

science. I also wrote an eight years' plan on the basis of geographical and financial data on my country, intended to awake the interest for the single land value tax and to show in a simple and comprehensive way the practicability of our system. It was written on the basis of a more normal state of things, but I deem it useless to reform the financial figures, since the State budget now with its enhanced nominal figures is, however, less than ever before in its revenue yield. The basis of the land rent of Spain is taken from the booklet, *Economia Política Georgista*, published in 1935. If you are interested I shall be glad to send you a copy of these writings."

### VICTORIA

The latest victory for the Rating of Land Values is that at Echuca, a town on the River Murray, with a population of 4,000. The system was adopted by resolution of the Town Council rendering a poll of ratepayers unnecessary. Another recent victory, already announced, was that in the City of Kew, in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Out of the 28 local authorities in Greater Melbourne, 14 are now levying their rates on land values (excepting for water and sewerage which are administered by an independent Board, and it assesses on annual value of land and buildings). Of the total area of Greater Melbourne (71,187 acres), 54,890 acres are now under the land values system for city rates.

The settled and confirmed sentiment in favour of Land Value Rating, especially where it has been tried, is shown in the following instructive return published in *Progress*, August, 1947. Where opponents have attempted to reverse the system by polls taken for the purpose they have been increasingly defeated:—

Municipality and Poll	Year	In Favour of Land Value Rating	Against Land Value Rating	Margin in Favour
<b>DANDENONG :</b>				
Adoption Poll ... ..	1920	632	167	465
Reversion Poll ... ..	1924	1,808	809	999
<b>BRUNSWICK :</b>				
Adoption Poll ... ..	1922	2,395	2,107	288
Reversion Poll ... ..	1926	4,676	2,644	2,032
Reversion Poll ... ..	1932	4,120	1,794	2,326
<b>SANDRINGHAM :</b>				
Adoption Poll ... ..	1926	2,284	2,098	186
Reversion Poll ... ..	1931	3,069	1,737	1,332
<b>OAKLEIGH :</b>				
Adopted by Council ... ..	1920	No Poll	—	—
Reversion Poll ... ..	1945	1,761	587	1,174

*Progress*, organ of the Victoria Henry George League, is obtainable from 18 George Parade, Melbourne—annual postal subscription, 2s.

### TASMANIA

Mr. F. Halkyard, Melbourne, writes:

"A rating poll was held at Launceston, Tasmania, on December 11th on the question: 'Are you in favour of the basis of valuation for rating purposes being altered from annual value (of land and buildings taken together), as at present, to the unimproved value system?' The result was 3,864 in favour of the change; 2,706 against the change; majority for, 1,158.

"Only 29.87 per cent. of the enrolled residents voted, but the Act requires that at least 50 per cent. must vote if a poll is to be valid. Hence the will of the majority cannot, at present, be made effective. But the Act also allows the Council to make the change by resolution. At the concurrent election of Aldermen, two sitting members, who declared themselves against the

change, were rejected, while the three candidates elected, one retiring and two new men, were all open-minded on the rating question.

"With a clear mandate from the ratepayers, which repeats the decision of a previous poll, it is to be hoped that Launceston City Council will now adopt Land Value Rating by resolution."

### FRANCE AND BELGIUM

*Terre et Liberté—Grond en Vrijheid*, in its second number (16th Year) has informing articles by A. Daudé-Bancel, Pavlos Giannelias and M. Cortvriend. The Bulletin is published in both French and Flemish. Annual subscription of 30 French francs may be sent to Daudé-Bancel, 6 Rue de la Prevotière, Boisguillaume, Seine; or of 10 Belgian francs to Cortvriend, Cederlaan, Wilrijk. Mr. Cortvriend quotes a number of typical examples of increasing land values; for instance: Four hectares of land situated between the Chaussée d'Antin and the Madeleine in Paris were worth 5,700 francs in 1552; 606,000 frs. in 1775; and in 1930 they had a value of more than 80 million francs. Again, in the Rue Neuve of Brussels, after the 1914 war, frontages were worth 2,345 to 4,600 frs. per sq. metre; after the stabilisation, 4,750 to 11,200 frs. Several sales just before the last war seemed to indicate that in the most favourable commercial positions in Brussels and Antwerp, the value of the land was more than 10,000 francs per sq. metre.

