

Postbag

RENT FOR LAND IS WAGE FOR LABOUR

Sir,

"I believe" says Bryan Kavanagh "that we may now have the name for the Georgist movement so urgently needed....The name is *EarthSharing*".

"I have no doubt" says John Loveless "that the word which best describes what our policies could produce is *Unity*".

"Everybody knows" says Jan Pot "that the whole world listens and acts at the very moment you say *Money!!!*".

What *is* it that we pursue? The payment of site-rent to the public treasury. Why? Because this is a pure commercial exchange of services for services.

Let me explain.

The earth is there, at no cost price. Maybe you call it a 'gift' of nature. If there were no man on earth, the terms 'value' or 'worth' would have no meaning. If there were just one man on earth, nature would be of immeasurable value to him, for he could live from it. If there were two people on earth, the very best location would have an exchange-value. If there are many people on earth (as there are) they make use of a medium of exchange and the gifts of nature gain a money-value. So money for land is due to people being there; a value not due to an 'owner' but due to all the others. Moreover, some money, earned by you with your labour, goes to pay taxes, with which government lays out streets and roads, piping and cabling; provides police and fire brigades etc. That makes your location much more livable and valuable and increases the rental value. The rental value of your site is made by the co-operative labour of all (but is not rewarded in their pay envelopes).

On the other hand, you pay for that

rental value of your site, made by all, with money you have earned by your own labour. So paying rent to the common purse is a commercial exchange. As Bill Pitt calls it: services for services.

That's the reason why we urge that the site rent has to be paid to the public treasury. That is economically in balance. Today, in western countries, our economy is out of balance to the amount of a third of the national income. Money! Tapped by the legal owners of our nation. It's 'the power in the land' that governs past and future.

So what about 'sharing' and 'unity'? Act commercially! Barter economically. Stop the legal robbery of our money to the amount of all our taxpennies together.

Money!

Our aim is a quite normal commercial exchange.

'Their brains are in their pocket.'
'Hit them in their hip-pocket nerve.'
That's our focal point.

Money!!!

So what shall be the name of union?

Jan Pot
Lunteren, Holland

Sir,

As many long-time proponents of Henry George have no doubt found, the "Single Tax on the unimproved value of land" is not exactly an attention-grabber or sound-bite. In the present political climate, where even Britain's Labour Party fights shy of talking of taxation, clearly some other nomenclature is called for. (It is a far cry, indeed, from the days when Ramsay MacDonald could round on a jeering Hilaire Belloc and promise to eliminate the ruling class by means of

Income Tax, no less.) My own preferred form of words, instead of the Single Tax, is the Social Values Repayment. This phrase encompasses the other concerns that George had, as well as defining the nature of the fiscal relationship, free of overtones of imposition. The term 'social' may appeal to left-wingers (among whom George has had some allies), while the term 'repayment' may appeal to right-wingers (anxious to prevent people getting away with anything that is not their due). Alternatively, the title Returned Social Value Payment gives you the initials R.S.V.P., which could have a marketing potential.

At all events, it is necessary to suggest to a possible political constituency that the Henry George tax is above all else a *repayment*.

D.B.C. Reed
Northampton, England

Sir,

In his Autumn 1995 essay, the Rev. Archer Torrey writes: 'The ideas that humanism or the pursuit of pleasure are the motivations in life...'. Does he associate 'humanism' with 'the pursuit of pleasure' or are they two separate ideas? If the latter is meant, then one has to tell him that humanism is not a 'motivation'. Whatever he meant, he certainly needs to study the Humanist Theory of Morality and to contrast the evil effects, throughout history, of religious belief and its institutions with the achievements made by the critical intelligence of humanists.

For what has religion given to the world? Massacre, holy war, torture, oppression, vicious laws, discrimination, guilt, self-hatred, sexual panic, division.

Advances in history have been