

the Henry George News

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Kenya Calls

by K. B. SHARMA

EVERYWHERE in Africa you can see a few natives straining to lift a big load or push a heavy obstacle. In spite of their efforts, it does not budge. Then one of them shouts "Harambee" repeatedly, and with their combined force applied all at once, it yields. This spirit has been instilled by Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, since the attainment of "Uhuru" (freedom) on December 12, 1963. With all Kenyans striving together to build the country in peace, Kenya takes her rightful place among the three other countries of East Africa, namely: Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar.

"As a community realizes the conditions which all civilized communities are striving for, and advances in the scale of material progress, so does poverty take a darker aspect. Some get an infinitely better and easier living, but others find it hard to get a living at all." It seems that when Henry George wrote this he was writing about the conditions in East Africa during the colonial era. To a great extent, the countries developed economically, but this entailed dire suffering on the part of the indigenous people who graduated from a barter system to a modern economy.

The immigrant Asians and Europeans—hardly five per cent of the total population—earned most of the in-



come. Very little of this percolated down to the Africans. The standards of living of the three races could not even appear on the graph—so different were they. The greatest challenge to these newly independent governments is a more equal distribution of wealth.

Within the last three years these young governments have manfully tackled this problem. Hardly a month after becoming free, the coup d'état which upset Zanzibar started a chain reaction throughout East Africa. Since January, East Africa has seen one revolution and four mutinies.

East Africa experienced these troubles because the indigenous people with a low standard of living, face unemployment, and only a few have enough land to provide food for them. Undoubtedly land is the problem facing East Africa, where the best land was taken over by the Europeans for huge plantations on which to grow export crops. No doubt they developed and produced cash crops to replace

(Continued on page sixteen)

A Word With You

THE recent cut in income taxes is being hailed in most quarters as a great step forward. On all sides we hear the learned explanation that with less withholding tax taken out, people will have more money to spend and this will stimulate the economy.

It's really admirable the way the experts can turn with the wind like a weather-vane. Not long ago we were hearing that the reason for higher taxes is that the "private sector" of the economy has too much and the "public sector" should have more.

Experts, in fact, are just like people — and people are too prone to accept whatever system is thrust upon them, whatever monstrous burden of taxation is put upon their backs.

They say that in the concentration camps, when a victim was beaten up, at the moment when the beating was stopped, the poor wretch would feel gratefulness and even affection for his tormentor. Such, I suppose, is the reaction of most of us to the tax reduction — so accustomed have we become to being robbed!

Unfortunately, the main thought most people give to taxation is not how to change the iniquitous system, but "how can I wriggle my way through it?" A recent fund appeal from a church stressed not only the importance of giving but also the importance of figuring out the tax angle. In fact, says this appeal, it's practically a sin not to take advantage of the intri-

cate and complicated federal tax laws so as to give more generously to the work of the Lord. Nothing is said about the sin of the tax system, or what the Lord may think of the robbing, cheating, venality, temptation and hypocrisy involved in the whole business.

It may take people some time longer to realize that no one is safe when the system is unjust. At present, it seems pleasant enough to recoup those few extra dollars — especially when the trend of taxation for the past fifty years has been nothing but upward.

But already there are clouds on the horizon. Some states are planning to increase their own withholding taxes. It's going to be harder to make loans, as the terms will be stiffer. All our economic experts can do is prescribe an alternation between chills and fevers. The remedy for the chill of economic stagnation is easier credit and lower taxes; but that leads to the fever of inflation, and the remedy for that is tougher credit and higher taxes.

The tendency of land rent to quietly absorb all the gains goes quietly unnoticed. This real cause of the trouble will soon be at work on the tax rebate. The average man is caught between two millstones — if taxes don't get him, rent will — until he realizes that he can get out from under by turning rent into taxes.

—Robert Clancy

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community — known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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Homeland Revisited

by ROBERT MAJOR

MOST American tourists to Europe this past year have been impressed by the spirit of optimism pervading the old continent. But vacationers seldom stay long enough to look behind the facade, and few are perceptive enough to understand the underlying issues. On my recent visit to my homeland, Hungary, I was encouraged to find the post-war reconstruction there highly successful—they have had their "economic wonder," and their living standard is higher. But my Georgist friends were skeptical. Being well acquainted with history, they are not deceived. They remember the booms of the twenties and earlier when prosperity led to depression and war.

Has the world learned anything from these disasters? After World War II Germany was fortunately not burdened with unrealistic reparations. The U.S. did not bar the goods with which other nations paid their debts. Europe was not flooded with short-term credits. Foreign investors were cautious and certain stockmarket abuses were eliminated. These measures were helpful in avoiding sudden depressions, but there are aspects of European life which still arouse grave doubts as to whether optimism is fully justified.

