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BEWARE THE DOCTRINE OF NO HOPE

The world is at war with itself. Our "global village" is being torn apart by stresses which, because they are man-made, can be cured. The political ideology that now dominates society cannot generate reforms that would bring peace and prosperity. That is why the voice of *Land & Liberty* is vital. The sanity of its editorial philosophy - associated most notably with the name of Henry George - ensures that, one day, it will be heard and broadcast far and wide.

The challenge is to develop policies that will appeal to the public. We have to tread a narrow path between absolute conviction of the correctness of our philosophy and the pragmatism that would make it acceptable in a democracy.

We have waited a long time. A century has passed since Henry George synthesised the elements of a tax-led strategy that promised a cultural renaissance. But for most of the 20th century the advocates of George's philosophy largely failed to polish the diamonds that he dug out of the earth. The result was an increasingly lacklustre programme that did not command respect.

In recent years, Georgist activists from around the world have begun to pool their brains, to articulate the philosophy in terms that are relevant for the 21st century. There is still much work to be done, if we

are to sharpen the cutting edges of the only philosophy that can abolish the baneful influences that have destroyed civilizations for four millennia.

In striving for progress, we must beware those who preach a counsel of despair. They lack hope. They believe that the promised land is a long way in the future. Time, alas, is a luxury we cannot afford. For people die by the thousand every day that passes without reform. That is the onerous burden carried by Georgists: we know the truth, and that imposes a responsibility on us to do our utmost to broadcast it in a way that can find its expression in practical politics.

This issue of *Land & Liberty* examines the roots of the world's problems. Dr. Michael Hudson discusses the lessons that flow from the evidence being uncovered by the archaeologists in the arid regions of Mesopotamia. And our feature writers examine the contemporary consequences of the trends that originated four millennia ago.

It is a frightening state of affairs that offers hope only to despots. But change also brings with it the opportunity for those who are willing to work for a decent world. Can we afford to postpone action? Can we envisage more propitious times for the acceptance of the philosophy of Henry George?