

been built up over the years by which control is exercised and potential dangers avoided; which really is to say the remarkable tradition which has been established by a body of men, themselves remarkable, with an ethical code and a stability that has earned the respect of the civilised world.

Like the trained, and first rate, reporter he is, Ferris does not omit to present the opposing points of view with which I began this review. But, like a reporter, he refrains from offering a conclusive opinion. In the process, he quotes, for instance, Professor Titmuss of the London School of Economics (from his book *The Irresponsible Society*) on the dangerous concentration of power in fewer and fewer hands — without offering a hint, any more than does the professor, that he is aware of the real basis of that power. To both of them, apparently, the power is in the manipulation of money. Only once in *The City* (in the chapters dealing so intimately and so entertainingly with take-overs and mergers) is there any reference to the foundation on which the monopoly power inherent in these devices rests, and then only in the oblique way by speaking of property values.

The fortunes represented by the colossal share issues by which these transactions are financed — as, for instance, in the great Clore campaign to take over Watneys Breweries, involving an offer of £20,000,000 — are clearly enough based on the rent potential of the “properties” concerned. Ferris says, “the Watney Board was aware of this particular goldmine,” meaning the under-valued “assets” in land. Watneys turned Clore’s offer down as “preposterous.” But Ferris says nothing to indicate that he is aware himself of anything wrong or even unusual in this traffic in “land values.” He is, of course, the impartial observer, the reporter taking notes. The opinion is for those who both run and read.

After reading *The City*, one is given to reflect on how long the system described could retain its present character and attraction for those who operate it, once the privilege of capitalising the rent of land was removed and, with it, the inhibiting effects of taxation on all commercial, industrial and financial activities. It seems obvious that, while the incentive behind the great fortunes being made in “property” deals would have disappeared, the enjoyment of legitimate business profits, intact from the depredations of the taxation authorities, would more than compensate. And gilt-edged stocks would then truly reflect the credit of a healthy economy and no longer earn the terrible indictment implicit in the term “gilt-edged” which Paul Ferris says is current among the victims of currency inflation.

These criticisms apart, *The City* is full of valuable information: on how the various mechanisms work, the stock market, insurance, bill broking, merchant banking; the history of London as a world financial centre; the Common Council of the Corporation of London; the office of Lord Mayor and the fascinating Livery Companies. It is a mine of intensely interesting and wittily written material for the student. The chapter on Lloyds alone is worth the price of the book. One cannot but agree, however, with one of the few comments Paul Ferris permits

himself, on the advantages of buying a company with a loss with which to offset your own taxable profits: “It all sounds a little crazy. Finance has a very special air of cloud-cuckoo land.” A result, of course, of the crazy economics on which our whole system is based.



E. P. MIDDLETON

WRITES FROM  
AUSTRALIA

**Subsidies—**

**Tariffs—**

**Controls**

NINETEEN SIXTY-THREE is the 175th Anniversary of the Founding of Australia. This is then an appropriate time to appraise the “state of the nation”; to examine what it is we have to celebrate in this 175th year of “growth”.

There’s plenty for us to get our teeth into. Population (10,705,121) increased by a million migrants since the end of World War II; sheep population: 157,714,000, wool clip worth £A338.5 million; the “Great Australian Car”, the makers of which are now a wholly-owned American private company who made a profit of £A15 million last year; the phenomenal growth of Australian secondary industries (under the umbrella of a sturdy policy of protective tariffs); and the fact that (almost) every Australian family now possesses at least one car, many thousands two or more. Saturation point is about reached in the home-installation of refrigerators, washing machines and television — at any rate in the cities. To these accomplishments we can now add unemployment, currently running at around the 100,000 mark.

A look at the major issues preoccupying press and politicians at this time discloses a number of things. There is, for instance, the argument about the sale of wheat to Communist China. One of our more picturesque politicians, Sir Wilfred Kent Hughes, has been saying it should be stopped, because, allegedly, China is using the wheat not to feed its peasants, but to feed its armies and is even re-selling a lot of it to Albania. Wheat farmers, on the other hand, enjoying a subsidised guaranteed price, have very strong views to the contrary — especially wheat men like Mr. G. F. Smart, of Western Australia, who has just harvested the largest crop ever grown on one property in Australia: half a million bushels, worth £A235,000. A more balanced and impartial view has been expressed by a leader-writer, who points out the dangers of dependence on China for the sale of this crop, the acreage of which

is expanding alarmingly under the encouragement of a subsidised guaranteed price.

