

The Bitter Harvest

Neo-classical economics has dominated thinking and policy now for half a century or so. The results are better than those achieved in Eastern Europe, but NCEists cannot take credit for our market economy, much as they boast of it. The North Atlantic nations had a well-oiled market economy functioning long before NCE drove out classical and Progressive economics. What can NCEists claim as *their* heritage, their contribution to our well-being? “What have they done for us lately?”

They have achieved power, and implemented much of their program. They have dismantled most of the reforms of the Progressive Era, and discredited their rationale. They have successfully stifled the movement to convert the general property tax into a pure land tax. Going further, they have shifted taxes off property, especially land, and onto payrolls and retail sales, beyond Ely’s dreams. They have achieved “uniformity” in income taxation, and more, given preferential treatment to land income and unearned increments. They have substantially deregulated utility and railway rates, and seen that regulatory commissions are drawn from the monopolies being regulated. They have privatized, or are privatizing, much of the public domain (including fisheries, the radio spectrum, water, and the right to clean air) without compensation to the public. They have done away with obsolete urban mass transit by substituting average-cost pricing for the old Georgist-Hotelling marginal-cost pricing supplemented by taxes on land value. They have turned the banks loose to lend on speculative land values, and bailed them out when they failed.

They have nullified the Progressive Era electoral reforms by pouring money into politics and “deep lobbying,” including higher education, to achieve Abram Hewitt’s goal and “make men who are equal in liberty

content with inequality in property". In the name of "freedom to choose" they have subsidized land speculators by extending public services in every direction at the expense of median taxpayers who occupy small plots of land. They have starved pre-collegiate education that serves everyone, and subsidized graduate education that serves the few. They have poured ever more of our tax money into prisons, to uphold respect for law and order. Clark and Pareto and Seligman and Fetter and Johnson and Ely, surveying the scene from their heavenly thrones, must glow with pride. Let us, however, look at this Utopia they have created for us.

Worsening condition of labor

1. The share of labor in national income has been falling; the share of property has been rising. (If we include imputed income, unrealized capital gains, interest on the national debt, and pensions, the share goes higher.) In spite of this rise, the rate of saving and capital formation is falling. A rising share of property income is going to aliens.

2. Real wage rates have fallen in the USA since about 1975, for given kinds of work. At the same time, American youth is turned into worse and worse kinds of jobs. Real wages of men with a high school education fell 21%, 1973-91. Those with less than a high school education fell 26%. Wages of young urban black workers fell 50% (sic!) (*Business Week*, 29 June 1992: 91). This has forced women into the labor market. The proportion of women working, or seeking jobs, rose from 38% to 58%. According to David Ellwood, Harvard Professor of Public Policy, this, rather than the welfare system, is what accounts for the rise of single parenting. Women have less incentive to marry, and stay married. Rising welfare may have had some impact from 1960-70. Since 1975, however, real benefits have fallen.

3. Unemployment has risen to chronically high levels. NCEists shrug it off by defining it away. The "natural" or "normal" rate of unemployment keeps rising: 2%, 3%, 6%, 11%, ... there is no natural cap, apparently, on what NCEists will call natural so long as they are in power. Rising employment, once an occasion to celebrate, has become bad news: NCEists automatically tighten money to choke it off. Joblessness is just a personal taste in the NCE cant: "To explain why people allocate time to ... unemployment, we need to know why they prefer it to all other activities"

(Lucas, 1986). Others say the unemployed are just engaged in the vital economic function of "job search".

4. Homelessness has risen to new heights, in spite of decades of subsidies to home-building, favorable tax treatment of owner-occupied residences, and an excessive diversion of national capital into residences. The problem, apparently, is "not production, but distribution," to resurrect an old phrase long discarded by Paretian NCEists. The 1990 Census shows that 10% of all dwelling units in the USA stand empty at any given time - many of these are the second homes of the more affluent. In California, affluent Newport Beach has the highest fraction of its units vacant. As to the homeless, in the NCE world some people just have a "taste" for sleeping over heating grates, under freeways, in cardboard boxes, and in doorways. In the NCE paradigm they are engaged in the vital economic function of "home search," a search they conduct every evening. They are guided in this by "rational expectations". Either that or they are "mentally disturbed": irrationality puts one beneath and outside the NCE system.

5. Hunger is still with us. "Second Harvest," a nationwide network of food banks, reports that children account for half of all people needing help from food pantries or soup kitchens, and 73% of households it serves have incomes under \$10,000. As Congress debated terminating The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), they got the following advice from Robert Rector of The Heritage Foundation:

It's not surprising that 10% of the American public is lining up to get free meals. But it doesn't mean they're malnourished. The more welfare assistance you give to people, the more dependence you have. (Dixon, 1994).

