

LAND VALUES

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"OUR POLICY"

"We would simply take for the community what belongs to the community—the value that attaches to land by the growth of the community; leave sacredly to the individual all that belongs to the individual."—Henry George.

TWENTY-ONE YEARS

"I take the explanation of the differences which distinguish communities to be this: That each society, small or great, necessarily weaves for itself a web of knowledge, beliefs, customs, language, tastes, institutions and laws. Into this web, woven by each society (or, rather, into these webs, for each community above the simplest is made up of minor societies, which overlap and interlace each other), the individual is received at birth and continues until his death. This is the matrix in which mind unfolds and from which it takes its stamp. This is the way in which customs, and religions, and prejudices, and tastes, and languages, grow up and are perpetuated. This is the way that skill is transmitted and knowledge is stored up, and the discoveries of one time made the common stock and stepping-stone of the next. Though it is this that often offers the most serious obstacle to progress, it is this that makes progress possible."

"The advocates of a great principle should know no thought of compromise. They should proclaim it in its fullness, and point to its complete attainment as their goal. But the zeal of the propagandist needs to be supplemented by the skill of the politician. While the one need not fear to arouse opposition, the other should seek to minimise resistance. The political art, like the military art, consists in massing the greatest force against the point of least resistance; and, to bring a principle most quickly and effectively into practical politics, the measure which presents it should be so moderate as (while involving the principle) to secure the largest support and excite the least resistance. For whether the first step be long or short is of little consequence. When a start is once made in a right direction, progress is a mere matter of keeping on."—HENRY GEORGE.

"As I see it, there is only one thing to be avoided, and that is a divergence from the line thus far so successfully followed. As the single tax comes into practical

politics, all sorts of half-measures will be proposed—this is of the nature of things. Let not the light of LAND VALUES be hid under any such bushel, but let the full light of the gospel of Henry George be shed abroad. Let the people of half-measures work with such light as is given them, but let the light of the whole, pure single tax be raised higher and higher as the territory over which it is allowed to shine grows wider and wider. Laws will come if enlightenment is assured."—A. C. CAMPBELL.

A year ago we were peacefully looking forward to a celebration of our twenty-first anniversary number. To-day we seek as best we may to commemorate the event, but in what altered circumstances. We can scarcely stop to rejoice over the compliments and the good wishes so generously bestowed upon us from near and far. This cruel and devastating war seems to have changed everything and to have set back our cause along with all other progressive causes for a generation at least. Even now, after ten long weary months of war no man can foretell the end of the bloody struggle. The civilised world, so named, is bathed in blood and tears. Our people daily learn of relatives and friends cut off in the flower of their youth, or cast aside among the wounded and broken. Alas! it is the common experience.

Who could have foreseen or even dreamed twenty-one years ago of such a world catastrophe? Yet we knew that great neighbouring nations were already armed to the teeth; and as the years rolled on did we not witness their war-lords preparing for the day when their ghoulish and hellish work should begin? Did it not seem logical that with millions of armed men on either side of the opposing frontiers the odds were in favour of Armageddon; or was it that we pacifists thought to counteract and defeat this gathering force of might by our humane methods of progress and reform? If this was our purpose we have been defeated. The forces of reaction have won, and it is but poor consolation to think that the reactionaries as well as millions of innocent victims are to-day paying a bitter price for the triumph.

But we single taxers have to look to the future.

We have done our best with the resources at our command to uphold the standard of truth and justice, believing that a recognition of the principles we stand for would save civilisation and carry it, in the words of Henry George, to heights which none can measure. In this dark hour this is still our faith. What will be left to civilised society at the close of this awful tragedy is a question which none can hope to answer. The outcome of it all is in course of settlement to-day on many bloody fields. The parliamentarian has got himself into the soldier's uniform, and our fate is in the hands of those who are bravely and unselfishly giving life itself to conquer and subdue a despotism which would make Europe a perpetual military camp and militarism the dominating and controlling force in human affairs:

When this war ends we must resume our own campaign. We must enter the lists again in the war of Briton with Briton, of German with German and of Briton with German for a place in the sun, for a foothold on God's good earth to earn a decent living. This is the deeper cut we are out for. In vain is the appeal to men's higher nature, before we first of all face and settle with the laws which enable the few to levy tribute on the earnings of the workers, and to shut labour out from the natural wells and springs of life and industry.