Life is better in Western Europe than it was before the war, but its progress — its increasing population, production and consumption — is leading again, as it always has, to higher than ever land values — especially in urban, industrial and recreational areas. This compels the great majority to pay an ever-increasing part of their income for habitation and transport. We have seen it before, always and everywhere. We know where it leads. As long as

this aspect of economic progress is neglected, as it is in America, European booms cannot still our doubts and fears concerning the future.

A tourist leaving the luxury beaches of Spain, Portugal or Sicily sees abject poverty scarcely touched by the *Wirtschaftswunder*. When he leaves the Champs Elysées he finds three kinds of Parisians: those living in rent-controlled, decaying, neglected houses; others commuting from far away suburbs where they pay somewhat less exorbitant rents; and a minority in publicly owned houses whose deficit is carried by other taxpayers. And if the tourist buys British newspapers he may read how land speculators are chasing away the old tenants to cash the immense increments in site values.

World population has doubled. The demand for goods has multiplied — natural resources are being rapidly depleted and urban sprawl devours Europe as it does America. To the delight of visitors, most cities are found to be preserved somewhat in their traditional pattern, and are not allowed to decay — many are still surrounded by green belts. Budapest, for instance, has mountain areas that can be reached in 15 minutes for only a four-cent fare. But in Western Europe land speculators are relentlessly destroying the charm of many famous tourist centers in the Alps, such as the Cote d'Azur, Riviera and Costa Brava. The Mediterranean's shores have enchanted visitors for more than two millenia, but now they have been commercialized and over-built.

Many Europeans do not mind the exhilaration of this "economic wonderland." Absorbed by the race for material gains, they want more goods — first of all, cars. These, however, de-

grade cities and countrysides faster in Europe than they did in America, where it took fifty years, while one decade was sufficient in Europe. In this short time the marvelous Grand Place of Brussels and the Josefsplatz in Vienna have been transformed into parking lots. Road traffic in Southern England and Metropolitan France is almost at a standstill and is now eroding the British railways. Britons are pondering the interdiction of auto traffic in cities and towns, but that is an obstinate problem. Whether industries are owned privately, or publicly like British Petroleum and Renault, so much business and so many jobs depend on them that further furious expansion cannot be stopped.

Perhaps Georgists should take time to reconsider the so-called problem of over-population. When I was young we refuted the theory that this was the cause of hunger, depression and unemployment by declaring that if the artificial barriers between human work and natural resources were removed there would be employment for all,

and the needs of a much larger population could be amply satisfied.

But what will be the consequences in many parts of England and Germany of more than 1000 persons living in a human anthill of one square mile? It is true that these industrial countries have virtually limitless productive capacities, thus there is no natural or technical obstacle to the gratification of the needs of the people. However, the abolition of want has been promised ever since the start of the machine age, and it could have been realized 150 years ago, especially in Europe.

Economic statistics indicate that northern and northwestern European countries will soon reach the American income average. In Switzerland and Sweden they have reached it already, and without U.S.-like mass poverty. We are told that when all of Western Europe will have reached that level, all social problems will disappear. But did they disappear in the United States? Have they disappeared in Sweden?

The Whitstable Breakthrough

The February - March issue of *Land & Liberty* (London) was largely devoted to the Whitstable Report on a pilot survey by the Rating and Valuation Association, which puts to rest a number of long-held objections. The goings-on in this English town in Kent have attracted attention in the U. S. as well, and an article in *The Christian Science Monitor* by its London correspondent, John Allan May, refers to it as a "Tax Breakthrough."

Mr. May, somewhat familiar with the principle of land value taxation, recalls such objections as the charge that it would not work, is difficult to apply, would be very costly, and offers advantages better obtained by

other means — but in conclusion he "heartily commends the report to all politicians everywhere."

The survey proves, he states, that "occupiers and owner-occupiers would pay lower taxes than at present, vacant land would no longer be held out of use, and neglected premises would pay less in taxes than they do now."

A tabulation of the results and a report on the technique of valuation and collection, as revealed by the Whitstable pilot land valuation survey, will be presented at the Eleventh International Conference of the International Union for Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade in New York beginning August 30th at the Henry Hudson Hotel, 353 West 57th Street.

German Land Speculation

by HEINRICH RICHARD

GERMANY, like most other countries, is trying to find a cure for the land problem. A "building land tax" instituted as an attempt to deal with high prices and land scarcity has proved ineffectual just as Georgists predicted it would. Land prices have continued to rise, and the hoped-for new building sites have not opened up. The Senate of the German Federal Republic is therefore now considering abolition of this law.

As long ago as 1958 land value taxation experts in Germany and France were pointing out that Adolf Wagner and Adolf Damaschke had proposed that the profit realized by selling a piece of land, after reimbursing the owner for labor and capital, must go to the community, and that this community-earned rent could best be levied by an annual tax on land values. This was based on the writings of Quesnay and Turgot (Physiocrats), also by Ricardo and Thunen, and by Henry George.