Then there is the worry about international trade and overseas markets. Here we have the fascinating situation in which, on the one hand, the U.S. is threatening the E.E.C. with reprisals in the shape of withholding "Foreign Aid" against the market's exclusion of U.S. agricultural products, and on the other Australia being caustic to the U.S. about American quotas and prohibitions against Australian exports — while both maintain their own tariffs and indulge in pious talk about "improving world trade".

Occupying large areas of the Sydney daily press has been the N.S.W. Labour Government's rent restriction legislation, the Landlord and Tenant Act. Certain clauses of the highly contentious Act expired at the end of the year and the Government took the opportunity, not only to try to renew the life of the clauses but to add some new provisions, making a few minor concessions as "pill sweeteners". The Government's majority in the Lower House assured the passage of the new Bill, but the story in the Legislative Council was another matter. There, the Opposition, with the assistance of several so-called

"rebel" members of the Labour Party, threw the Bill out, to which the redfaced Government, led by its Minister of Justice (sic) threatened Orders-in-Council to "correct" the position. It has not yet dared to do this in the face of strong criticism from all sections of the community and warnings from members of the legal profession. The Bill has been withdrawn while the Government sucks its burnt fingers and thinks up the next move. Meanwhile, the two lapsed clauses make it no longer necessary for (1) a landlord to have owned "controlled" premises for two years before taking eviction proceedings; or (2) to provide other "suitable" accommodation for an evicted tenant of "controlled" premises. Meanwhile, too, the Home and Property Owners Rights Association is preparing to challenge the validity of the Landlord and Tenant Act in the courts, and letters pour into the newspapers from the victims of the invidious and inept legislation, including recently-arrived migrants, whose views of Australia are being sadly modified by their experience in seeking homes. Meanwhile, also, the *Sydney Morning Herald* could report "£A42,506,000 Building Boom in Small Sydney Area"; the area being part of the business heart of the city. Banks and insurance companies have no worries about where to lay their heads.

## Letter to the Editor

SIR,—May I say how much I always enjoy the Personally Speaking articles in your journal, perhaps because they show so clearly the wide appeal of Henry George's ideas. I particularly enjoyed the January contribution (*The Road to Realisation*), and before proceeding further would mention that I have recently used this article as an introduction to Georgeist philosophy to one or two enquirers.

As, however, the writer says that he accepts the idea of a "just war," I feel prompted to answer.

And yet it is not so much the idea of a just war that I question, as what are the "just" weapons that should be used to fight it. The conventional weapons of war are material, but—to make a gross understatement—these are too clumsy ever to come to grips on the real stage, where it is ideas that are at war with ideas.

There is no need to cite extreme instances, such as Hiroshima, because any occasion of resorting to material weapons is a mistake—unless you are simply trying to find out which sword is the stronger.

None of us, of course, is able to

say how he would act in any sudden situation. But of this we may be sure: that it will depend largely on how we have thought and acted in the quite ordinary moments of our life, when we had the time consciously to direct our thoughts and actions.

We become adept at the war of ideas in proportion as we are disenchanted with material weapons. But this is not all; for we find that if we go in this direction, other changes come about in our lives. For instance, it is impossible to continue thinking for long in this way without being attracted, sooner or later, to vegetarianism (to which Mr. Carter was sympathetic but did not embrace). This leads one in turn to appreciate the value of whole-foods, and our need to consume the greater part of our food uncooked. Further by doing this, one avoids a great deal of unnecessary illness; and should the need arise, the healing power of nature, tried and tested, makes one ever more sceptical of orthodox medical ways.

In case you should think that I am straying wide of Henry George's philosophy, may I say with all due

humility that in my view I am sticking very much to the point. There is a passage in *The Condition of Labour* that has always stood out in my mind. Henry George says that of the two sides to his reform — the ethical and the economic — the ethical is the more important, and that in his opinion it will need "nothing less than the religious conscience" to bring it about.

But the "religious conscience" cannot be sought in any one sphere of life, it must encompass the whole of life—it cannot do less. And for me the attraction of Henry George's ideas, and the attraction of pacifism, of vegetarianism and of nature cure is one and the same—the attraction of non-violence. Schweitzer has very well called it "reverence for life," and any treatment other than nature's is violence to the body—the thalidomide tragedy being, like Hiroshima, only an extreme instance of its kind.

All of these ideas are at war with their opposites, not because of any "just" cause, but by reason of their very nature, as is the way with ideas. They do not bear any material weapons, but instead a universal message of "peace, goodwill toward men."

Yours faithfully,

SHIRLEY-ANNE HARDY.

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