

Iowaco N.J. 4/5/43
J. G. C.:- Am sending another copy
of "Economics Simplified" - the other
was addressed to Mr. Gaston who
probably put it on the shelf. - I doubt
that he finds much time for the
study of basic economic principles.
Perhaps these principles will be discussed more
frequently under the new editorship of the Courier
Wm. Joseph Rusby

GEORGE L. RUSBY
TOWACO, N. J.

Towaco, N.J.
May 18 1943

C.A. Gaston,
Fairhope, Ala.,
Dear Mr. Gaston:

I was glad to get your letter of April 14. Urgent matters have prevented me from making an earlier acknowledgement.

When it comes to submitting a review of Economics Simplified, it is rather embarrassing for an author, himself, to be elected to do the job. As you know, every woman thinks her own baby is the finest on earth. Have tried to duck by merely assembling some of the things that have been said by others, and hope the result, as enclosed, may meet with your approval.-

I quote from a letter received a few days ago from one of the teachers in one of the Henry George School Extensions: "In the class I now have is a girl who was born, brought up and educated in Fairhope, Ala. It surprised me to have her say that the Organic School of Education, down there, does not teach the very science which is supposed to lie at the bottom of the Fairhope experiment. They have some kind of a course which is, however, very incomplete". How come? And this

reminds me of a meeting, a few years ago, in New York, which I attended, and at which Mrs. Johnson was one of the speakers. I recall that I was amazed to find that she was utterly unfamiliar with any basic economic principles,- didn't know the difference between the George philosophy and Marxianism. Indeed, she was about 90% socialistic. Fairhope may get the reputation that Nazareth had, and that caused the query, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Some of the articles that occasionally appear in The Courier, by some of your correspondents, supposed to be Georgists, are most astoundingly communistic in tone. Perhaps Fairhope would be a promising market place for "Economics Simplified".

I thoroughly agree with you that our chief difficulty is in getting people to think analytically. The George movement went on the rocks, from whence we are now trying to rescue it, because it was founded to such a great extent on emotion. Emotion has its place, but it will not do as a substitute for clear reasoning. I tremble when envisioning what this country has in store for itself, unless we can popularize the George principles,- which are, of course, the Mosaic principles. But education must precede popularity,- and education is a slow process.

With best wishes, Sincerely,

George L. Rusby
George L. Rusby.

*Are you in accord with
enclosed "Functions of Govt"?*

May 28, 1943

Mr. George L. Rusby
Towaco, N. J.

Dear Mr. Rusby:

I was glad to get your letter of May 18 and you will find published in yesterday's Courier the material you sent concerning "Economics Simplified". Since you may have overlooked earlier mention in my editorial of April 22 I enclose a clipping and also call your attention to the last item in the published council proceedings, blue penciled. I erred in making remittance for the authorized six copies, sending six dollars so 12 books were sent but all are being put to good use (I hope).

Also in this week's Courier I hope you'll find time to read my editorial "Production's Tri-partnership". I don't believe you'll find it communistic. However I'll welcome your criticism of anything I may publish. I too find much to ~~xxxx~~ criticize in material that is contributed to the Courier and in some that is selected by my sister Mrs. Crawford, but thinking people should profit from the opportunity for comparison and there is little to hope for from those who do not think, so possibly the only damage is to personal reputation.

Your conclusions concerning Mrs. Johnson are, in my opinion, altogether correct. We were greatly disappointed to have her even support the Townsend Plan, and to consider other plans based on irrational emotional desires. Perhaps if you and Dr. Bowen had produced Economics Simplified twenty or thirty years ago her real usefulness to the world would have been multiplied many times. You see I do believe she was useful and I am sure that the institution she founded here and the teaching practices she developed are well worth maintaining. While I can't recall that there has ever been a simple pure single tax economist on the teaching staff, and the further fact that there have been those who embraced the 57 varieties of pseudo-scientific and religious theories, the teaching practices have produced students who I believe have a remarkably low degree of gullibility.