However, an "Imperial Increase Tax" was levied in 1911, and land speculation continued to flourish as before, while prices rose. High land values and land rents are looked upon as being dangerous to the community — whereas actually the value of the land reflects the good quality of the land itself, as well as the activity and density of the population. If the land rent thus resulting from population density went into the public treasury it would be a great blessing, as the Georgist experts have repeatedly pointed out.

The tax as now charged is still a tax on buildings, improvements, crops, etc., and therefore it demonstrates the old law that a tax is unable to lower the price of a thing that owes its birth to it. So the present "price increase

tax" is a double tax, with exactly the opposite effect that was expected of it by the proponents. It greatly hampers construction of new buildings and of course every purchaser adds the increased tax to his price, raising it to cover the cost of building as well as all the hidden taxes.

Everybody complains of the results of the present taxation, but no one knows how the situation could be improved. A certain group "in the know" manage to avoid paying the tax — the others are caught in its vise, and the community suffers. The chief error is that the soil is treated as a negligible factor in building, since its share in the total budget, after deduction of all other costs (plantings, improvements, etc.) is only one per cent.

Looking to the future, Georgist writers in Germany urge only a direct tax on the soil which can never be passed on. All are children of the soil, whether owners of land or not, and every tax reform which neglects this consideration, they point out, is doomed to fail. Meanwhile the Ministry of Finance, although competent, completely misses the connection between the general tax increase and the monetary devaluation, and doggedly overlooks proposals of tax reforms based on the scientific studies of such experts as Henry George and the earlier exponents.

Although speculation is rife, not everyone is out to get rich through land manipulation. Many would prefer to build or cultivate today, rather than tomorrow, if the high "land" tax did not make the price prohibitive. The actual taxation falls secretly on labor, capital, trade, industry and the consumer. Nevertheless, everybody is naive enough to express astonishment without making any effort to show a

responsible interest. Merely taxing all land according to its gross value is a clumsy system that must be overthrown in favor of the annual land value tax which would lower the selling price of the land even if its gross value con-

tinued to grow. "An evil cannot be fought by veiling it, only by abolition of its causes."

The above article by Heinrich Richard of Bonn was translated from the German by Pavlos Giannelias of Lyon, France, a veteran Georgist.

Don't Give Up

by JOSEPH S. THOMPSON

IF I ever run into a hard-shell from now on, I'm going to shut up!

Why?

I got into an argument with Bill Ingalls and got nowhere.

What was the argument?

Oh I was talking about Hutchins' article. You know Robert Hutchins — he was president of a university — Chicago University. He said we should stop taxing buildings and put the tax on the land only.

Gee, Did he? I must read that. But what about Bill Ingalls? How long ago did you talk with him?

Oh, ten days — two weeks, maybe.

He didn't agree, I suppose.

Didn't agree? Gosh, by the time he got through, Hutchins was a communist, I was a fool falling for every crazy notion, our tax system was perfect — then he came up with "ability to pay" and "across the board" and "make everybody tax conscious." Boy, I got nowhere. I give him up.

That's where you're wrong. Never give anybody up. He'll battle with you. He'll admit nothing — even when you make a point that teaches him something he'll never let you know...

Well, I don't see any use in working over somebody who's against you.

Let me finish. The reason I went on about Bill Ingalls was that I saw him and Sandy Burke...

Sandy Burke! There's a hard-shell if ever there was one! Why...

Let me finish. Sandy was saying they

ought to raise the sales tax and relieve the property owner, when out comes Bill Ingalls. Yeah, your friend Bill. And he says, "wait a minute now, Sandy. This feller Hutchins — he's a college president, mind you, says don't tax buildings but put the tax on the land. He claims that'll make business..."

Bill Ingalls said that?

He did indeed.

And Sandy says, "Bill, that feller Hutchins must be a communist and you're a fool falling for every crazy notion!"

Gosh, that's just what Bill said to me!

Sure, and that's why I say to you, never give anyone up. You never can tell what effect you're having because a man rarely admits that he was wrong. Don't expect it.

You mean I ought to go right on arguing? That's where I live!

Well, yes, in a way. But don't get them in the habit of saying, "here comes old Land Value Taxation again!"

Joseph S. Thompson of San Francisco is president of the Henry George School, New York, and honorary president of the school in San Francisco. The syndicated newspaper column mentioned above in which Dr. Robert Hutchins expressed his views in favor of land value taxation (see Feb. HGN p. 13) has now been reprinted in its entirety, and copies are available on request from The Henry George News, 50 E. 69 St., New York, N. Y. 10021.

Moral Reawakening

by OSCAR B. JOHANNSEN

"THE truth that I have tried to make clear will not find easy acceptance. . . . But it will find friends—those who will toil for it; suffer for it; if need be, die for it. This is the power of Truth," said Henry George in the last chapter of *Progress and Poverty*.

And he could well feel confident that it would find friends, for in his day what is now known as the "Protestant ethic" was the dominant standard. It was assumed that men were by nature independent, self-reliant, courageous and willing to fight to overcome obstacles and hardships. It was not surprising that Henry George believed some might be willing to die for principles such as he espoused, and he could reasonably hope that the majority would, at least, be sympathetic to his individualistic philosophy.

