *Mrs. Roosevelt never advocates abolishing the system under which a few, purporting to own the earth get something for nothing, with the result that producers get nothing for something. Mrs. Roosevelt never advocates the Georgian system under which, by collecting our publicly created land rent and applying it to our public needs, and abolishing taxation, we would, in effect, establish each and every human being's equal right to live on this earth without paying tribute to any landlord.*

"The rich will do everything for the poor," wrote Tolstoi, "except get off their backs."

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Like Boston, which has been called a state of mind, our philosophy can find acceptance only in a well ordered mind. It can be grasped only by those who love liberty for her own sake; who sense a Divine order in the Universe; who can understand fundamental principles in the realm of political economy; who are familiar with the history of government; who agree with Jefferson, that that government is best which governs least; who can reason from cause to effect.

Herbert Spencer truly said that it required a high type of human being to make democracy a success. Our philosophy can succeed only when there are men and women of fine feeling, possessing what educators call "a sense of awareness;" men and women who can distinguish between "mine and thine" on one hand, and "ours" on the other; *for we see things not as they are, but as we are.*

True to the character of his philosophy, Henry George was a deeply reverential being; considerate, kindly patient with those who differed with him; serene in adversity, at all times radiating sweetness and light.

Karl Marx, the founder of modern Socialism, was his antithesis. Marx was opposed to religion, calling it an opiate to keep the masses in poverty; (this is the slogan of his present day Russian disciples.) He was embittered, sour at humanity, intolerant of criticism, and preached the terrible doctrine of class hatred.

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To understand the Georgeist philosophy requires a new orientation, or new viewpoint. In ancient times, men built their temples so that the worshippers at the altar should face the rising sun. As the worshippers prayed, their faces were suffused with the sun's rays. The location of a structure thus to face the sun eventually came to be defined by the verb, "to orient." Hence

the noun "orientation" was developed as significant of articulation with, and adjustment to one's environment.

What do I mean when I say one must be properly orientated before one can grasp political economy? I mean he must understand its fundamentals: he must grasp his relationship to the globe on which he lives, and from which he draws his sustenance. *He must recognize that this globe lacks the characteristics of private property.*

Six qualities distinguish land from private property.

1. The earth on which we live was not produced by any human being, but is the gift of the Creator for the equal use of all his children.

2. It is limited in quantity.

3. It is essential to our existence, because we can produce nothing without it.

4. It does not owe its value to anything which land-owners choose to put on it.

5. It owes its value entirely to the presence and activities of the community.

6. It cannot be carried away or concealed.

These are, indeed, unique qualities.

It is significant that no form of individually created wealth possesses a single one of these characteristics.

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The position of mankind today with reference to political economy is analogous to that of the human race in the 15th century with reference to astronomy.

Until the discoveries of Copernicus, it was believed that our earth was the center of the universe; that the earth stood still while the heavenly bodies revolved around it. With the publication of Copernicus's work in 1543, man learned his *true position* in the universe. He discovered that the earth was only a tiny speck of dust in the universe; one of the many specks of dust traveling around the sun, which is over a million times as big as the earth, and is *itself* only a grain of sand in the vastness of space. It was not until man learned his true position in the universe that he was able to make real strides in the science of astronomy. Likewise, he will not be able to advance in the science of political economy until he has been properly orientated, that is, until he has acquired perspective.

What are the essential elements we must establish for the public collection and public expenditure of land rent? Since the problem is not unlike a problem in law, let us examine an analogy from that field. If, for example, A sues B for damages, claiming misrepresentation, A can recover only if he proves five essential points:

1. That B made certain representations to A, orally or in writing.

2. That these representations were statements of fact, not merely expressions of opinion.

3. That B made these representations to induce A to act upon them.

4. That, in fact, A did act upon them.
5. That A suffered damages as a result.

Unless A proves each and every one of these five points, his case fails.

Now, it happens that the points which we must prove to establish our case for the public appropriation of ground rent also are five in number.