I was glad to get another copy of "The Functions of Government" and have just reread our correspondence ~~of~~ dating from your letter of Dec. 25, 1938 when you sent me the first copy of The F. of G. on into July, 1941, correspondence that I found and find profitable and which I think prove me to be "in accord". Certainly I believe that government activities should be limited to promotion of the public welfare.

I have been a member of the municipal council here for 12 or more years and for the past 6 or 7 have been chairman of the utilities committee, the municipality owning and operating the electric, water and sewer utilities, and Fairhoppers enjoy superior service to that available in neighboring communities, yet they are fully supported by earned revenue and by far the greater part of the "unearned increment" these utilities produce comes to the coffers of the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation in the form of rent payments for the use of sites on our land. We still have available land so all in Fairhope who pay unearned increment ^{to private owners} are really in the position of the man who stands up to the slot machine and feeds nickles into it. Our municipal government is obliged to levy unjust taxes since the state constitution prescribes the sources of public revenue for municipalities. Fairhope does however levy twice the ad valorem tax levied in like communities and since the improvements that have to bear this tax as well as the land, are mostly on our land with the taxes on them paid out of the rent fund, the tax is largely a land tax.

Certainly I am not convinced that it is impossible to work out a plan where the full monopoly value of utilities can be secured to the public and if it can surely there can be no good reason for government to continue in their operation. The simpler we can make government and the more we can safely restrict its activities the less is the hazard at the polls. I am of the opinion that under free conditions, ~~un~~ which we can not have without public collection of the monopoly value of land, that private education may displace public education and that much of the work now done in public health will be cared for by private physicians, that charitable institutions will go out of business and there will be advantages we do not yet see, but it does appear to me that until government does collect the monopoly value, ~~we~~ can ~~scarcely~~ not see my way to the withdrawal of my support ~~from~~ all things that give some relief even though it is shortly absorbed by the collectors of rent.

In reviewing our correspondence I find in your letter of April 13, 1941 the statement that: "I am very sorry Fairhope was ever permitted to be referred to as a 'Single Tax' Colony. It is a hard nut to crack: to be obliged, when telling of what the application of Georgism will accomplish, to meet the objection of those who contend, - 'Well, if it will accomplish so much, why doesn't it where they have it, in Fairhope?' " I don't know how long it is since you visited Fairhope or whether you or those referred to made any practical appraisal of the natural opportunities inherent in this section or if you or they made any considerable study of neighboring communities so that an adequate comparison could be made. All these it appears to me are necessary; also consideration that there are some who would be unsatisfied with paradise. If the objection is that we have not made staunch single taxers of all who reside here I am mindful that though government has been exercising police power for ages many are not yet convinced they should not trespass the rights of others and probably the continued exercise of that police power will forever leave many ignorant and unconvinced, so possibly we should not be held too faulty for our failure. I am always glad to hear from you.

Sincerely yours,

GEORGE L. RUSBY
TOWACO, N. J.

Towaco, N.J. June 20/43

C.A. Gaston,
Fairhope, Ala.,
Dear Mr. Gaston:

I have been too much pressed to find opportunity to reply earlier to yours of May 28,- and even now I cannot indulge to the extent of writing as fully as I would like, regarding the questions which your letter suggests.

I cannot tell you how glad I am to learn of your attitude toward Govt. operation of the utilities and your attitude in general toward the question of The Functions of Govt. I used to correspond with E.B.G. as to this subject, but he did not share your views, and we had to agree to disagree. You may have what seem to you good reasons for favoring municipal ownership of the so-called "public" utilities (which are actually no more "public" than a grocery, or sausage factory), for temporary purposes, in any given condition, and I, myself, can imagine conditions which would make me favor the same; but it pleases me beyond measure to have you endorse the view that Govt., actually, should not concern itself with anything but leaving people alone, and seeing that they leave one another alone.

You must see clearly all that is involved, as I see it, when you even go with me to the extent of holding that our public school system is "wrong". It is more difficult for many to grasp, that privately paid for instruction is the only system, if we would hew to the principle involved; and this is probably so, because people cannot envision the conditions in which people will find themselves, financially, when the liberation of the land shall have created a condition of "more jobs than men". Meantime, like you, I would vote to continue the public school; but there is a ~~vast~~ vast difference between continuing a thing recognized as fundamentally wrong because of other bad conditions, ~~and~~ understanding that it shall be for temporary purposes only, and upholding that thing because of one's belief in it, per se.