But is this true today? According to Richard LaPiere in *The Freudian Ethic*, a perceptive analysis of the decline of the "Protestant ethic" in the 20th Century, our beliefs are now quite different. Men are assumed to be shackled by biological urges which can never be freely expressed so they are in constant conflict with society, ill adapted for the world in which they are born—weak, irresolute and without the stamina to endure the stresses and strains of living. This gives them the excuse to be egocentric and irresponsible.

And wherever we turn we see a depreciation of individual values. Moral standards once recognized as sound guides for living are increasingly questioned. Truth is no longer absolute but relative. Moral precepts are redefined in order to coincide with the desires of those wishing to indulge in the pleasures of the moment; and the

mores which bound a society of independent, responsible people are under pressure. Evidence of this is seen in the appalling increase in crime, violence and degeneracy, and the apathetic tolerance of these evils. The continuous clamor for more privileges from the government and the increasing willingness to foist on it such obligations as the care of the aged, the indigent and the helpless, are additional proofs that the "Freudian ethic" has largely captured men's minds today.

In such a milieu it is hardly likely that Georgism, with its emphasis on individual integrity and responsibility, can grow and prosper. Instead, the danger is great that the philosophy of Henry George will be re-examined by those who do not clearly understand its deeper implications, and will be diluted and reinterpreted in a way that will vitiate the fundamental structure.

A moral and spiritual reawakening is being called for by many who deplore the increase of violence. The Henry George School may not wish to participate in this except insofar as it can aid through the diffusion of Georgist principles, which are really moral principles. The school has naturally and properly followed intellectual lines, but Henry George was more than a fiscal reformer—he became a leader of conviction, vigor and courage, and his life might well be studied by his followers.

This is not so far fetched as it may sound for there is little doubt that sooner or later, as in previous civilizations, men will arise, much like the Biblical prophets, and will exhort people to return to clean living and high standards, when violence and crime have become increasingly repugnant.

Think what an effect a great spiritual leader would have if he understood the land question and would include in his teachings the principles of Henry George! Moses must have been such a man, for Henry George in a brilliant lecture, stated that Moses recognized that the decadence of the Egyptian civilization and the enslavement of the masses were primarily the result of the possession by a small class, of the land on which and from which the people had to live. It may

be that this explains how Moses exerted such tremendous influence on his people.

The reawakening which is surely coming in the not too distant future, calls for men and women of courage. One of the most effective means for propagating Georgism would be to try to influence spiritual leaders to study the land question. Such men might then inspire us to create a truly great society based on justice and equal rights to the sources of all wealth — the land.

The Lure of the Caribbean

Planning a holiday in Jamaica? Philip Wallace, director of the Henry George School in Kingston would like to hear from vacationing Georgists who can give talks before local civic groups explaining land value taxation. Please write to him six weeks before your visit, at 24 Harcourt Road, Kingston 16, Jamaica, W. I.

"You don't have to be a tycoon to establish digs in the Caribbean," according to Walter Wager, who described the island homes of stage and screen celebrities. Quarter acre lots on the Grand Bahama range from \$1950 to \$10,000 — a stone colonial house at Montego Bay (Jamaica) sold recently for \$26,000 with two guest cottages and 39 acres — and handsome

new apartments are available in co-operative buildings in Jamaica and the Virgin Islands at \$12,500 or more. And for "gracious private empires" there are a number of "dandy islands" for as little as \$75,000 or as much as \$1,200,000, complete with dock and perhaps a landing strip or heliport.

If you ever decide to sell you can expect to make a substantial profit. "As the jets lure more people to these splendid islands, property values are almost certain to continue their impressive ascents. Many houses are now going for double what they brought a decade ago, and the prices for complete islands seem destined to zoom even further as wily North American investors spot the potential for additional resort developments.

The Standard, published monthly for many years by Georgists in Australia, has been renamed Good Government. The January number clarified the objective of its publishers, the Henry George Union for Social Justice (NSW), as "the collection by our governments (local and central) of the revenue continuously produced by the community itself, i.e., the site-rents in the centers of population, which in Australia are estimated to amount to over £1,000 millions annually," with no payment for any improvements included in the rent, and a corresponding cancellation of taxation on private incomes, wages and property. "Governments, like individuals, must learn to live on their own incomes," say these experienced Georgists.

Poverty Rediscovered

by SYDNEY MAYERS

IN the year of our Lord 1964, in the United States of America, the richest and most productive country on earth, it has been found expedient to declare a "war against poverty." By doing so, the national administration frankly concedes that, notwithstanding the tremendous industrial, scientific and social advances of the past century, the monstrous economic maldistribution that has plagued mankind for millennia still prevails. It thus becomes poignantly apparent that what Henry George called "the great enigma of our time" remains an unsolved puzzle — except to the all too few who understand and sympathize with his economic principles.