First, it seems to me, we must convincingly show that we live on the earth; that out of that earth, labor must fashion its habitations, whether rude huts or the most magnificent palaces; on that earth, men must lovingly tend their animals, in order that they may have meat and drink, leather and wool; on that earth, labor must tickle the soil to grow fruits, vegetables and grains; over that earth man must operate trains, ships, and automobiles to transport themselves and their products; under the waters of that earth they must operate submarines, and in the air airplanes; on that earth, teachers, doctors, lawyers, preachers, newspapermen, actors, and a thousand other trades and professions must minister to the efficiency, comfort, mental and spiritual advancement of those who toil on the earth.

In short, the first point we must convincingly establish, is that man, in his physical aspects, at least, is a land animal, chained to this ball called the earth, his activities limited to the earth, at death, the elements constituting his body again returning to earth.

"Dust thou art, to dust returnest."

You say this is obvious?

Speak to the first ten men you meet, and learn with astonishment how many consider land no longer essential to their existence; indeed they are uncertain that their needs must be satisfied from land. They fail to perceive that employment requires use of land.

"We don't need land any more," they will tell you, "we live in cities, in six-story buildings."

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"Why, you can get all the land you want for nothing, out West," they tell you.

Socialists, Technocrats and Communists glibly speak of machines "manufacturing clothing and shoes," and becoming so efficient that "human labor soon will become unnecessary." (Of course, no machine ever produced anything. All a machine does is to aid labor, transform raw material taken out of the earth, into shapes, forms, colors, and conditions suitable for human needs.) It comes as a distinct surprise to Socialists that every brick, column, piece of stone, bit of glass composing a building was fashioned by labor from materials extracted from the earth; that every bit of food which we eat is nothing but land that has been transformed by the alchemy of nature into a condition suitable for human consumption, and that every job requires access to land. No one can clearly perceive our philosophy unless and until he recognizes his utter dependency on the planet to which he is

chained, and from which, by his labor, every moment, he draws his food and bodily covering, and has his being.

In Brooklyn, a few years ago, the Socialists seriously informed me that machinery and factories now were more important than land. If they lived on the ground, in tents, they might agree that land was essential; living instead in six-story tenements, they are not quite certain they use the earth. It signifies little to them that the tenements rest on ground.

Likewise, if every morning, chicken-like, they had to go out and scratch the ground for their food, they would clearly see that all food is produced by labor applied to earth; using bottled milk and can openers, they have a hazy notion it somehow comes from dairies and factories.

We place the emphasis on the essential, land; they place the emphasis on the non-essential, capital. Henry George rightly said that the trouble with Socialism was that it was not radical; it failed to reach down to root causes.

The *second point* we must establish is that all human beings have an equal right to live on this earth, or, as the Declaration of Independence phrases it, "an unalienable right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Since the American and French revolutions, this point has not been so hotly disputed, although there are still many who practise the contrary. Witness our discriminations against our black brothers; discrimination against Jews, and Catholics; lynchings, race riots, Ku Klux Klans, Russian pogroms, German anti-Semitism.

The basis for the assertion of human equality is that every human being, *because he is a human being*, has indefeasible worth, and therefore is entitled to honor and respect. True, a human being may fail to exhibit his wonderful qualities; he may, in fact, express his worst side, but, *potentially*, we recognize in every human being divine qualities which we are to elicit, for, *as we elicit them in others, we thereby release these divine possibilities within ourselves*. This point has been especially developed by religion and ethics.

(To recapitulate: First we must prove that the earth is indispensable for man's existence. Secondly, that all men have an equal right to live on the earth.)

The *third point*, a corollary, flows from these two points; namely, the earth cannot be privately owned, any more than the air or the sunshine, or the flowing rivers, or the mighty mountains, and each generation has only a right to use the earth, and cannot foreclose succeeding generations from their equal right to use it.

The *fourth point*, that land rent, a differential, measures the desirability of different locations, presents a problem of inductive reasoning, in the science of political economy.

The *fifth point*, in my opinion the most difficult to establish to the satisfaction of beginners, is this: By using ground rent for our common needs, and abolishing taxation, we, in effect, establish each and every human being's equal right to live.

