

upon, the breaking up of homes, the miseries, the sickness, deaths of parents, children, wives; the despair and wildness which springs up in the hearts of the poor when legal force, like a sharp harrow, goes over the most sensitive and vital right of mankind. All this is contained in the land question.'

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AUSTRALIAN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

The 1979 SUMMER SCHOOL will be held at The Women's College, University of Sydney Carillon Avenue, Newtown. On 27th & 28th January 1979

All invited.

For further information write to Box 175, Post Office, LAKEMBA NSW 2195 Phone (02) 750-9110 759-1120

NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN MELBOURNE

The Executive of the Victorian Branch is asking other Branches to indicate the likely numbers of participants in a National Conference of Georgists to be held in 1979 in Melbourne to commemorate the Centenary of the publication of *Progress and Poverty*, also the subjects which members would like to discuss.

One subject which would be the appropriate topic of one Seminar is: 'How could we increase the impact of Georgism?' Another subject: 'Implementation of Georgist policies: 1. Alternative Budgets; 2. Legislative Reforms. (Taxation etc.)'

Interested members are invited to contact the Association.

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'PROGRESS AND POVERTY' CENTENARY

1979 will be the 100th Anniversary of the publication of *Progress and Poverty*.

One of the events to commemorate the occasion will be a World Convention in San Francisco from August 20 to August 25, 1979.

Further details will be published as they are received, but intending visitors to the convention are invited to contact this Association.

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BRITISH HISTORY'S DARKEST CHAPTER

By ROWLAND ENTWISTLE

One of the most significant chapters in the constitutional history of Great Britain is that which covers the restoration of the monarchy in 1660. It was not remarkable because it brought to an end the military dictatorship established by Cromwell. The termination of the so-called

Commonwealth was a foregone conclusion when the Protector died, and had he lived it could not have long survived. Cromwell maintained his army by means of a land tax, a form of imposition that has always been unwelcome to Land Lords. The effect of the tax was to confirm the Land Lords in their power over the country, and so—when the opportunity came—they were in a position to dictate terms to the monarch they restored as the symbol of their own authority rather than as a king in his own right.

It may be well to pause for a moment to give the Commonwealth its due. Torture, which was totally opposed to the law of England, but which had been used in every reign, was abandoned by the Commonwealth, and was never restored again. In Scotland torture was not abolished until 1708, in France till 1789, in Bavaria and Wurtemberg till 1806, in Hanover till 1822, and in Baden till 1832. The foundations of religious tolerance were established. The prerogative of royalty was destroyed, or at least made subject to Parliament, while the power and jurisdiction of Parliament as the supreme legislative and judicial authority were placed on an immovable basis.

Much of the revenue raised by James I and Charles I never reached the royal treasury, but was embezzled by his ministers. Under the Protectorate this income and expenditure of the Commonwealth greatly exceeded those of any monarch who had previously sat on the throne, and while the ministers and commanders took very good care of themselves, it is clear that public affairs were better managed than they had ever been before. The burden, however, pressed heavily on the great Land Lords, without the compensation of the sweets of office, place and power to which they had been used.

With the overthrow of the Commonwealth, the Land Lords returned to power. The restoration of Charles II was marked by a brief but extremely bloody and infamous revenge on all those who could be held in any way responsible for the defeat and execution of Charles I, and then the Convention Parliament got down to business, and a fiscal revolution followed.

Most historians have passed lightly over this significant epoch. Some just mentioned the fact that the feudal tenures were abolished, and that the excise was granted as a permanent revenue to the Crown, and others that the aristocracy obtained a release from their feudal obligations but did not release their tenants. Even Macaulay glosses over this event. At the commencement of the second chapter of the first volume of his history he says:—

'The history of England, during the seventeenth century, is the history of the transformation of a limited monarchy, constituted after the fashion of the Middle Ages, into a liberal monarchy, suited to the more advanced state of society in which the public charges can be no longer borne by the estates of

the Crown, and in which the public defence can be no longer trusted to a feudal militia.' He then states that feudal rights and tenures perished with the crown under the Commonwealth, and that at the Restoration they were abolished by statute.

