

HENRY GEORGE: A REVIVAL

By W. C. Glazebrook

Progress and Poverty; Protection or Free Trade; The Condition of Labour. By Henry George. *Gems from Henry George.* Price, 1s. each. Published by the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values.

The pioneers of the Labour Movement owe much of their inspiration to Henry George. The Right Hon. Philip Snowden, in a foreword to *Protection or Free Trade*, says: "Each new generation has, in a large measure, to re-learn the truths which its ancestors established." The publication, in a cheap and handy form, of these books is a distinct aid to us of this generation to re-learn the truths that Henry George established.

Reading these books, and reviewing them collectively—as the sequent items in the expression of a man's philosophy—I am convinced of several facts about the man and his work. There is, first of all, his passionate humanity.

"In cities where there exists a pauper class and a criminal class, where young girls shiver as they sew for bread, and tattered children make a home in the streets, money is regularly raised to send missionaries to the heathen! It would be laughable if it were not so sad. Baal no longer stretches forth his hideous sloping arms; but in Christian lands mothers slay their infants for a burial fee! And I challenge the production from any authentic accounts of savage life of such descriptions of savage life as are to be found in official documents of highly civilized countries, in reports of sanitary commissioners, and of inquiries into the condition of the labouring poor."

Then there is the literary quality of his writings. The purpose of prose, we are told, is to get itself immediately and continuously understood. The prose of Henry George fulfils this purpose. For example:—

"Near the window by which I write a great bull is tethered by the nose. Grazing round and round, he has wound his rope about the stake until now he stands a close prisoner, tantalized by rich grass he cannot reach, unable even to toss his head to rid him of the flies that cluster on his shoulders. Now and again he struggles vainly, and then, after pitiful bellowings, relapses into silent misery. This bull, a very type of massive strength, who, because he has not wit enough to see how he might be free, suffers want in the sight of plenty, and is helplessly preyed upon by weaker creatures, seems to me no unfit emblem of the working masses. In all lands, men whose toil creates abounding wealth are pinched with poverty, and, while advancing civilization opens wider vistas and awakens new desires, are held down to brutish levels by animal needs."

This passage contains practically all the virtues of prose composition. That, however, is for the academicians; what interests us is that he enforces and illustrates his lesson in a thorough-going way with nothing slipshod about it. I feel sure that this partly explains his hold over that generation of exacting scholars to whom I have referred. If those of the 'nineties demanded austere English usage, they had also some pretty notions as to the functions of the speculative thinker. Henry George's philosophy is clear and logical. In any seemingly cast-iron analogy he can see, unerringly, the weak spot. His blows in destructive criticism are as devastating as a steam-hammer and as certain as a sculptor's.

I have devoted this space to treating the books collectively, because it seems to me that they are, in a sense, complementary. I can recommend them to our members, and I advise them to buy all of them.

Those responsible for the issue of these books are to be congratulated on their spirited attempt to popularize the ideas and ideals of Henry George with a generation that is in danger of forgetting him.

The U.C.T.L.V. have also issued recently two pamphlets, *Unemployment and the Land and Agriculture and Land Value Taxation*, both of which are as full of information and noteworthy ideas as "an egg is full of meat." The second one, consisting of papers by F. C. R. Douglas, A. R. McDougal, and James Scott, is about the most stimulating pennyworth I have ever read.

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Press cuttings received bear witness to the untiring energy of those of our friends whose advocacy of the taxation of land values finds one outlet in "letters to the editor." We notice: F. R. Jones in the *Liverpool Post*, *Evening Express*, *Liverpool Echo*, etc.; J. O'D. Derrick, in the *Rothesay Express*, *Irish Weekly*, etc.; Rt. Hon. J. C. Wedgwood, M.P., in the *Kelso Mail*; F. R. West, M.P., in *Forward* (Glasgow); Chapman Wright, in the *Birmingham Gazette*, etc.; Wm. Reid, in the *Scottish Farmer*, etc.; A. H. Weller, J.P., in the *Manchester Guardian*, *Lennox Herald*, *Kilmarnock Standard*, etc.; A. D. Haxton, in the *Architects' Journal*; Fred. Skirrow, in the *Yorkshire Observer*, *Yorkshire Post*, etc.; D. J. J. Owen, in the *Manchester Guardian*, etc.; F. Mitchener, in the *Times* (London); "Student," in the *Hants and Berks Gazette*; Councillor Wm. Noble, in the *Stockport Express*, etc.; "Verdad," in the *Rosshire Journal*, etc.; G. W. Currie, ex-M.P., in the *Scotsman*; Lady Stewart, in the *Kensington News*; G. Benson, M.P., in the *Labour Magazine*; and T. Watson Collins, in the *Daily Herald*; A. S. Munsie, in the *Scottish Farmer*; A. J. Mace, in *Glasgow Evening Times*, etc.; A. Campbell, in the *Kilmarnock Standard*, etc.; and T. Dickson, M.P., in *Forward* (Glasgow).

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If we take Henry George's definition of the terms "wealth" and "capital" we clearly see that land is neither one nor the other. "Wealth," he says, "as alone the term can be used in political economy, consists of natural products that have been secured, moved, combined, separated, or in other ways modified by human exertion so as to fit them for the gratification of human desires," and "capital is that part of wealth used for the production of more wealth."—J. CAMPBELL in the *Ardrossan Herald*.

SPECIAL OFFER

Any six books from the new editions of Henry George's works (1s. each) published by the Henry George Foundation: *Progress and Poverty*, *Protection or Free Trade? The Condition of Labour*, *Social Problems*, and *Gems from Henry George*, will be sent to any part of the world for Five Shillings, post free.

The parcel will be made up as the purchaser may choose. This special offer holds good till the end of the year 1931.

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