It is not reported that he or his Foundation have agitated to lower payroll taxes, which fine people for working, or retail sales taxes, which fine people for supporting their families. Most NCEists support such fines, then join Rector in "blaming the victim".

6. Beggary, once rare, is everywhere, here in the midst of great wealth and capital and new technology and universal education, all the NCE panaceas which are supposed to make jobs. You might call it, "Progress and Poverty," a phrase worth jotting down.

The current NCE answer to these problems is to downsize labor forces

in major industries to make them "leaner and meaner". "Efficiency" and "productivity" have become identified with layoffs. In some unknown future this is supposed to create new jobs by making us more "competitive".

Worsening returns to capital

In spite of worsening returns to labor, we also have a worsening condition of capital.

1. The returns on savings are at historically low levels, especially after taxes and inflation.

2. The domestic saving rate is low. This implies a high consumption rate, which Keynes *et al* said would help us, but it does not seem to be working that way - a matter on which neo-Keynesians are silent.

3. Foreign savings rates in Japan and Europe, which bailed the US out in the 1980s, seem to be drying up, too, following the collapse of Japan's "bubble economy," and the onset of recession in Europe.

4. American capital is increasingly decayed and obsolete, as old capital is replaced too slowly. The US has lost much of its steel and auto industries. Many powerplants and oil refineries are ancient, with grandfather rights to continue polluting the air people breathe. Much public capital is too old, its replacement made highly expensive by the low density per mile of line. New York City, which in 1902 was able to build and operate a subway charging 5 cents to ride anywhere, now cannot even maintain and operate what it already has, even while charging fares so high they can hardly be collected.

5. The US financial system is a shambles, surviving only by virtue of loading hundreds of billions of dollars of bad debts onto the taxpayers.

The concentration of wealth and income is high and rising

A higher share of the national income is going to property. As a simple test of this, the labor-price of land has risen sharply, for residential or business use. The labor-price of an American farm, for example, has risen from 6 years' industrial wages to 17 years, 1954-87 (Gaffney, 1992a). (In terms of farm wage rates, the labor-price is a good deal higher in both years.)

As to urban residences, The California Association of Realtors publishes a regular "Affordability Index". It shows the fraction of households that could afford to buy the median price house. They assume 20% down, and

30% of income used on monthly payments, with a 30-year mortgage. In November, 1990, the index said that only 32% of households could afford to buy a house at the US median price of \$130,000. (That means a debt of \$104,000, payment of about \$11,000/yr., indicating income of about \$37,000).

A report by Ernst and Young, and the National Real Estate Index, relates the monthly cost of buying a standard house to take-home pay. It varies from lows of 18% in Omaha and Kansas City to highs of 50% in San Francisco and 49% in Honolulu.

During the 1980s the merger movement reached new heights. It has long since been shown that mergers lead to lower output, more downtime, fewer jobs, and alienation between employer and community. It is obvious to all that "investment" in mergers and acquisitions creates no new wealth nor capital nor jobs.

The number of American farms has fallen from 6 million to 1 million, 1920-90 while the population rose. In 1900 there was one farm per 11 Americans; in 1987 only one per 113. At the same time, the Gini Coefficient (a measure of concentration) among the farms that remain has risen from .57 in 1910 to .76 in 1987 (Gaffney, 1992a). It is possible to adjust the Gini Concentration Coefficient for the loss of farms, by adding the lost 5 million farms to the data universe as farms with zero acres. Doing so, the 1987 Ratio is .92 instead of .76 (Gaffney 1992a).

Income has grown more concentrated, too, but its Gini Ratio is much lower than that for property ownership of any kind. Likewise, its increase is less. That is because so much of income, at least as defined and measured by NCE statisticians, consists of the gross cash flow from labor.