This note is also made by E. Wickersheimer: "Think that in Paris, land which was sold in 1850 for 50,000 francs the hectare had a value of 12,000,000 francs per hectare in 1896 and without the merit or the work of any sort on the part of the proprietor. That is what made the fortune of the Rothschilds. . . . I call to mind a law which has been forgotten but not abrogated, the law of 1807, by which the State was to cash half the increased value given to land by public works. If that law were applied, the State would have something toward liquidation of the national debt."

Mr. Ivanoff, Clichy, France, writes interestingly of his own work in the Press, and he is busy on a number of articles as well as translations of English Georgeist pamphlets. In *l'Homme et la Vie*, organ of a Society called "Integration" which appears to have a mission of its own—the Editor, Girardin, very critical of anything else—Ivanoff had an article on "Great Men," naming among them Henry George. But the Editor who evidently had had more propaganda of the sort amused himself in a succeeding issue with a quip entitled "Solutions instead of Patchwork." Among the brave friends, he said, from whom he had received suggestions were those who spoke for Georgeism. "What's it all about? Put broadly, it is to replace all taxation by a tax only on the value of land in town and in country. Mining, agriculture, transport, exchange, building, education, the urban and rural milieux—are all these reforms necessary? Don't pester yourself—The Single Tax!" It seems that the Georgeists make sport of 'Integration.' So much the better, but, returning the compliment, we do say they make us a little sad." The Editor had his fling.

Mr. Cortvriend has successfully placed his article, "What is Georgeism?" in a number of papers. Besides those already named, there were the Normandy *Cité Nouvelle*, the weekly Socialist journal; also the Belgian *Volonté*, the democratic, social, economic and political weekly. A professor in Economics who is at present assisting Minister Spaak, caused publication in the latter instance and put his own postscript to it: "The next word is with the Minister of Finance." Mr. Cortvriend hopes to improve his acquaintance with the Professor.

### GERMANY

Mr. Rudolf Schmidt, of the Bund für Land und Freiheit, Nassauische Str. 54-55, Berlin-Wilmersdorf, acknowledges six parcels of miscellaneous books and pamphlets sent by the United Committee. Some of these he would have proceeded at once to translate and publish, but he regrets the circumstances which make that impossible, because at present the Bund is not yet licensed in Berlin itself, where the procedure—because of the four-Power administration—is more difficult and more protracted than in the Bi-Zone. For that reason the effort to gain official recognition of the Bund as an active agency is

meanwhile abandoned. The position is better in the Bi-Zone, where three branches of the Bund are operating under official recognition. There it may be possible to obtain a licence to publish, but the difficulty is the paper shortage, supplies being much more restricted than in Berlin, where paper produced in the Russian zone can sometimes be purchased in the black market. "If we might contemplate a modest monthly journal," Mr. Schmidt writes, "we could try to have it produced abroad. What we have in mind is an 8-page issue, say, 2,000 copies, which could be circulated from abroad to our members and friends individually or be sent in bulk to Berlin—that is, as soon as the use of the post for printed matter can be resumed. I have already made that suggestion to the friends in New York.

"To-day, since we are unable to publish our own Bulletin (even in typewritten sheets) we are obliged to carry on by means of personal correspondence with our leading members wherever they may be. We cannot influence the general public. We have to look on, impotently, at the experiments being made over the face of Germany with the so-called 'land reforms,' which have nothing whatever to do with land reform. In place of our abandoned Bulletin, I have established a working party of our old and active friends in various parts of the country who are in constant correspondence with one another. Their letters are sent to me and once a week I send a general circular to all the members of this group so that each is acquainted with what the others have to say about the problems that face us. In that way fundamental questions are clarified which will arise as soon as we can enter into the open with our proposals. This group is at the same time a sort of committee in permanent session prepared to take up the wider work at any moment.

"One thing, however, troubles me. Our best and most active colleagues are all associates of Damaschke, who died ten years ago; they are now so advanced in years that their aid cannot be relied upon much longer. My father, 68 years old, is the youngest of them. The two driving forces in the West are Dr. Liertz in Dusseldorf and Dr. J. P. Naab in Wiesbaden, both 78 years old. You can understand my real impatience. First, I much hope that those deserving men will see some results of their arduous endeavours and, secondly, I doubt if in the succeeding generations there are co-workers who will keep to the strict line of principle to which those men have been true. Younger people are inclined to accept compromises and, in my opinion, the ideas of Henry George dare not be whittled down by any compromise. A mistaken step on our road is worse than no step at all. If we are to make progress it is urgent that our able veterans shall have access to the public by the written and spoken word so that they can rightly educate the younger people who must follow on."