The continuing prevalence of poverty is a distressing reality, yet there is something refreshing in the current willingness to acknowledge its existence. This is a distinct change of attitude, for until recently the tendency was to dismiss the very word "poverty" as an archaic expression, having no place in today's vocabulary. The Georgist who spoke of poverty was repeatedly greeted with the insistent assertion that "there no longer is such a thing—certainly not in this country!" Supporting this reaction was the common inclination to equate poverty with jobless vagrants, threadbare beggars, underfed children and the like.

In the context of political economy, being a comparative concept, poverty can occur even in the absence of abject human misery. The general trend of wages to a subsistence level necessarily creates the condition. Now, however, it is clear that there is poverty not

only in the abstract economic sense, but in terms of physical want and suffering as well. "Depressed areas" abound, unemployment and welfare payments have skyrocketed, and in America's second largest city lines of demonstrators carry picket-signs reading "We want food." Under such circumstances, even the most ostrich-like evader of facts must admit the existence of what is.

It is not pleasant to review this situation. It is heart-rending to acknowledge that there is hunger in the land; that one need not go to India or China to find it. And the problem will never be solved with doles, no matter what euphemistic names we may give these handouts. (George calls personal charity a noble impulse, but public charity a degrading practice.) In any case, it is impossible to close one's eyes and pretend poverty is not there—it simply cannot be swept under a convenient carpet of complacency.

If this nation is forthright enough to grant the existence of poverty, and sincere in its desire to "war" upon it, perhaps it is not too much to hope that more ears will hearken to the voice of Henry George. Now that poverty has been rediscovered, perhaps one may delicately point out that Henry George "discovered" poverty over eighty-five years ago. Moreover, he faced it as an economic problem, and proceeded to evolve a logical solution, which he freely gave to all the world. Surely the time has come to hear his message, and to be guided by it.



All Occupants of the Same House

by EDITH SIEBENMANN

THE Chicago Henry George Woman's Club essay contest, on the application of George's principles today, was won by Richard D. Ward, a student at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois, with an essay entitled "The Old Premise and a New Promise."

"The past and the ideas it spawned are not often relevant. Somehow they seem cold, distant and even fossilized to a generation that measures life not in terms of abstract thought, but in sonic speeds and megatons," Mr. Ward stated by way of introduction.

"This generation, as no other, has had a rendezvous with progress. Modern civilization, progressing in technic terms, and its own genius to which alone it answers, embracing the Baal, progress, may yet make an offering, the ultimate offering — civilization. There is no greater poverty, nothing more dismal than contemplating what man thinks he has achieved and the pottage he holds. This generation suffers nonpossession of many things, especially all that might liberate it. But as long as ideas can speak to us and we can commune with them, some will know that all we behold we have not mastered; then there is an outside chance of achieving true civilization.

"I consider *Progress and Poverty* to offer such an outside chance. As modern, as pertinent as the last headline, as related to contemporary living as the next international crisis, the theory and the total humanity of the ideas of the 'single tax' embrace, quite literally, the underlying nature of human discontent-inequity.

"My idea here was to communicate not primarily to those already conversant with Henry George, but to those who, with me, are just discovering him; and especially those who

question his relationship to this age and hour.

"Henry George as a vital person and a crusader believed so deeply that he ultimately felt compelled to place his life on the altar of his beliefs. More, he was an intellect that sought combat with life, and in his being personified something very rare — the capability of giving stature and added dignity to the species called man.

"This is offered then, in the hope that Mr. George's ideas released again and again may enable man one day to be worthy of himself. But you and I know such a day can come only when man fulfills the capacity of his promise."

The twenty-page essay shows remarkably good comprehension of *Progress and Poverty*, which was required reading according to the contest rules. On automation the winning contestant wrote: "At the present time we need 75 million jobs and at least a million and a half new ones each year. They will come, but adjustment will be required. Great industrial potential, which previously absorbed many kinds of skilled and semi-skilled classifications of labor, has entered upon what some have called the second industrial revolution.

"Scarcely a clear term, since what really has happened is in the nature of an evolution. Nothing sudden, swift, or violent, nor unforeseen or unexpected has occurred. What will happen is what took place in the electronics industry. Prior to 1940, the field was small and limited. With mechanization and the attendant expansion, it created a service industry of distributors, jobbers, dealers, servicemen and others with a gross volume of more than 4 billions annually. General Motors, as far back as 1961, said that it

had 200,000 more employees in spite of all the new and modern equipment that it had installed over the years. A president of the C.I.O. once said that the industrial revolution in the United States had, in some 25 years, brought into the employment field an additional 20 million people. Even the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union and the Pacific Maritime Association have agreed upon a \$5 million a year slush fund to retire men and speed automation.

"Industry is not afraid, and from the long view neither should labor fear new technic advantages. Paradoxically, the technic-age requires more of man, but less of him too."