When, and only when, we have satisfactorily established each and every one of these five points, have we proved our case.

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Long before Henry George, thousands of years ago, in fact, wise philosophers, great religious teachers, and deep thinkers in the realm of political economy had perceived that our earth, because of its unique nature, could not be private property, like buildings, suits of clothes, or food, which labor produces.

Henry George's contribution to the solution of the age-old problem of want in the midst of plenty, consisted of this:

He showed how, by applying land rent for our common needs, and abolishing taxation, we, in effect, established the inherent right of every human being to live equally with every other human being. Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, Herbert Spencer, among others, had missed this vital point.

I have already indicated the importance of a sound understanding of fundamental politico-economic principles. It requires a thorough comprehension of wealth, how it is produced, and how it is distributed, to grasp the philosophy of Henry George. Especially, it requires a clear conception of the definitions of the terms of political economy; land, labor, capital, interest, wages, rent. Henry George devoted one chapter of twenty-six pages in "Progress and Poverty" to defining the terms he was about to use, before setting out to solve the problem of the unjust distribution of wealth. Geometry, which like political economy, is an exact science, first defines the terms to be employed and sets forth its axioms and postulates before offering its problems for solution.

How can we explain our philosophy to the Socialists, for example, who include land monopoly in the term, "capital;" or to the man in the street, to whom, "landlord" signifies only the individual who owns the building in which he lives, who in many cases, has leased the ground, and is not a *land* owner; or the term rent, which to the man in the street, connotes the payment he will be called upon to make on the first of next month, solely, he believes, for the three-room apartment he occupies? He has never paused to think that land has a value separate, and distinct, and apart from the improvements in, on, or above it.

Or the terms, wealth and property, in which most persons include also land; or the term real estate, which includes two such diverse elements as land, placed here by the Creator, and improvements on land, produced by the labor of human beings? Or the term profits, which as commonly used, may signify wages, interest, rent, any two, or all three? Ask the next person who talks about, "production without profit," which of these he has in mind.

It is of vital importance then, if we would be under-

stood, that the terms of political economy mean exactly the same to our listeners as they mean to us. How far would I get, in solving a problem in geometry for you, if you understood a triangle to be a four-sided figure? Or, suppose I, speaking only English, tried to convey a thought to you, speaking only Spanish, how far would I get? The story of an American in Spain, in this situation, is pertinent. Being very thirsty, after a hot summer's day's journey on foot, the American sought a glass of milk; unable to make known his wants in the vernacular, he drew on the bill of fare the picture of a cow. Within two minutes, the Spanish waiter returned with tickets for a bull fight. (Incidentally, this bears out what I have previously said, about seeing things, not as they are, but as *we are*.)

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Believing that Henry George correctly formulated the laws governing the production and distribution of wealth, the HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE has been chartered, under the Laws of the State of New York, to teach the science of political economy. We confidently believe that the student who familiarizes himself with the simple laws of that science, cannot help become an advocate of the Georgian philosophy.

"Correct thought," wrote Henry George, "must precede right action. Where there is correct thought, right action will follow."

Address of Charles O'Connor Hennesy PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR FREE TRADE AND LAND VALUE TAXATION

HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS, SEPTEMBER 27

IT seems to me very fitting that a gathering of the professed followers of Henry George, wherever held should devote some part of its proceedings to the international aspect of Henry George's philosophy.

This is particularly true at this time, when, because of recent events in Europe and in Africa, the civilized world is confronted with the actual prospect of a new World War, more terrible in its implications than that which only a few years ago brought death to millions of human beings, and grief and misery unparalleled to countless other millions throughout the world.

Henry George considered himself a citizen of the world. The concept of freedom which is at the base of his teachings, meant to him freedom for men everywhere under the sun. We know that he did not esteem mere political freedom for which men in all lands have striven mightily as essentially important unless the proceeds of government served to arrive at economic freedom. Without the establishment of economic freedom in producing wealth, and justice in its distribution, he predicted that