The modern enclosure movement of common property resources proceeds apace. The ocean fisheries, until recently open to all, are being privatized through licensure. While this may be necessary to avoid overuse, it is not necessary to give the newly minted licenses away, as is being done. Former fishermen have become instant millionaires, living in idleness and luxury by renting their licenses to working fisherman, suddenly creating a class structure where before there was equal opportunity. Air polluters, instead of being fined or charged *pro rata* of their effluents, are being given "Offset rights" to sell. The radio spectrum has been and is being given away in valuable chunks. Having once made J. Werner Kluge of Virginia into

America's second richest person, the FCC has now given the McCaw company so much of this public domain that it recently sold out to AT&T for \$12.5 billions. 40-year contracts to receive irrigation water from Federal projects are currently being converted into perpetual ownerships that the original contractors may sell to the highest bidder. These "innocent" purchasers are to receive not just the water, but a right to demand that the taxpayers subsidize their water service (storage, conveyance, quality protection, etc.) forever. The national parks are being turned over to private concessionaires, some of them politically selected, who charge what the traffic will bear while paying no more than token rents to the public that owns the parks. Offshore oil and gas are being auctioned off to private lessees under a system that the major oil firms seem to control and manipulate to their major advantage. The Forest Service is spending \$10 on roading for every \$1 in forest revenues, in some marginal areas. All these giveaways, the kind of things the Progressives stopped, are back in full fashion to the loud cheering of the "new resource economists," steeped in NCE and Ayn Rand.

Social problems we thought were cured

Americans have experienced a sharp loss of community. There is little place for the sense of public service, or honor or patriotism or duty or loyalty or devotion or dedication or responsibility in NCE: it is cynical of such values. The family is an anachronism, a communistic unit. Private individuals, motivated by individual self-interest, make the system work. Public servants are assumed to be moved by the same self-seeking. Those who think otherwise are fools or hypocrites.

That philosophy has a self-fulfilling quality. It is a short step from that to their viewing themselves as chumps and suckers if they act for the public weal. "Heroic," in NCE lingo, is a term of reproach; "bribery" is rational. Selling out one's country for cash is not inherently bad, in NCE thinking, it is expected. Accordingly, we now have retired Congressmen lobbying for foreign powers, without remorse or rebuke. We even have unretired Congressmen representing foreign powers, does not NCE teach that individuals should serve those who pay them? We have national treasures sold to aliens, we have defense secrets sold to foreign spies, all justified by going for the top dollar. After all, the marginal productivity of the stealth

bomber might be higher to Iraq's Air Force than to ours.

"Greed is good," as Gordon Gecko put it, is the central NCE creed. Ayn Rand and Harry Browne are the new Messiahs. Church is still tolerable, but only if it narrows its focus to individual salvation: social concerns (like those of Moses and Jesus) are out. Almost anything public or common is suspect: public schools, public health, public transit, public parks and beaches, public monitoring of weights and measures, public inspection of foods and drugs, common rights of citizenship, public safety, public restrooms, public care of the feeble-minded, common waters, common land, common carriers, public utilities, public broadcasting, public courtesy, social behavioral controls, public financing of political campaigns, the public good ... Only the public roads are acceptable, because they may be used and dominated by private vehicles. The individual driver, windows closed except to toss out trash, door locked, air-conditioner running, muffler cut, catalytic converter bypassed, radio receiving advertising, cellular phone in hand, by-passing accidents and road kill to avoid getting involved ... Is this a caricature of NCE, or is this how many Americans spend hours a day in modern sprawl cities, living with settlement patterns framed by NCE values?

The rich used to live in plain view, in the big house on Main Street. They may have flaunted their wealth and abused their power, but they saw and were seen. They took some responsibility for their towns, and exercised some leadership: they and their tenants were in the same boat, their common city. Now, class divisions are reinforced by spatial segregation, as we follow the NCE panacea and "vote with our feet" (wheels, actually). The rich cluster in exclusive suburbs and gated communities, or move off entirely to enclaves at Aspen, La Jolla, or Palm Beach. They never even have to see their tributaries any more, but relate to them through their stockbrokers, agents, and the hired police.

Accordingly, alienation is the norm, and crime rates have soared. The rejected, the unwanted, the landless might say with Richard T. Ely himself, "Do you want me to commit suicide?" Idle hands are not simply wasted, they steal, murder, burn and destroy. Persons and property have become notoriously insecure. The cumulative social costs of guarding against assault, theft, arson, vandalism, trespass, extortion, embezzlement - all the arts of gross and petty crime - amount to a large fraction of the national

income. The combination of democratic forms with our divisive distribution of wealth, and our NCE leaders' distaste for full employment, makes crime the most attractive allocation of effort for millions of Americans, even though crime typically costs the victim much more than it gains the criminal.

A culture of individual crime easily coalesces into mob crime, triggered by some dramatic grievance, real or imagined. Now we have periodic civil disturbances and insurrections, and the cost of putting them down. In 1992 large parts of Los Angeles were torched, for the second time in a generation, pretty much as foreboded by Henry George in *Progress and Poverty*, Book X. Such colossal waste and barbarism traces right back to the NCE policies that alienate great masses of able people.