The truth was that while the aristocracy freed themselves from their obligations to the crown, they expressly retained the obligations due to themselves from the lesser tenants, namely, all the manorial rights, including the great one of copyhold.

Lingard (Vol XI, pp. 195-6) throws a little more light on what happened. Referring to the grant made by Parliament to Charles II of £100,000 per annum in lieu of the feudal tenures, he says: 'Neither did they choose to pay the price of the benefit, though it was to be enjoyed exclusively by themselves. Originally, the authors of the measure intended to raise the compensation by a tax on the lands which had been relieved; the amount had actually been apportioned to the several counties by the committee, when a member, as it were accidentally, asked why they should not resort to the excise. The suggestion was eagerly caught by the courtiers and many of the proprietors. The injustice of compelling the poor to pay for the relief of the rich, though strongly urged, was contemptuously overlooked; and the friends of the motion, on a division in full house, obtained a majority of two.'

Burdensome and irritating as many of the burdens imposed by despotic kings may have been, they were the conditions attending the magnificent grants by the crown of the greatest parts of the lands of the kingdom, and they were not, as a whole, disproportionate to the vast benefit given and enjoyed. By Magna Charta they had been secured to, assessed, and regulated by the landholders themselves in Parliament. The annoyances and hardships could have been rooted out by Act of Parliament, but this was not what the Land Lords wanted. They desired to retain the splendid gift and get rid of the whole mass of conditions by which it was hedged in the bestowal.

By this act the Land Lords established that extraordinary value in their property which has made them the most astoundingly opulent and powerful aristocracy that ever existed, and has enabled them to overthrow the balance of the Constitution and thrust the people out of their rights.

This is but the beginning of the story. We owe to this period the device known as the 'National Debt', a matter which requires a chapter to itself. From the moment when the people paid, and the Land Lords received, through Government offices and appointments in the navy and army, from this moment begins the history of our boundless expenditure and the

rise of the whole of the modern system of taxation, of extravagance in public administration, of gigantic wars, and of the power of the vested interests by which we are mastered today under a yoke heavier, and more firmly secured, than any under which our forefathers groaned.

The petty tyrants in other countries were quick to follow the example of Great Britain. This country has the dubious distinction of having led the world, by the success of the great injustice here related, to erect a system which has made Christendom a byword and a reproach among the nations, which presents to future ages the amazing paradox of increasing poverty and enforced idleness side by side with a phenomenal growth in the production of wealth of every kind, and particularly of the primary necessities of existence.

It is for us to rescue civilisation from its sorry plight by going back to the point where Cromwell failed, to rebuild on the assertion of the common right to the land which our forebears entrusted, with such disastrous results, to the administration of kings, a new state of society in which economic justice will prevail, the only state in which men can be truly free.

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STRONG STATE-WIDE VOTE FOR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL REFORM

Democracy in New South Wales had a double victory at the statewide referendum held on 17th June. Following the strong 82.6% vote in favour of reform, the NSW Legislative Council (the State's Upper House) will not only be elected by popular vote for the first time since members were first elected in 1856, but the quota preferential method of proportional representation to be used is the best voting system that could have been chosen.

The Association for Good Government pays tribute to:-

*The Government and the Opposition for deciding on the quota preferential method of proportional representation voting.

*Independent member Mr John Hatton, who steadfastly supported the quota preferential method of proportional representation even though he was opposed by all Legislative Assembly members, both Government and Opposition, during debate on the Bill, which, in its earlier form, provided for the unsatisfactory list system of proportional representation.

*Members of the NSW Branch of the Proportional Representation Society of Australia, independent citizens and members of this Association, who have promoted the use of the quota preferential method of proportional representation for elections for over 50 years.