

Mr. Heath finds more defects in his version of Henry George, but we can save ourselves further detail by moving to the heart of the matter. Why does he choose to attack Henry George? Why this captious heckling? The answer is stranger than fiction. After twenty pages of unrestrained denunciation, on page twenty-one Mr. Heath reveals that he himself advocates using land rent to defray public expenditure, even as Henry George! He states: "When the now separate site owners of great communities transform their separate ownership into corresponding undivided interests in the whole, in order profitably to supply community services and advantages to the inhabitants of their united properties . . .," and as they "diminish political burdens oppressing the enterprises of capital and labour," they will "thereby create new rents and vast new values." He would "maintain . . . needful community services out of the income and values thus created . . ."

He evidently envisages a sort of corporation of land owners, administering large blocks of land, taking over most of the functions of government, leasing sites to users, and thus financing public works and services.

With this dénouement Mr. Heath's motive becomes clearer. It seems a remarkable exhibition, to damn a man and embrace his principles. I judge Mr. Heath fears identification with one displeasing to the landed interests whose favour he courts. Some, if mistaken for Jews, denounce Jews. Evidently someone has taken Spencer Heath for a Georgeist.

How Georgeist is he? He agrees that production should be untaxed and unhampered, and public services financed from land rent. He differs over the form of government. George puts his hope in popularly elected representatives: Mr. Heath puts his in a landed élite. George would have any excess of land rent over tax needs accrue to society as a whole; Mr. Heath would skim it off for the governors. This is quite a difference. Mr. Heath's America would be a collection of company towns, paternalistically—or tyrannically—administered from the top. He trusts that the leaders, in their wisdom, will tax only themselves and provide ideal conditions for producers. He trusts that these little principalities will never war on each other, exploit their monopoly potential, or obstruct trade.

As between the two plans, I will stick with George's. Ghastly things have been done, it is true, in the name of democracy. But aristocracy and plutocracy have blacker records in history. Spencer Heath's corporate domains are but an Americanisation of the Spanish hacienda, the Roman latifundia, the feudal manor, and the colonial plantation. None of these made a good record for rewarding the useful and punishing the wicked.

Further objections to Mr. Heath's plan for corporate government will pour in upon all who consider its implications. His avowed purpose, to free production and exchange from taxes and controls, is superb. But his method will neither achieve the goal nor tolerate other social ideals, like democracy.

But what of the goal itself? Is it not exciting that two men, pondering social organisation from such different viewpoints, should come so close? Is there

some hope, after all, to resolve the dispute between Left and Right that threatens to split society into warring camps? Are Efficiency and Humanity, often represented as alternatives, actually compatible? George spoke for the dispossessed, and Heath for the landed. But each rose above the eternal squabble over distribution and saw a society free to produce its utmost as the goal of human organisation. And each wrote the same prescription: untax production, capital, and exchange; support government from ground rents. Does this not suggest some intrinsic merit in the idea?

Those liberals interested in welfare rather than power, and those conservatives interested in freedom rather than privilege, will find the policy advanced by Henry George one they can mutually support. The productive, be they called management or labour, can unite behind it in their common cause against parasites and obstructors, be they presumptuous regulators or non-functional land owners. Those who put their trust in private landowners to battle socialism had better look to Italy, Spain, England and France, where the state will confiscate and control everything except land. They should compare them with America, where a portion at least of the general property tax falls on land values, where production has been correspondingly less taxed, where the idea that a man owns himself and the things he produces is correspondingly further advanced. The spectacle of men receiving large incomes for doing nothing discredits large incomes in the public mind, and leads government to tax income from every source. The truth is, socialising land rent does not pave the way for socialising labour and capital, but obviates it. Conversely, when land owners contrive to divert reformers from taxing land values, they only insure a rapid advance of other taxes, controls, paternalism and decadence.

MASON GAFFNEY.

#### VICTOR GOLLANZ AND HENRY GEORGE

Mr. Victor Gollancz, author and London publisher, in his newly issued autobiography *My Dear Timothy* mentions (page 246) that he has read Henry George's works and writes: "While keeping an open mind about the doctrines of Henry George, so attractive in their promise of liberation by the easy enactment of a single reform, I was unable to escape the conviction that such easiness was altogether too easy, and that somewhere in those pages a fallacy must lie hid."

The diversity and universality of social problems, and the myriad remedies applied and recommended can blind even the most acute thinker to their single cause and their single resolution. The "conviction" that somewhere there must be a flaw in George's logic, and the failure to discover such a fallacy, is not uncommon, but Mr. Gollancz's admission is rare indeed and no credit to one of his moral and intellectual calibre.

**Progress and Poverty.** By Henry George. An inquiry into the causes of industrial depressions and of increase of want with increase of wealth—the remedy. Large-type library edition. 10s. 6d.

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