In the shadow world between crime and business there is now the vast, gray underground economy. Tax evasion is the poor man's tax avoidance, and our modern high taxes on exchange and production and payrolls and income arrange it so that many people can only survive by evading taxes. Street hawkers evade both taxes and high rents, and in some neighborhoods constitute a chronic force. Once one is outside the law, other illegal acts easily follow. The best-known of these is, of course, drug-dealing. It is now a major industry, with a major counter-industry, the "narcocracy," dependent on it. Rent-free and tax-free and highly portable, it is the natural outlet for those whom NCE policies push off the upperworld. Or did they expect them just quietly to commit suicide?

The national stature is dropping fast

The USA, once so self-sufficient, has grown dangerously dependent on importing raw materials, dependence so high that we are subject to extortion by our loyal OPEC "allies". To some extent this is based on simple gains from trade, and is so rationalized by faithful NCEists. It has some other, less creditable causes. One is that NCE policies have stamped on our country the most energy-intensive, resource-wasting land settlement pattern in the world, and in human history. This is the result of heeding R.T.Ely's admonition that land speculators "perform social service". Another cause is that our industry and farming are now fully dedicated, by ideology and tax-bias, to displace labor with capital and land. Capital and land require fossil-fuel energy as a complement, where labor substituted for

such energy.

Another cause is that American-based land speculators, especially after World War II, have acquired shadowy titles to mineral holdings around the world, under the US military umbrella. Following J.B. Clarke, they have created value and wealth from those otherwise worthless natural elements, recalling that Clark (1886, p.10) taught us that wealth is created "from the mere appropriation of limited natural gifts..". The cost of the military umbrella was mainly borne by US payroll-tax payers. Having firmed up their titles, the new owners performed more social service by gaining privileged admission to the US market, thus raising our dependency on foreign sources.

The USA, recently the "arsenal of democracy" and the most efficient producer of almost every manufacture, now grows increasingly dependent on foreign manufactures. To live in our inefficient cities, and to pay several species of payroll taxes, American workers need premium wages. The burden on employers grows too great. Relieved by NCE individualism of ancient prejudices of patriotism and loyalty, they dump American workers and transfer operations abroad.

It is notorious that the USA, which once led the world in basic international comparisons of welfare and performance, is falling behind: in public health, in infant survival, in longevity, in literacy, in numeracy, in athletics, in wage raters, in mental health, and so on. To be sure, these are interpersonal comparisons, which Pareto taught are "most unsatisfactory," and are purged from NCE. Does this say they have no meaning? Perhaps, rather, it is NCE with its Paretian welfare criteria that has no meaning.

The USA, recently a metropolitan power center, is en route to becoming again what it was in the 19th century, an economic colony. Alien ownership is rising in the centers of power and culture, and wherever else land is highly rentable and lightly taxed. In the post-Progressive culture property wields more political power than citizenship, and it is becoming a question in some areas whether citizens as such carry as much weight as alien landowners. Indeed, there are now many water service districts in California, clothed with the powers and immunities of sovereign governments, in which only landowners can govern, and voting is in proportion to landownership.

Electoral setbacks in Greece, Lithuania, Poland, and Russia in 1993/94 show that the current NCE model pushed by the IMF-World Bank

establishment is having trouble competing even with communism, even in nations that know the worst face of communism. No longer is the US model so attractive that desperate nations yearn for it above all else.

American education no longer leads the world. Privatized education in the form of commercial TV, given free use of the public domain to operate for private gain, has to a high degree superseded public education. NCE theorists should be pleased, but one can wonder: our culture is impoverished. The public schools encourage the reading of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens; they try, at least, to teach mathematics. TV gives us murder, rape, soaps, racing cars, alcohol, drugs, "gangsta rap," tabloid news, sound-bites, spectacles, and kinky sex. In the NCE view TV adds most to the national product, guided by consumer sovereignty. Public schools and libraries, being public, are inherently suspect. Public libraries are forced to serve as public restrooms for the homeless. Alternately starved and harassed, public institutions take the blame for all the intellectual faults generated by a society and economy dominated by NCE and its values.

Summing up, the recent harvest of NCE and its derived public policies is a worsening condition of labor, lower returns to saving, high and rising concentration of wealth and income, rising class divisions and social problems, and a fall of national stature. It should be enough to make us realize that NCE, forged as a stratagem to discomfort Henry George and Georgists, is intellectually, morally, and practically bankrupt.

