

The truth, of course, is that the tenants are not deprived of any part of their personal earnings by landowners when they hand over the rent; (we are not now considering the incidence of speculative rent) that they are not a landless group forced to come to terms with either land-owners or society for the use of the land they rent, lease or buy; that what they do pay for today is the opportunity, not for access to land as the totally misleading article 'Justice and Land Tenure' appearing in the same issue of the journal takes as its theme, but for access to rent or the privilege of augmenting their incomes by that bonus which attaches to their particular site—an excess or differential in the income they can enjoy there over and above what they could get on an inferior site.

Until we are able to eradicate such confusion in our own thought through a more adequate grasp of the nature of economic rent, we seem doomed to go on damaging our public image.

I take no pleasure Sir, in having to direct this criticism at your otherwise excellent editorial but I have been running a bit of a fever since I had the painful experience of listening to a prominent Georgist on one of our most popular television programmes, making a pathetic attempt to explain our proposition in terms of hospitals and street sweepers. This is the only way I can get it out of my system.

E B DONOHUE

Croydon NSW

Mr Donohue's criticism of the 'Viewpoint' article is, of course correct. Rent does not reduce wages. Degraded politically into land values, however, its speculative advance is at the expense of wages, and one is continually faced with the necessity of discussing it in two senses. From the tenor of the paragraph in particular and the article generally I do not think that an inference of a right of tenants to retain rent can be substantiated any more than it could be from 'Progress & Poverty', in which the same ambiguous usage occurs.

Any contributions from Mr Donohue or other sources that could assist in maintaining interest in the subject whilst avoiding this double usage would be most welcome. EDITOR.

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Sir — Further to J C Shergold's letter (*Progress*, Aug. 1978) and other recent observations that Georgism is not winning, and why, I believe we must take serious note of some simple if unpalatable factors which appear to have been ignored to date.

According to P Raskall in the current Journal of Australian Political Economy (reported in Aust. Financial Review, Aug. 3) the richest 1% own almost three times (22% against 8%) the wealth of the poorer 50% of Australians.

The richest few percent—the 'establishment'—quite obviously control Australia, including the media and education sectors. Institutions of both know well that they won't survive if they vigorously promote single-tax or other boat-rocking theories which put 'the establishment' at risk. Their grants, advertising revenues, etc, will dwindle whilst the would-be reformers are hounded and persecuted for good measure and as grim reminders to the rest of us to stay in line.

Just look at the delicate task of getting even a Gough Whitlam into academe without jeopardising funds, or observe as in *Progress*, Dec/Jan 1978, that an academic expert on city land wheeling and dealing (Dr I Sandercock) could write a book about it with '...only a few lines...' mention of Henry George. *Progress*, Aug 1978 also laments that Susan George, another land reform author '...has apparently never heard of her great namesake...' and admits that George Hardy, as 'Antimonopolist' could not be outspokenly Georgist.

The problem is not what arguments to use on the public but how to get to their eyes, ears and intimidated minds. Georgists are, effectively, a minor and ex-communicated splinter from a brainwashed society of closed minds. Compare us, e.g. with the negroes in 'Roots', kept in complete ignorance to maintain their docility.

This situation will continue whilst wealth and power remain concentrated, as illustrated above. The prerequisites for dispersing them and their respective corollaries of poverty and brainwashing intimidation are the opening to public scrutiny of wealth, its ownership, all business and government revenues, expenditures and contracts and open government from cabinet levels down through the bureaucracies.

As admitted in 'Interview With a Crusader', *Progress*, Aug. 1978, The Henry George League is a pariah in this well-trained society, '...had the approach (George Hardy's) come direct from the League, they would not have invited us...'. On the other hand I believe the simpler policies of open business and government are politically saleable in a community continually paying lip service to their need, even whilst moving toward more secrecy, e.g. Freedom of Information Bill.

Nothing less can overcome the brainwashed apathy which presently foils all direct attempts to spread the more complex single-tax idea.

Energies should, I suggest, be turned to achieving openness first, unpalatable as that may seem to enthusiastic Georgists. Can this be debated in *Progress* now, I wonder, or are Georgist minds also closed?

