

## An Open Letter to the Wall Street Journal

"Henry George has long since been forgotten" says Vermont Royster (WSJ 5/11). Such news should have been headlined by the Wall Street Journal and not buried in its editorial page. After all, those who have studied Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* at the Henry George School of Social Science here in New York City, as well as in its extensions and affiliates, throughout the United States and Canada could not help but be interested in learning that someone who, to them, is as alive today as when he actually lived has been forgotten.

Possibly it is because Mr. Royster has forgotten what Henry George said in *Progress and Poverty* about "overpopulation" that he resurrects that dreary pessimist, Malthus. Had he remembered, he would have recalled that the threat of 'overpopulation' is merely an appearance due to our unjust system of land tenure. By making the good earth the only means which man has of securing a living -- private property, a host of what appear to be inexplicable problems arise.

People are forced into the cities, much as they were in ancient Rome, for as land gravitates into fewer and fewer hands, the cities act as huge magnets drawing to them absurdly large numbers of people. With them come the problems always associated with huge numbers congregated in relatively small areas -- rise to the welfare state, which as did the Roman State, gives bread and circuses to the mobs to appease them. The bread of the modern all-knowing welfare state appears in such forms as social security and doles, while the circuses are such expensively fascinating spectacles as the moon shots.

Intellectuals gravely ponder the possibility of the "overpopulation" of the world, while millions upon millions of acres of land lie idle awaiting the inevitable increase in prices brought on by the efforts of other people, but for the benefit of society's noblest member -- the land speculator.

Henry George forgotten? Possibly by the intellectuals of both the right and the left, who argue interminably over how to alleviate the problems caused by man's unsound system of land tenure, but never bother to study it to see if, just possibly, there might be a connection be-

tween how man makes the good earth available to all for use and the problems of "overpopulation", poverty, and even war.

Could it be that possibly some day men will realize that two things should never be private property -- human beings and the land. The history of the world might well be summed up as the tragic story of the violation of this truism. Some day men may recognize that private property consists only of things made by men, whether it be a mighty blast furnace or a simple toy, for without the incentive to own that which he produces, men will not produce. But men, even if they wish to, cannot produce land. It is a gift of Nature to all men.

Probably the fundamental problem which has perplexed man down through the ages has been: *How to divide up the unequal opportunities of the earth among the equal claimants to them with justice to all?*

The Indian looked with amazement at the actions of the white man in making land private property. The Indian knew that the good earth was his mother, and as he said, "A man never sells his mother." But, then, the Indian was an 'ignorant savage', and the white man a 'civilized gentleman.'

Sincerely yours,

Oscar B. Johannsen

---

## Joint Georgist Conference

A Joint Georgist Conference will be held at Conference Point Camp, Williams Bay, Wisconsin, beginning Friday, July 1 and ending on Tuesday, July 5. Cosponsors are Land, Equality and Freedom; the Henry George Foundation; and the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.

A balanced schedule has been planned with a program of top speakers invited by the co-sponsoring Georgist groups. In addition to separate business meetings and conferences, there will be planned social activities and free time for leisure, or other recreation at facilities nearby to Conference Point.

Those wishing to attend should contact Nadine W. Stoner - 1118 Central Ave. Beloit, Wisc. , 53511.