Regarding taxation generally, Mr. Ward believed a new system should be considered, since 185 years of taxing the products of labor had produced "more difficult and complicated tax structures, which increasingly lead to cycles of dislocation one upon the other. With a deficit of an estimated \$18.4 billion, we need either to add more tax rates to the twenty four now in our graduated system; or raise taxes more. Perhaps the government might confiscate the 50 per cent it leaves to some brackets, and thus decrease investment further. The system now in use is, on the face of it, driving itself out of business.

"The nature of the system encourages fraud and graft at all levels, from those who pay to those who collect. In short, the whole tax system has nothing to recommend it. It has no basis of stability and is at the mercy of its own constant drain upon the national real income.

Alexis C. Ferm of Fairhope, Alabama, is a 94-year-old Georgist. He lives on an income of only \$16 a week, and yet he recently made a \$10 contribution to the Henry George School. He has also contributed to the land value tax campaign in Erie, Pennsylvania, and manages to assist civil rights and share-cropper causes! Writes Mr. Ferm: "There are so many people who live in unnecessary luxury and so few who understand the land question. These folks go to church to praise God for his blessings. Is it understandable?"

It is almost as hard to understand Mr. Ferm's generosity, but he is, after all, being religious in the sense spoken of by Swedenborg: "The life of religion is to do good."

— R.C.

"Our Constitution is organized with injunctions in the first ten amendments against abridging property rights and the enjoyment thereof; but we are not pleading the cause of the removal of all property, only that which infringes upon the rights of other men. There is no quarrel with the rights of men to enjoy the fruits of their labor. But in property rights we have a pernicious form that contends with one class as against the other. Labor must pay for the right of another not to produce, and not to contribute, and worse, he must contribute to his own impoverishment and that of his nation. That is immoral. The very rent he pays is a fee given for something no human really labored to produce. . . .

"No good, intelligent reason remains for the institution of rights in property (in land). No man has a clearer title to it than any other; and all men, in order to avoid the problems previously noted, should hold and share the earth in common trust forever.

"There is nothing much that man can own anyway, not even his own soul. All life, like the earth, is a gift, a loan, a sort of interest bearing note, due and payable upon demand. So, though the means and modes of men may vary, the real needs of men require some universal way to add cubits to their stature. The world requires some way to be one, some way for all to eat from the same table as it were, since we all really occupy the house."

Similar contests are offered for high school students in New York City and Fairhope, Alabama.

Sydney Mayers

VIEWS THE NEWS

An Australian farmer named Lindsay Schmidt was recently granted an income tax deduction for the upkeep of his trained chimpanzee, after demonstrating that the talented simian actually drives a tractor and performs other helpful chores. Who says you can't monkey around with taxes?

* * * * *

C. Northcote Parkinson, the sardonic British writer, who is famous for his "economic laws" (that expenditures rise to meet income, and that work expands to fill the time available), has formulated a new one: that all nationalized industries tend to go bankrupt. Parkinson's pronouncements are wonderfully witty, but as Molly used to say to Fibber, "It ain't funny, McGee!"

* * * * *

Britain's Conservative party has apparently regained much of the strength it lost to the Laborites at the time of the cabinet scandal, and if the present trend continues, probably will win the next general election. The change in prospect is attributed to a substantial rise in prosperity since Sir Alec Douglas-Home took over as Prime Minister — indicating anew that a full dinner-pail outweighs an outraged conscience.

* * * * *

An official decree recently issued in Moscow requires that hereafter the Russian word for "Communist" shall be spelled with only one "M," the purpose being to eliminate unnecessary letters and thereby conserve paper. Perhaps the money saved will be used to build more walls to restrain happy Soviet citizens from escaping to the

decadent (if somehow more appealing) western world.

* * * * *

Premier Nguyen Khanh of South Vietnam has proclaimed a comprehensive political and economic reform program, the Vietnamese text of which covers fifteen pages, and has declared that the general and specific details of this voluminous "plan of action" are to be put into effect within one year. Anybody want to bet?

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The United Nations is sending a "peace-keeping force" to serve Cyprus, but has been stymied in its efforts because its member states show little urge to contribute the estimated \$6,000,000 cost involved. Even in international politics, economics cannot be ignored.

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To look askance at any tax reduction may seem cynical and rather un-Georgist (if not un-American), but we cannot help contemplating where the cash proceeds of the eleven billion dollar income tax cut will ultimately go. Particularly, we wonder how much will be appropriated as rent, and how much will sink in a sea of inflation.

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Though we do not suggest that either the kidnapping of Frank Sinatra, Jr. or the ensuing conviction of its perpetrators is a subject for mirth, we must permit ourself a modest smile concerning one aspect of these events. Even while young Frank was being held captive, it seems, there was much discussion as to whether the \$240,000 ransom his father paid for his release was a tax deductible expense.