Nothing can halt, permanently, a nation's course toward the socialistic, the communistic, so long as the nation endorses anything in harmony with the principles underlying those proposals. Oil and water cannot mix. Supposing that the public school was the first move in that direction (I do not know whether it actually was), ~~the~~ in making that move the foundation was laid, inevitably, for all the ~~progress~~ further movement in that direction- until the "new deal" came in, and for all that remains to do, further in the same direction. Every step in the wrong direction demands two more to support it, and we are now not "drifting", but racing toward some form of the same thing that we condemn in Germany and Italy. I do not refer to the demands of war conditions, but to the tendency that was so apparent long before the war.

When in a previous letter I stated it as my view that it has been unwise to refer to Fairhope as furnishing an example of the application of the Single Tax, this was my thought: we teach that the application of the S.T. will make men free, will enormously increase wages, and will ~~taxalkkthex~~ ~~stherx~~ bring all the other benefits we have so long pictured as in store for us. Then somebody gets up in the audience and testifies that in the "Single Tax" Colony of Fairhope he found wages just as low, and just as much poverty, as elsewhere; ~~and~~ then what? Then the speaker has to explain that that colony is NOT a Single Tax colony, that it is a misnomer, that only the very first steps have been taken in the direction of what we picture under the full S.T. I have had it thrown at me repeatedly, that all of our claims have been woefully exaggerated, as to what the S.T. would accomplish, for "down in Fairhope, where they have it, conditions for making a living are as bad as anywhere else". all of which I have to admit, for I've been there myself, to see. The benefits that you describe, and which are actual, as far as they go, cannot but be regarded as trivial compared with what we expect ~~from~~ eventually.

Of course it can all be explained, but the explanation takes the form of a recantation so far as advertising Fairhope as a "S.T." colony. It may do some good, from the angle of mere taxation; but we are not out for that. I used to believe that the S.T. method of destroying private property in land was the best method. But I have come to believe that there would be danger of losing sight of the fundamental principle, and of thus returning to the old system of taxation, - especially so since if the tax reform were slowly applied, its benefits might not come quickly enough to prevent schemers from fooling the people into going back instead of forward. We must teach the people the difference between property rights in land and those in labor products; we must teach that land must be treated as common property. I now favor confiscation of land titles, outright. And I believe that the shortest route to our goal consists making this the outright issue. It did not seem so, years ago, but the struggle for existence, for both Capital and Labor, has brought conviction that something is basically wrong in society, and we must supply the answer to the query as to what it is, - and it is NOT some form of "tax reform".

I am so glad to have you assure me that the Courier was not, itself, ~~an~~ a supporter of the Townsend Plan, - one of the silliest proposals ever made. I have ever since sorrowed over the belief, gathered from your columns, that you did favor the idea, which is in direct opposition to all that George stood for, and we stand for.

You say that you believe there will be found a way of taking the full monopoly value of the utilities. I do not believe that humans can do anything with exactness. But we could approximate to doing what you say, - and (and this is the vital thought) it would be infinitely better to come short of attaining our goal, to take all of that value, than to adopt the alternative - going into socialistic practices involved in the Governmentalizing of the utilities, or anything else. The ~~adoption~~ adoption of an evil principle is incomparably worse than failure to fully apply a correct one. I am a great believer in principles - the only thing worth striving for. As I say in "The Functions of Govt.", we must ~~cut~~ cut out acting on opinion; lay down a basic principle, and hew to it. The whole trouble with our legislators is that they are trying to do something "for the people", using their judgement, instead of accepting a fundamental principle, and then only asking themselves whether any given proposition conflicts or accords with that principle. "*Down with opinion!*"

I hav'n't had time to read the Courier, yet. Give me a little more time.

With best wishes,

Sincerely,

George L. Rusby
George L. Rusby.