

Justice and Rights

By **ROBIN RAYNHAM** (Avon, England)

Charles E. Byrne, in GJ No. 65, correctly argues that land value taxes when equal to the annual rent correctly determine how much each of us should pay (to the community or state) for the privilege of exclusive right of tenure to a location. I also agree that Henry George's central theme was justice.

But then Mr. Byrne goes on to say that "the largess of land rent must be equally divided among all people." Why this, when he has just correctly argued that the rent is what should justly be paid to the community or state? What is the point of then handing it all back to the payers, divided up in a different manner? The idea of a head tax "to pay for those functions of state that remain continually in place" is, or ought to be, abhorrent to all Georgists.

I do agree with Mr. Byrne that equal rights to land is the important thing, but would add that land rent is the whole income due to government.

On another, but related topic, human rights are supposed to be an "in" thing at the moment and there are now some half-dozen conventions and codes of practice which governments are supposed to observe.

Despite this, there is still no recognised legal right to: Freedom of conscience; dissent from the system of government in use; the product of one's own labour; the right to land.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everybody has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services." I presume that if he is denied access to the land he needs in order to earn a living (or to a job because of a slump brought about by land speculation), then the government must have a duty to provide these things for him? It's a sad world!