#### CANADA

Mr. Ashley Mitchell, in his report on his recent visit to Canada, made mention of Mr. Oscar Boellens, Montreal, who had organised a study class on *Progress and Poverty* in French. Mr. Boellens himself now writes: "We have just about finished our first fundamental course in French under Mr. Marcel Syvain's able leadership. Although a very busy man, Mr. S. has not missed one class during the nine sittings so far and it looks as if he will be ready to have another class in French right after the New Year. We started off with 19 students and 17 of them bought the French translation of the book. As usual, there has been a falling away of attendance for various reasons. We will finish up by five or six following the course through. Those of our students who had to give up owing to bona fide reasons were: One C.B.C. announcer who was transferred to Watrous, Saskatchewan; two business men and their wives because of pressure of business; one of my countrymen (Dutch) and his wife had to give up in similar circumstances, and another member had promotion at his work."

Mr. Boelens is ever active with his pen in Press and other correspondence. In the French and English Montreal newspapers he had taken opportunity to press for the taxation of land values and make full statements on its principles and policy. This was particularly applicable to street widenings in the city and to the proposed new underground tramway. As to the former, it

appears that the proposal from the City Council itself is that at least part of the cost be borne out of the land values of the region thus benefited and if that takes effect Montreal will be adopting at least a measure of taxation levied on the value of land apart from improvements. Mr. Boelens pushed the argument home to show that land value taxation should be of general application for all revenue purposes, with total exemption of buildings and improvements.

"I have been leading study classes in Henry George each year in my home for the last few years, followed by one on Protection or Free Trade. The average number who finish the course is between eight and ten. During the war years the majority of the students were connected with the armed services and consequently they have now left the city. However, we have a small permanent branch of the School of Social Science. I find LAND & LIBERTY a great help in our classes."—H. G. Barber, Ottawa.

#### PALESTINE

Published in the *Palestine Gazette*, No. 1637, of December 30th, 1947, is an Ordinance, the effect of which is to enable Municipal Corporations to levy a higher rate on the annual value of unimproved lands than upon other lands. It corresponds to an "undeveloped land tax." The Ordinance is entitled, the Municipal Corporations (Amendment No. 2) Ordinance, No. 60 of 1947, and it amends the Municipal Corporations Ordinance, 1934.

Dr. Bernard Ascher, Haifa, who gives us this news, comments: "I consider it as a first step in the direction of true Land Value Rating, but not more than a step, because it amounts to discrimination against the owners of vacant lands and fails, therefore, to give a remedy against *insufficient improvement*. It's progress, anyway."

The official bulletin of the United Nations General Assembly, A/AC.14/15 of the 13th October, 1947, has this item: "Ad hoc Committee on the Palestine Question. Communications received during the period 6th October to 12th October, 1947. . . . Letter dated 24th September from the Reverend M. J. Stewart, Bishops Stortford, England, submitting a copy of the September, 1947, issue of LAND & LIBERTY, containing on page 71 an article by Dr. Bernard Ascher, Haifa. This memorandum, which was forwarded to the Special Committee on 21st June, argues that there can be no solution to the Palestine problem until land prices are lowered which, it is suggested, could be achieved through site value taxation."

"I have enjoyed very much reading and keeping more or less in touch with what you are doing in Britain to promote the only kind of economic reform that can save our civilization. I have especially enjoyed LAND & LIBERTY. Were it not for the qualities of human integrity which give each true reformer an undying urge to meet his responsibilities as a creature of the Divine, it seems to me that most of us would give up in discouragement. I hope you will be able, always in the admirable work so well done."—S. C. Swezey, Kansas.

"I sympathise with the views expressed in LAND & LIBERTY. And I will go as far as to suppose that it is the only way to go if we want peace and justice to rule the world. The usual frequent objection to our 'Justice Union' is that it is too simple. People think that a remedy they quite understand is not sufficiently effective. They say, 'It sounds sensible enough but how will you do it, and can it be the proper means when so many clever politicians say that it would not do?' They don't grasp the fundamental law that the more laws, the more offenders; the more governmental interferences, the more interference is necessary."—Frode Nielsen, Risskov, Denmark.

"I hope you will be able to hold back the advancing tide of totalitarianism to some extent. Through a friend I get the *Sunday Times*, the *Observer*, and the air edition of the *Spectator*, so I am fairly well informed in respect of conditions in the U.K. The general run of citizens here are more illiterate, economically, than your people. Here, too, there is a marked tendency to regard government as an all-powerful god whose function is to bestow abundance upon the people without effort on their part."—D. E. Peddie, Vancouver.