References

- 1 Patten later brought Scott Nearing to Pennsylvania, and encouraged other Progressives there. I cannot say if this means he was inconsistent, or inefficient, or genuinely tolerant, or a late convert to the single-tax. What is certain is that he bent his own academic work to accommodate the protectionist views and interests of his employers at Wharton School of Business.
- 2 Actually, Ely gradually shifted after 1893 from a classical definition of capital, limiting it to "products," to a Clarkian definition including land with capital (Fetter, 1927: 154). The shift was gliding and marked by ambiguities, which we will see is characteristic of Ely.
- 3 This is also called "the excess burden of indirect taxation," "the excise tax effect," and various epithets.
- 4 Laffer's invocation of George was, alas, opportunistic. When the chips were

down, Laffer fully supported Prop. 13 in California in 1978. He refused to acknowledge that half of the California property tax base consisted of land value.

- 5 Reagan-Bush tax policies actually withdrew preferential treatment from new investing and lowered rates on unearned income from land, while raising rates on payrolls.
- 6 "Trust no future, howe'er pleasant; let the dead past bury its dead. Act, act, in the living present, heart within and God o'erhead!"
- 7 Few recognized it at the time. A notable who did was Jacob Stockfisch, 1956, who, however, viewed it negatively. Stockfisch was a student of Earl Rolph, who had absorbed his Clark, Knight, and Seligman thoroughly. Stockfisch was a close associate of William Niskanen, adviser to President Ronald Reagan, and now head of the libertarian Cato Foundation. Another student of Rolph was George Break, whose student in turn was Michael Boskin, Chair of President George Bush's Council of Economic Advisers, where he crusaded to lower tax rates on unearned increments to land prices. Thus the lineage proceeds, generation to generation.
- 8 A long collection of dismal quotes from Alan Greenspan, Paul Samuelson, Henry Wallich, Otto Eckstein, Milton Friedman, and Arthur Okun is assembled in M. Gaffney, 1976: 101; and M. Gaffney, 1977: 58.
- 9 Such, for example, is the misleading implication of the now standard and generally excellent biography by Charles A. Barker.
- 10 Pacifists might question including the war years in the Georgist period, but consider this. Newton D. Baker, former single-tax Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, was made Secretary of War. Under him the US had the most impartial, democratic draft policy we have ever known: no one could buy his way out. Baker's policies contrast with the neo-classical ideal of a mercenary army, articulated by Milton Friedman. Consider also that the original income tax details were forged by Georgists like Congressmen Warren Worth Bailey and Henry George, Jr. Rates during the war were set high enough so we paid for the war without borrowing as much as any of the other powers, and we did it *without taxing labor income* more than trivially. Consider also that in 1917, for the first time, the US Treasury sold bonds directly to the public, cutting out the Morgan-Seligman cartel of middlemen.
- 11 The first income tax legislation, passed by Congress in 1916, was crafted by Congressman Warren Worth Bailey, single-tax publisher from Johnstown, Pennsylvania. It exempted almost all wage and salary income. One of his many allies was Congressman Henry George, Jr. (D-Brooklyn). The story is told in W. Elliot Brownlee, 1985, "Wilson and financing the Modern State:

- The Revenue Act of 1916," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 129(2):173-210.
- 12 Congressman John I. Nolan of California introduced it in Congress on February 7, 1920 (H.R. 12,397). Note how its drafters copied the legal logic of the corporation income tax, rather than using the 16th Amendment.
 - 13 Zangerle and Somers worked in Cleveland; Purdy in New York City; Babcock in Chicago.
 - 14 The French signalize this in their inimitable style. They give two meanings to the verb *percevoir*: to perceive, and to tax.
 - 15 Nothing could be more ironic than this happening in a State whose capitol is named for the Junker Otto von Bismarck. We see below how Bismarck's educational apparatus helped give NCE its anti-Georgist orientation.
 - 16 Two excellent works on the venality and tyranny of college trustees and administrators during this period are Sinclair, 1923, and Veblen, 1918. Several more such works are needed today. Most academics could, if they had the will and the insight, write them from their own careers.
 - 17 For example, Elizabeth Dilling, a leading alarmist of the 1930s, includes the following prominent Georgists and quasi-Georgists as members of "the red network": Wm. S. U'Ren; Frederic C. Howe; Newton D. Baker; Benj. C. Marsh; Upton Sinclair; Louis D. Brandeis; Louis F. Post; John Dewey; Philip Snowden; J. C. Wedgwood; "Mr. Asquith"; Sun Yat Sen; Carrie Chapman Catt; Jackson Ralston; Warren S. Blauvelt; Geo. H. Duncan; Alice Thatcher Post; Herbert Quick; National Popular Govt. League; People's Lobby; Harry Laidler; Otto Cullman; F.C. Leubuscher; Broadus Mitchell; Clarence Darrow; John S. Codman; John R. Commons; John Ise; and Helen Swift Neilson (Dilling, 1934). My father, a moderately liberal school superintendant, had to regulate his public life carefully to forefend Mrs. Dilling's fatal finger. It could cost one his job, and might have when she named him in the pages of the *Chicago Herald-Examiner*. One of his faculty, a free-spirited English teacher had assigned *The Communist Manifesto* to a class including her son, Kirkpatrick. Such unwelcome attentions intimidate many more than those actually named.
 - 18 The writer has documented this in Gaffney 1970, 1971, and 1993.
 - 19 This does raise another concern, whether such effects might lower the value of land as a tax base. It would be biased to debit George on this point, without crediting him for the equity and efficiency gains that lead to it. Still, it must be addressed, and we do so in a forthcoming CIT volume (*Private Property and Public Finance*).
 - 20 George Gilder (getting a little carried away) even writes that human