Reassessment of Vacant Land

by SAMUEL SCHECK

IN Nassau County, Long Island, a reassessment of 46,000 parcels of vacant land has been directed by County Executive Nickerson, to bring them in line with the assessment of improved land. The last reassessment took place in 1939, just before World War II, and certainly there have been some spectacular rises in value which have not been reflected in comparable rises in taxes. These losses in revenue to Nassau County amount to \$20,000,000 annually. Naturally the private homeowners have to pick up the tab to the tune of from \$50 to \$80 per homeowner annually.

The county was literally forced to this new measure because of increased costs of government and services, and it cannot ask more of the homeowners for they are already paying the limit (the goose will squawk if another feather is plucked).

There were 14 articles and editorials on the subject in *Newsday*, the Long Island daily. Following a half-hour debate on TV between Nickerson, a Democrat, and a Republican Assembly Speaker, the newspaper, formerly antagonistic to Nickerson, came out with an editorial entitled "Why Not Re-assess?"

Nickerson brought up some flagrantly unjust cases of tax nonfeasance against a parcel of 7½ acres of vacant land in Merrick assessed for \$1,700 in 1939 that should be assessed for \$178,000 today. Assessments in Nassau County are supposed to be legally maintained at one-third of market value.

What encouragement can we derive from this expected victory? Our cause can be expected to succeed eventually, perhaps irrespective of our efforts, as

government authorities are forced to look for other sources of revenue. This should not make us think we can wait smugly, rather it should encourage us to renewed vigor in our efforts to educate and to propagate good tax reform. There is enough progress to be made within the framework of existing laws to keep us busy.

The idea of keeping vacant land taxes as high as possible by reassessing such land to its true value regularly makes sense even to people who are not Georgists, and affords easy fruits for our endeavors. When this victory has been won, we can try the harder task of amending existing laws to place the bulk of taxation, and finally the entire load of taxation, on land values. Right now, Nickerson's slogan is "equalization" of the taxes between vacant and non-vacant land. With this accomplished some of us can proceed to talk about just taxation.

Suffolk County, also in Long Island, has its brand of vacant land tax reform to match that of Nassau County. Its County Executive, Dennison, has for years been planning an official tax map, which does not now exist. As a result many tracts of land are not even listed in the tax board and have never received tax bills. The loss to the county is estimated at \$5,000,000 annually. Approval must be obtained for the placing of concrete points at regular intervals to serve as an accurate base for surveys. The entire cost of the program would be \$2,000,000 but it would be well worth it. Land values in some areas have multiplied three times in three years, putting what should rightfully be community funds into the pockets of private land speculators.



The writing of letters occupies a considerable part of my time evenings and weekends. With materials supplied at no cost by the Henry George School and Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, along with what I have purchased, I have been able to maintain quite a barrage of correspondence in this area (10-15 a week). I have 20 copies of a letter written to the City Manager going out in the morning, concerning appropriation of \$20,000 for the beautification of one of the many lakes in Lakeland. So, 20 prominent people, including the newspaper editor, will receive copies of the letter plus a reprint of the Reader's Digest article, "Parks That Pay for Themselves."

I'm sorry I did not know about these things 25 years ago. Friday I convinced two visitors in my office that they must learn more about the (economic) facts of life. I am anxious to visit New York and know Georgists in their "den."

T. J. JENSEN
Lakeland, Florida

When very young I studied political economy at Carnegie College, Rogers, Ohio, and later spent many tiring hours studying Karl Marx's volumes, some of which I did comprehend, strange as that may seem. I am glad for all experiences which left me better prepared to appreciate the tax proposals of that master of clarity, Henry George, when I chanced to discover him. For me the really outstanding characteristic of George's presentation is his insistence on thorough understanding of terms. This is his key to simplification that makes possible the comprehension of an otherwise complex science.

I want to thank all the people who have contributed to a transformation of my economic thinking. I took five courses by correspondence, and my mentor fired my imagination until the momentum of enthusiasm cleared up the disturbing questions for me.

H. E. SALISBURY
Pittsburg, Kansas

What I believe to be the most important point of the correspondence course in Fundamental Economics is that Henry George combines the laws of his political economical system with the natural laws of the universe. I feel this to be a very important aspect of his philosophy since we have a criterion by which to judge the value of his system, but most important is that we can judge the situation as it exists today in reference to the natural laws of nature. Each man should have what is rightfully his — that cannot be denied. I am grateful to the teacher who took the time to bring out additional points and explain some that I didn't understand too clearly.

DOMINIC GHIGLIERI
New York City

The poverty issue is so clear cut now, both in domestic politics and foreign affairs, that the philosophy of Henry George seems never to have been more appropriate. New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary has given me a chance to get through with that opinion to several of the major candidates.

RICHARD NOYES
Jaffrey, New Hampshire

Richard Noyes is editor of the *Monadnock Ledger*, at Jaffrey. After his ride with one of the presidential candidates (who had never heard of Henry George) Mr. Noyes addressed a letter to him which appeared in the *Ledger* of March 5th. The letter quotes extensively from Henry George regarding poverty and the land question — so if this candidate reads his mail he now *has* heard of Henry George.

