

# INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR LAND VALUE TAXATION AND FREE TRADE

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13th December, 1946.

*Ans Jan 18*

Dear Anna George,

It is some time since I had your very kind and most interesting letter of October 30th. But now I have got my Dictaphone in good order and have got busy with numerous letters. There is a tremendous batch of them from overseas and these letters make me very proud to think that I am sitting here as it were in the centre of things enjoying the privilege of conversations with so many wonderful friends.

I gave Ashley Mitchell a whole batch of these letters to read and he is passing them on to Mr Wilfrid Harrison so that both of them can have some conception of the "conversations by post" which take place. As soon as I have finished answering the new batch these good friends will have a look also at this further collection.

To-morrow Lily and I are having lunch with Peggy Calder and shortly after, in a few days, Peggy and her mother and the two children Ronald and Barbara will be at our home spending a Sunday afternoon. What a tremendous lot we have to talk about going over the personal history of the last few years!

Arnold Schwartz, Peggy's husband, is likely to be able to make a visit to this Country very soon. Peggy has got her old job in London and is very happy. She has quite settled down, because the two children have been sent to school in Wimbledon.

I can well believe that you have had a thrilling time in New York with all those famous Statesmen roaming about the City and making their proclamations of one sort or another. But <sup>alas</sup> these Statesmen have little if any understanding of the deeper causes of war and of the solution which will lead the world to real peace and real prosperity.

You ask me a number of question: some of which I am not able to answer. You ask whether I am acquainted with V.K. Krishna Menon, but I am not acquainted with him or with his standing. Also you ask about Kenneth Fairfax but I have heard nothing of him for a number of years. I believe he was engaged upon one of the large papers probably it was the weekly John Bull: and the last time I did speak with him I found that he had become quite a Communist.

/I was

I was pleased to get the report of the planting of the oak tree in Central Park. That was a grand thing which Agnes did and she has all our warm congratulations.

In the present "Land & Liberty" I have made mention of the display about the School which was in a big window in one of the New York stores. I hope that will have brought many and new students for the school.

You ask whether it is the case that unused land in England is free from tax. That is true. However valuable a piece may be, if it is not used it is assessed as having no value at all because our standard of assessment is the rent which any property could command if it were let for a year in its existing condition. Accordingly by that definition no rent could be obtained for land which has no improvements upon it and therefore it is free from any assessment. Also if there is land with any building upon it and that building stands empty without an occupant then these premises are exempted from any taxation. The only exception to all this is that when a person dies his estate is valued for death duty and it is only in these circumstances that any valuable unused land is subject to taxation. I will send you Mr Douglas's pamphlet which is entitled "Rating and Taxation in the Housing Scene". It describes very faithfully our present tax system.

We do not hear much from Mr Douglas now. He is an extremely busy man as Governor of Malta and on the other hand he never was a man to write long letters. He has as his secretary Arthur Batty one of the most brilliant young men in the Single Tax System and so we have lost two able men so far as the work of the movement in this Country is concerned. But of course both of them will be back some time or other.

The latest section of your "Citizen of the World" which I have is No. 12 in No. 2 Volume 5 January 1946 of the Journal of Economics and Sociology. But I have received the Journal itself, I mean the whole volume, for April 1946, July 1946 and October 1946. That brings your biography of Henry George down to the "Sullivan Controversy".

Please tell the Editor of the Journal "Economics and Sociology" that the following numbers are missing from my set of volumes and I should much like to have them, they are: Volume 4 October 1944, January, 1945, April 1945 and July 1945. Also Volume 5 October 1945 and January 1946. I do wish I had much more time for reading because there are many excellent articles in these Journals which I should like to make use of in "Land & Liberty".

Meanwhile as I write, there is a great collection of matter to be looked into including all the raw material for the next issue of "Land & Liberty". Fortunately however we are much better situated now in the office because we have a new Assistant in the person of

Mr V. H. Blundell and also a lady Shorthand typist. Nevertheless, just as the staff increases so does the work, and truthfully speaking I have no more leisure than I used to have.

I agree with you that you and I ought to be in that train from Paddington to Plymouth so that we could have a real long con'fab with one another.

\* That paper of mine which was given at the Killarney Conference has been published in pamphlet form and I enclose a copy to you.

Warmest wishes for a Good New Year and love from us in which Lily and Jean gladly join.

Yours Ever,

*Arthur*

\* In separate cover.