BILL WASON

*** ** Pearce ACT

Sir — Figures recently were published showing the percentage increase that Victorians can expect to pay for services supplied by State instrumentalities this year as compared with last year.

They are: Electricity, 9%; Briquettes, 12%; Gas, 7%; Rail fares, 14%; Tram fares, 11.33%; Board of Works rates, 8%; Stamp duty, 11%; Driving licence fees, 66%.

At the same time a relatively small segment of the population has been investing in land holding for speculation or as a hedge against inflation. The value of their land holdings has increased enormously over the last ten years but their contributions in land tax to government have not commensurately increased.

The increasing concentration of property ownership in fewer hands is building up to saddle us with a major depression. Already unemployment is high and increasing. Until a decade ago Australia, at 80% had the highest proportion of home ownership in the world, but tenancy has been increasing at about 1 per cent annually since. The high price of land is the cause of both indicators of deterioration. A fundamental shift of the burden of taxation from land use to land hogging is essential. This means more land rental taxation, in place of taxes on incomes, goods and services.

A R HUTCHINSON
Melbourne
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Sir — Can any reader supply the source and exact wording of the following quotation, believed to come from the writings of sayings of one of the popes?

"They who make private property of the gifts of God pretend in vain to be innocent, for by appropriating their means of life they are the murderers of those who die every day for the want of it".

Please send information to Box 175, Post Office, LAKEMBA, NSW 2195, Australia.

W A DOWE
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GEORGIAN LAND-LIBERATION IN NORTH EASTERN N S W

By D E SPAIN

In practical terms, Georgian ideals are already being implemented in north-eastern NSW, upon what the mainstream (and often misconceiving) public loosely calls 'Happie mocomunes'. People from all walks of life (professional, artistic, artisan, labouring), being dissatisfied with the pollution, inequality, exploitation and inhuman competitiveness of established society, are coming together in this area, buying shares (costing as little as \$400) in land co-operatives, and, despite such open-ended, diverse origins, are harmoniously living together. Some four or five thousand acres, and

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as many people, have been 'liberated' in this way.

Of course, certain land is set aside as commons or wilderness, and settlement is, by consensus, restricted to certain areas, but in practice, since each nuclear family only needs an acre in this fertile, well-watered region, there is ample land for each shareholder. Provided settled neighbours are amenable, one can choose a site then build a safe, camouflaged home, and plant a reasonable area with life-support systems. Most people, once established, do without motor vehicles, electricity and telephone, some even have no income; health is maintained by proper diet and exercise, and social fulfillment is cheaply provided in the extremely rich artistic, emotional and intellectual environment. 'Alternative' means of transport and energy are widely utilized.

Although potentially idyllic, and in practice quite satisfying, there are difficulties to be faced. At present local council will only permit the more-dense 'hamlet' settlement of rural areas upon a few specific properties, and in such instances homes may share common facilities. At present negotiations are under way between the 'New Settlers', the Council and the State Planning Authority to extend the area open to such development. It is advisable for settlers to bring some \$4,000 for establishing their orchard and building a home; there is a need for capital also to construct dams for retaining wet-season run-off against the dry summer; and of course, one gets a quarter sprinkling of not very industrious or far-sighted people.

After the initial purchase of a share, one can expect a levy to be made against residents so as annually to cover rates, taxes and administrative costs. In our case, at Tumble Falls, near Nimbin, with 250 settlers on about 2000 acres, this is only \$20 per annum for each resident. About one-quarter of the population, by the way, live (more or less) without money, while the other approximate quarters work seasonally, have private savings/income, or receive governmental social security.

Of course, the sort of lifestyle evolving here springs spontaneously from liberty and the Heart: it is the emergent prototype of 'Aquarian' or 'New Age' civilization. Individuality, free will and tolerance are invariable and essential tenets. Basic characteristics of Aquarian life style are centeredness in group-soul; co-operative, group-focused (but monogamous!) living; self-sufficiency in agriculture and cottage craft; and harmony with Nature. It is envisaged that the entire north-eastern corner of NSW (the 'Rainbow Region') will become saturated with such settlement, even over the next ten years, and will come to flower as an exemplary Aquarian City-State, first to be actualized on Planet Earth.