The Henry George School in the News

LOS ANGELES experts debated The Economics of the Free Society on March 6th — again with Harry Pollard, director, "keeping the peace." The panel included Frank Green, a Scottish metallurgist; Thomas Sanders, engineer and lecturer; and Herbert Selwyn, an attorney. Interrogators were Roy Begley, a Yorkshireman; Thomas Marshall of the midwest; and Wilbur Pereira from the southern part of the U. S.—all of which afforded a varied collection of accents.

CHICAGO women have enthusiastically feted Mrs. Edward C. Goetts in celebration of her 90th birthday. She is a past president of the Henry George Woman's Club and has been in the movement 50 years. An afternoon class in Fundamental Economics has been in progress at her home, organized by Mina Olson and taught by Edith Siebenmann. The Henry George Woman's Club \$100 prize for an essay in the recent contest was won by Richard D. Ward (see page 10).

PHILADELPHIA will soon have a new director. After a period of training in New York, George Collins, a teacher at headquarters, will succeed the late Joseph A. Stockman. During the summer he will be in charge of the Birthplace of Henry George, at 413 South 10th Street, which is also the Philadelphia extension headquarters. The historic birthplace will be one of the points of interest for the international conference visitors in August.

BOSTON has released its downtown headquarters but has arranged for a

more central location on a voluntary basis, with Mitchell S. Lurio continuing as director. He will teach a class this spring at Boston's First Church.

Recently Mr. Lurio spoke at the Cambridge School of Weston, situated on land given by Fisk Warren, who started a couple of Henry George enclaves early in this century, and the road leading to the school is named for Henry George. Having this bit of history recalled by a faculty member started an enthusiastic discussion among the students.

NEW YORK'S spring term begins April 6th with 13 fundamental classes (in English) and four in foreign languages: Italian, French, German and Spanish. Other courses being offered are Evidence & Trust by Isaiah Cash; Leadership Development by Nicholas J. Minaya; Georgist Philosophy in Practice, by Peter Patsakos; Practical Politics by James Murphy; and Spanish History by William Camargo. There will also be classes in Applied Economics and The Science of Political Economy (in both English and Spanish). Great Books and Teachers Training will continue with George Royal, the dean of the school.

The Friday Evening series will present film programs on April 3rd and 17th. On April 10th, Robert Major, a journalist formerly living in Hungary (see page 3) will discuss the European economy with special reference to the land reform measures. On April 24th Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Jesperson will return with a collection of popular slides, this time from Austria.

Kenya Calls

(Continued from page one)

subsistence farming, but many Africans were deprived of their most important asset—the land.

More than anywhere else in the world, the people here must be made to realize that land is the common property of the whole community. Thus emergent Africa must be told of the method by which this may be accomplished without bloodshed. Africa must be told about the ideas of Henry George *now* before it is too late. The young Africans whose thirst for knowledge is insatiable must be made aware of the great lessons that the Georgist philosophy holds for them, and the solutions it provides for their difficulties.

The potential future rulers of the new Africa must be informed, educated and presented with the Georgist ideas. Kenya has taken a few steps in the right direction. About one million acres of the good farming land has been bought by the government from the white settlers and distributed to the African yeoman farmers. These settlement schemes are helping the country a great deal. Land valuation is the prime function of the lands department, and a course on land valuation and surveys has been started at the Royal College, Nairobi, as part of the University of East Africa.

Unfortunately this is not enough. We hope to establish a branch of the Henry George School in Nairobi with free courses in Georgist economics for educated Africans. A few articles about Henry George have already appeared in local papers but we lack the facilities and funds for following them up with correspondence courses, seminars and conferences to introduce the single tax—the tax to end all taxes. In East Africa where foundations for social, economic and political structures are now being laid, the Henry George ideology has the greatest chance of being practised. This is an opportunity that must not be missed. On behalf of our future Georgist followers I appeal to Americans for help in showing Africa the path to progress and annihilation of poverty. We feel that the United States—the home of Henry George—owes it to Africa to light up this continent with the ideas of her great political economist.

Mr. K. B. Sharma of Nairobi writes that facilities for starting a Henry George School are available there at the New Era College, and that local personalities and institutions are ready to cooperate. An article on Henry George by Robert Clancy of New York recently appeared in the New Era magazine published by this college. Five thousand copies have been distributed and many readers mentioned the Henry George article as the feature which interested them most.

The program for the international conference to be held in New York from August 30th to September 5th, is taking shape and scope, with discussions on the agenda from Hawaii, England, Germany and other countries. Reservation at the Henry Hudson Hotel, 353 West 57th Street, New York, will insure all conference visitors a roof over their heads during the World's Fair. Rates range from \$5 to \$9 a day.

Mr. Robert Clancy,
33-53 82nd St.,
Jackson Heights, L.I., N.Y.