- intelligence is now the only limiting resource, and resource constraints are an obsolete notion.
- 21 They called him "The Prophet of San Francisco". He turned out to be the prophet of Los Angeles - its riots and arson, that is.
- 22 Leon Walras impugned the character and motives of conservative economists of the French establishment, especially Bastiat, more savagely than ever Henry George impugned his targets, and for the same reasons. It is an interesting question why Leon was forgiven, and George was not. It is probably because Leon, like Mill, pulled his punches: he proposed compensating landowners before taxing them. One may insult the hired help so long as one does not threaten the existing maldistribution of wealth.
- 23 Fred Foldvary coined this apt term recently. See his contribution to *land and Taxation* (Editor: Nicolaus Tideman), London: Shephard-Walwyn/CIT, 1994
- 24 Post was also the author of Labor Day, and Assistant Secretary of Labor, 1913-20. He was to conduct an heroic rear-guard action against the stampede engineered by Mitchell Palmer and J. Edgar Hoover to deport US labor leaders.
- 25 Before that Butler was Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy. I surmise that my original source, a careful scholar, has a basis for the statement, and the error is only a detail. Wall Street, New York city, and Columbia University had interlocking directorates.
- 26 Concerning the political ambitions, machinations, connections, and low academic productivity of Butler see Sinclair, 1923, Chaps. I-XIII. Sinclair conceived his low opinion of higher education as a student at Columbia.
- 27 Figures are from E.R.A. Seligman's introduction of the man he ribbed familiarly as his "benevolent despot," N.M. Butler, at a banquet in honor of J.B. Clark. Apparently he had lost the exact count.
- 28 *Dartmouth College v. Woodward*, 4 Wheat. 518 (1819).
- 29 George and Georgists regarded franchises as forms of landownership, and would subject them, like all lands, to heavy taxation. They rather quickly worked out what is now called the principle of marginal-cost pricing for decreasing-cost services, and would regulate fares at low levels, where appropriate, making up the fare-box deficit through land taxation. Cleveland's mass transit applied this system under Georgist Mayor Tom L. Johnson, 1901-10; New York City kept its subway fare at 5 cents for decades under this system. The brilliant economist Harold Hotelling rather timidly formalized this concept in 1938. Kenneth Arrow (1987) characterizes his position as "market socialism," but that is a blind spot: it is pure Georgism, restated after

the fact for the Econometric Society.