This unnatural and unholy institution, property in land, is the chief menace to enduring peace. It is the bottom cause of labour unrest in all civilised countries, and its fruits are now being garnered in a carnage of hate and misunderstanding. If the publicly earned value of the land is not taken, as we advocate it should be taken, for the needs of the State, it must go to build up fortunes for private individuals. Such fortunes made up of the earnings of the disfranchised masses of men can only lead to discontent and worse; and the State, robbed of its natural revenue for its upkeep, must perforce turn to the Robin Hood method of making ends meet.

In the existing circumstances the root of the trouble and any guiding principle, is forgotten or ignored, while the passionate cry for relief from industrial distress goes up daily from the mass of the suffering poor. Gaunt poverty forms the background and the mainstay of the reactionary elements in our public life; it is this which will force our politicians and publicists to make up their mind to go one way or the other. It is either back to protection and barbarism or forward with Henry George to radical land reform and intellectual strength and moral progress. We cannot childishly continue to plead for fresh avenues to trade and commerce while maintaining a system of land tenure which permits one class in the community to raise the price of the raw material of all industry upon the producer, and a system of taxation which remorselessly bleeds enterprise at every turn.

We have not striven in vain these twenty-one years. There are signs of a better understanding abroad. If the fallacies of protection have not been sufficiently revealed, its danger to society has. The war has shown to many the real issues at stake and our Cobden Club school will soon have to reckon with new energies which will quicken and direct the thought aroused on such problems into the channels of real free trade.

We single taxers do not claim, we never have claimed, that our practical policy is all-embracing and that nothing more is required. What we do assert is that without our policy of economic emancipation nothing else will avail. We have said this time and again. The failure of free imports, misnamed free trade, together with the failure of Fabian palliatives proves our case.

Twenty-one years ago we set out to teach the philosophy of life as revealed by Henry George in *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*, to make plain his remedy for want and the fear of want and to arouse public sentiment in support of his practical policy. This is still our mission. Those who understand this policy and who give their adherence and support constitute a body of opinion of no mean dimensions. This was realised in the 1909 Budget campaign in Parliament and throughout the country. It was this that carried the Budget and made land valuation possible. Valuation and the $\frac{1}{2}$ d. tax on undeveloped land is the net gain in politics we have to put to the credit side of the agitation in this country. We have not gained much, but the political job we set out to do was perhaps rather more than we bargained for at the time. We saw more land ahead a year ago, but the cloud swept down upon us as it has often happened before to those who stand for social righteousness. When this cloud disappears, as it will some day, the forces which the paper stands for will speedily and firmly be placed in position. Our public will know how to meet the new alignments.

But *LAND VALUES* has developed other and it may be more important uses. It has made friends for the movement and has come to be recognised as the standard bearer of our crusade. In its stand for Truth and Justice, with or without success, the paper has won the approval and the admiration of a band of workers in the cause the world over, the significance of which cannot be over-estimated. We have their word for it that the paper has helped them and encouraged them in their own strenuous efforts. If those who have upheld the paper, those who have contributed by gifted pens, and otherwise, to its success desire any reward, here it is in this grateful and inspiring recognition.

The task we took in hand so readily twenty-one years ago is still before us. In one sense, it is lighter to-day, because of the services we can now command; on the other hand it is more onerous and exacting, because of the growth and development of the movement. But these new responsibilities are what we set out to realise, though we may not have given much heed at the time either to their character or to their weight. In those days we were young and not much given to dwell on results.

We have no new plans for the future nor any resolution to take as to any new course we intend to steer. Our faith and belief is now embodied in the democratic thought of the day. We stand in politics for first steps first, and there will be no divergence from the straight path we have held to in the past. We shall not compromise on principle, nor shall we hide our light under any half measure. We are for the half measures, or less, provided they are steps in our direction. We appreciate, we hope, to the full the difficulties of assailing the enemy so powerfully and deeply entrenched in the position he holds. All that we bargain for is the freedom we claim to state our full case. We do not hold ourselves to be the servants of the politicians, but rather regard them as the instrument, or the machinery, through which and by which, we must wend our way. We shall endeavour always to seek the line of least resistance, and we shall not fail to supplement this by upholding over our wide and far-reaching territory the full light of our inspiring gospel. However else we may have faltered by the way we have kept the faith and we mean to keep it.

J. P.

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