

THE GEORGIST INFLUENCE IN EUROPE

Henry George und Europa (Henry George and Europe) by Michael Silagi (in German). 193 pp., paperbound. 1973. Price \$10.50, available from the publisher, Etana, Taku-Fort-Str. 13c, Munich 82, W. Germany.

This interesting book may well be the most thorough work yet written on Henry George's influence in Europe. It was prepared as a Ph.D. thesis by the author. (High prices generally in Germany and the limited edition of the book would account for its high price.)

Beginning with an account of George and his philosophy, the book explores the Single Tax and its underlying philosophy, with suitable quotations from George's works. Great Britain and Ireland are then taken up. George's visits there and the appearance of Progress and Poverty during a period of great social ferment had a catalytic effect. Unfortunately a good deal of this influence was diverted into the socialist Fabian movement, an effect George certainly had not intended. Closer to a Georgist influence was the Liberal government's "People's Budget" of 1909 which called for a national land valuation - a measure that was never undertaken.

Dr. Silagi's book proceeds to Germany where he explores the background in the work of land reformers there, particularly Theodore Stamm. George had to contend with Marx's influence in Germany - however there were strong supporters in such men as Michael Flürscheim and Baron Eulenstein. Later came Wilhelm Schrameier who initiated a single tax policy in the German colony of Kiau Chou in China; also Adolf Damaschke who led the influential Bodenreform movement.

Especially interesting is the chapter on Hungary where the Georgist story is less well known. This is largely the story of Julius J. Pikler who, as chief of the Land Valuation Department of Budapest, sought to introduce the single tax in the stormy period following World War I.

Denmark, a more familiar story to Georgists, is also covered in Dr. Silagi's work. Dr. Viggo Starcke is quoted on the natural affinity of Danish traditions with the Georgist philosophy. The support of the small holders, the teaching of George in the Folk Schools and the rise of the Justice Party are narrated.

Henry George und Europa is a valuable addition to the literature on the movement. It deserves to be translated into English.

One wishes for still more information. This work does not quite cover all of Europe. There were active movements in France and Spain, for instance. Eastern Europe, particularly Russia with Tolstoy's espousal of George, merit treatment.

A sad but true feature of Dr. Silagi's account is that most of his story ends after World War I. The movement in the various countries seems to peter out by the 1920's. It is discouraging that such heroic efforts by so many dedicated persons reaching high levels of influence should thus melt away.

But the story does not end there. Many movements in those days were swept away, but something of the Georgist movement refused to die. There are still active movements in Great Britain, Denmark, the Netherlands, to speak only of Europe. And the hope is as strong as ever that our day is yet to come.

(R.C. assisted by Hedwig Eckstein)