- 30 Some notable cases were the firing of Edward W. Bemis from Chicago, for speaking out for the strikers in the Pullman case, offending a potential donor, the head of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad (Barber, 1988: 252-53); the dismissal of Edward A. Ross from Stanford for advocating public power and transit; the dismissal of Veblen in 1909. The overt domination of Stanford by Leland's widow, Jane Stanford, was notorious (Cookingham, 1988: 280-89; Sinclair, 1923: 152-68). Mrs. Stanford at one point put the Stanford faculty on her payroll as personal servants. It was an infighting maneuver among rival robber barons, but an accurate statement of the faculty's status. Leland and Jane Stanford had originally founded their university on the advice of a medium hired to communicate with the ghost of their deceased only child (Wallace, 1905).
- 31 The scenario fits almost exactly Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*.
- 32 Nearing told Upton Sinclair that he commanded larger and more interesting audiences after the Pennsylvania dismissal (Sinclair, 1923: 449). In 1922 Nearing was still so dangerous that the President of Clark University interrupted and closed a visiting lecture he was giving to a student club, literally ordering the lights put out. On this occasion his offense was quoting from Veblen on *The Higher Education in America* (Sinclair: 296-97).
- 33 This much is from family lore (Clarke was my great-uncle). Professor John Henry (1992: 16, n.11) believes that threats to religion were seen as threats to property. I am not at all persuaded of this, considering the uses to which Darwinism was put by Spencer, Huxley, Sumner, *et al.* Clarke himself was a Roosevelt Republican, perhaps slightly to the right of J.B. Clark, a Cleveland Democrat.
- 34 There was little reason to suspect Ely of anything but loyalty to rent-takers, as we will see below.
- 35 Professor Henry's works on Clark are stimulating and well-researched. We maintain a long, friendly correspondence. Our differences stem, I believe, from the domination of modern radical scholarship by those who overestimate the role of Marx.
- 36 Frank Knight, 1946. The profession took this nonsense with all gravity. A Committee of the American Economic Association (Bernard Haley and William Fellner) laid on its hands by selecting this article for reprinting in its *Readings in the Theory of Income Distribution*, 1951: 384-417.
- 37 J. and W. Seligman Brothers had a lock on a fixed share of the distribution of US Treasury bonds, along with Belmont, Rothschild, and Morgan. In 1917 the Treasury cut out the middlemen, with no apparent loss of efficiency

(Myers, 1907: 560, n.10).

- 38 This is laid between the lines, as absurd points must be to get by, but it is central to the argument he makes. What he says is that a tax on housing will drive capital out of housing unless land is also taxed, which will drive it back into housing. Uniformity is thus what makes taxes neutral. The corollary is that to tax land and not capital would drive too much capital out of land and into housing.
- 39 McLure, then a Treasury official, gave intellectual guidance. Politically, the leaders were Congressman Daniel Rostenkowski, Chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means, and Senator Robert Packwood, head of the Senate Finance Committee. Both of the last two later achieved notoriety on other grounds. The power of those who write tax laws has led others into temptation before (like Andrew Mellon and Wilbur Mills, each in his own way).
- 40 Seligman repeats this point verbatim through 10 or more editions of *Essays in Taxation*, Chap. III, sect. 4. He really means it. The original phrasing actually came from Charles Spahr (1891: 632).
- 41 George had given most of his emphasis to the extensive margin of production. Critics of the "any-stick-to-beat-Henry-George" school accuse him of overlooking the intensive margin, but a careful reading of George shows otherwise. E.g. he writes that when wages fall, labor resorts "... to inferior lands, or to inferior points on the same lands ..." (1879: 169). This phraseology, repeated elsewhere, clearly refers to an intensive as well as an extensive margin.
- 42 George Stigler exhumed them in 1969, *J. of Law and Economics* 12:181-226. The itch to giggle at the ghost of George continues to run high, even among those who insist he is inconsequential and forgotten.
- 43 A Lorenz Curve is simply information organized in this manner: the top 4% of the landowners have 53% of the land, etc.
- 44 Ely refers only to "Mr. Sage". This would be Henry W. Sage, a resident of Ithaca who made a fortune speculating in western timberlands. By coincidence the better-known Russell Sage was, with Ezra Cornell, a major Western Union stockholder.
- 45 Ezra Cornell was guaranteed a 7% return on his investment before the College got its share (Gates, 1943: 35-36, 56-57). Gates, a Cornell historian, hints vaguely that E.C. may have pocketed more than he should (p.58). Sometimes he did not pay for the scrip up front. Those, however, are only incidental suspicions.
- 46 There are no adequate sources on this neglected era, but some usable ones are

Young, 1916; Miller, ca. 1919; Fillebrown, ca. 1901-20; Whitlock, 1925; Steffens, 1931; Geiger, 1933: 381-478; and Fels. Brownlee, 1985, is very good on its limited topic. Historians have focused excessively on George the person, to the neglect of the movement that thrived for twenty-five years following his death.

