

LAND&LIBERTY

No 1244 Autumn 2018

PO Box 6408, London, W1A 3GY
+44 (0) 800 048 8537
editor@landandliberty.net

Editor
Joseph Milne

Managing Editor
Jesper Raundall Christensen a-m-m

Graphics and Production
Jesper Raundall Christensen a-m-m

Publisher *Henry George Foundation*

To receive Land&Liberty or support the work of the Henry George Foundation contact us at the address above.

Land&Liberty has chronicled world events for over 100 years. It has offered a unique perspective with its reports, analysis and comment on the core issues of political economy. And that uniqueness remains. Land&Liberty aims to explore how our common wealth should be used - and to demonstrate that this is the key to building the bridge of sustainability between private life, the public sector and our resources - between the individual, the community and the environment. Land&Liberty - putting justice at the heart of economics.

Copyright in this and other Land&Liberty publications belongs to the Henry George Foundation, which welcomes approaches for the reproduction of articles. However, reproduction is prohibited without prior written permission of the copyright holders. No responsibility will be accepted for any errors or omissions or comments made by contributors or interviewees. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the publishers. Goods and services advertised are not necessarily endorsed by the publishers. Land&Liberty is produced by the Henry George Foundation and printed by Premier Print Group on 100% recycled paper.

ISSN 0023-7574



The Henry George Foundation is an independent economic and social justice think tank and public education group with offices in London and members throughout the UK. The Foundation deals in cutting-edge ideas, exploring and promoting principles for a just and prosperous society and a healthy environment.

The Henry George Foundation of Great Britain is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England, no. 00956714, and a charity registered in England under the Charities Act 1960, no. 259194.

www.HenryGeorgeFoundation.org

www.landandliberty.net
follow us on Twitter @landandliberty

message from the honorary president

There come moments in our lives that summon all our powers—when we feel that, casting away illusions, we must decide and act with our utmost intelligence and energy. So in the lives of people come periods especially calling for earnestness and intelligence.

We seem to have entered one of these periods. Over and again nations and civilizations been confronted with problems which, like the riddle of the Sphinx, not to answer was to be destroyed; but never before have problems so vast and intricate been presented. This is not strange. That the closing years of this century must bring up momentous social questions follows from the material and intellectual progress that has marked its course.

The opening sentences of Henry George's *Social Problems* bear repeating as *material and intellectual progress* now presents us with a still starker challenge. The failure to meet such a challenge at the end of the nineteenth century led to the catastrophes of the first half of the twentieth century; failure today is likely to be far more serious. George illustrates how man's intellectual and material progress is due the fact that man is by nature a social creature. People are not independent but interdependent as every individual is but part of a greater unity. Starting within a unity where the bond is naturally love and caring for each other; history shows us how this interdependent unity may naturally extend through cooperation and trade to embrace ever widening circles of humanity. Science, philosophy and religion alike show how this interdependent unity extends to embrace the whole universe. George further reasons:

In this progression which begins with man, as in that which leads up to him, the same law holds. Each advance makes a demand for higher and higher intelligence. With the beginnings of society arises the need for social intelligence—for that consensus of individual intelligence which forms a public opinion, a public conscience, a public will, and is manifested in law, institutions and administration. As society develops, a higher and higher degree of this social intelligence is required, for the relation of individuals to each other becomes more intimate and important, and the increasing complexity of the social organization brings liability to new dangers. [...]

Social progress makes the well-being of all more and more the business of each; it binds all closer and closer together in bonds from which none can escape. He who observes the law and the proprieties, and cares for his family, yet takes no interest in the general weal, and gives no thought to those who are trodden under foot, save now and then to bestow alms, is not a true Christian. Nor is he a good citizen. The duty of the citizen is more and harder than this.

The intelligence required for the solving of social problems is not a thing of the mere intellect. It must be animated with the religious sentiment and warm with sympathy for human suffering. It must stretch out beyond self-interest, whether it be the self-interest of the few or of the many. It must seek justice. For at the bottom of every social problem we will find a social wrong.

The social wrong George refers to here may be seen as both incorrect and untrue - unjust, dishonest and immoral. It has its root in the mistake individuals make when, in their mind, they claim as 'exclusively mine' what is merely 'for use' in fulfilling a wider purpose or when a society allows some individuals to assume duty free 'ownership' (as distinct from conditional possession) of something that nature or society as a whole has provided.

David Triggs
Honorary President
Henry George Foundation

henrygeorgefoundation@googlemail.com