- 47 This strange locution is repeated verbatim in Fetter, 1933: 149.
- 48 Genealogical evidence suggests that Ely was distantly related to the present writer: his mother was Harriet Mason from Massachusetts. His works resonate with *simpatico* old New England verities. We also share common backgrounds in western New York, Wisconsin, Chicago's North Shore, and the study of land economics. My father, like Ely, studied at Heidelberg. So much sadder the regret at our differences, which are deep.
- 49 Gilman and White had remarkably parallel careers. They went to Yale together; they overlapped at the University of Berlin (Barber, 1988: 210); they were attachés together in the US Embassy at St. Petersburg (*New Columbia Encyclopedia*); they exploited the Morrill Act together. White engineered Gilman's appointment at Hopkins, patronized Ely in Berlin, and then placed Ely with Gilman (Barber, 1988: 210). Later he helped Ely found the American Economic Association, although White was an historian. Another ally was Timothy Dwight, President of Yale. Many tracks lead back to Yale. Something ambitious was stirring there: this is the same Yale generation that took over the lands of Hawaii in the name of Christian conversion. To these Yale divines, Skull and Bones was more than a club, it was an ensign. Conspiracy theorists revel in the "secret society" Skull and Bones connections. This writer lacks the expertise to form any opinion on this "spooky" aspect, and finds Sutton's (1983) treatment too disjointed, even though provocative and often factual. Sutton also seems to mysticize what is more obviously explained as common class interest and clubbiness. For whatever reasons, the community of academic economists was thick as thieves.
- 50 In 1888 he had written tolerantly, even favorably of the results of early Ohio experience with focusing the property tax on land value (1888: 135, cit. Ralston, 1931: 155). "Ely changed his economic views upon making a fortune as a land speculator" (Ralston: 156).
- 51 Jackson H. Ralston wrote *The Law and Procedure of International Tribunals* (1926, Stanford University Press), based on his experience in the field. He was also attorney for the American Federation of Labor for 26 years. After 1928 until retirement he lectured at Stanford on International Arbitration.
- 52 Jackson Ralston was later a Judge, and visiting Law Professor at Stanford.

- He was the leader of various single-tax campaigns in California. Congressman John I. Nolan of California introduced the present Bill in Congress on February 7, 1920 (H.R. 12,397). Note how its drafters copied the legal logic of the corporation income tax, rather than using the 16th Amendment.
- 53 Data to test and refute this lay in 1923 income tax returns. In 1923 and 1924 Congress made this information public, for the first and last time. Jorgensen uses it effectively to refute Ely, citing the *Report* of the Secretary of the Treasury, 1923: 11 (Jorgensen, 1925: 76).
- 54 "Colonization company" was at that time a euphemism for a land speculator.
- 55 Lowden's stature was such that in 1924 he declined the Republican nomination for vice-President - he evidently thought he should head the ticket. Lowden contested Hoover for the 1928 Republican nomination. Their main difference was that Lowden favored subsidies for farm landowners (Hicks, 1960: 201-202).
- 56 These included some of my ancestors, but that was long ago and has played only a minor role in forming my biases, such as they may appear to the reader. My Irish grandfather was a militant Fenian in the late 1860s, joining in the abortive invasion of Ontario by Irish-American veterans of the Civil War. However, he soon repudiated the leadership of that fiasco, and ended his career as a puritanical Presbyterian clergyman in upstate New York. In any event he died in 1911, well before my birth.
- 57 This seems inconsistent with the denial that interpersonal comparisons are valid, but untangling Edgeworth is a full career that I will not enter.
- 58 Better yet, let the reader consult Pareto's books and articles. The *Manual*: 349 ff., consists of disjointed misanthropic ravings. Pareto, 1893, is totally cynical and nihilistic, with no constructive end in view.
- 59 The unwary modern reader might assume this to refer to Tolstoy's pacifism, but Pareto himself was an anti-militarist. The context of these remarks is opposition to leveling and redistribution of wealth. Pareto favored the use of force internally, to maintain the unequal distribution of wealth. He opposed almost everything else done by governments, including international war. This is consistent with his anti-leveling spirit. International wars generally result in stronger community feelings and higher taxes. George himself was not a pacifist, but a supporter of Lincoln. He also volunteered in an abortive venture to back Juarez against Maximilian in 1865 (Barker, 1955: 70).
- 60 J.M. Clark was probably a good and moderating influence on J.B. Clark, all in all, but J.B. Clark was still the dominant influence on J.M. Clark: father, teacher, dissertation chair, and finally predecessor in the chair J.M. Clark got at Columbia.

- 61 To repeat and remind, Clark and Knight could not abide Austrian capital theory because it distinguished land from capital by stressing that each item of capital has a period of investment from birth to exhaustion.
- 62 This is a stylized "production function" in which output is an instantaneous function of labor and capital, each described as a quantity at a point in time.
- 63 This is in the oral tradition. It was told me years ago by Dr. Walter Chryst, a Brown student, now deceased. I believe the writer was King. I have not confirmed it otherwise.
- 64 I have not researched whether this is original with Plehn. Whoever did originate it, it surely has become a major point of rent-takers in our times.

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