

# The Freeman

*A Monthly Critical Journal of Social and Economic Affairs*

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June, 1938

Five Cents

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## The Freeman

### A Monthly Critical Journal of Social and Economic Affairs

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## An Announcement

With this issue I am retiring from the editorship of *The Freeman*. This journal is now permanently established and, thanks to the aggressive promotion work of its publisher, enjoys the largest circulation of any Georgist periodical in the world and one that compares favorably with those of other journals of social criticism. The editorial direction is being left in safe, capable and devoted hands. The unstinting cooperation of editors, officers, contributors, clerical volunteers, readers and supporters has built an effective instrument in the campaign against economic illiteracy; it should be a source of satisfaction to all of us to know that as the campaign widens, the effectiveness of this instrument will multiply.

Will Lissner.

## A Statement

In taking over the editorship of *The Freeman*, I ask the indulgence of our readers. For it is with understandable trepidation that I assume a duty for which no one knows better than I the lack of professional training I bring to it.

What makes the job more formidable is the ideal which has been set for me during these past eight months by Will Lissner. Had he not done so well I would not feel the magnitude of the undertaking.

On the other hand, the job Will has done in establishing definite standards, in policy and in format, will be of real value in helping me to carry on. The hard work of starting the publication is over. To him



## LAND and FREEDOM

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OF SINGLE TAX PROGRESS  
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EDITED BY

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I owe a debt of gratitude which I shall try to repay by continuing to make *The Freeman* an interesting monthly interpretation of events in the light of Georgist philosophy.

A public expression of personal attachment is indelicate and a useless intrusion on the reader's time. Yet I do wish that every reader of *The Freeman* knew Will Lissner as I know him—for a man of such parts is well worth knowing.

F. C.

## The Essay Contest

As this issue of *The Freeman* went to press, the judges in this journal's essay contest were beginning to ballot on the merits of the various entries. Announcement of the results of the balloting will be made in the following issue—The Editors.

# Milk River Tests the Rent Tax

By Fred Pease

The original site of the village of Milk River, owned by the Alberta Railway and Irrigation Company, was subdivided by the company in the year 1909. Since that year three further subdivisions, owned by the company and its successors, the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, have been added to the original site. In the year 1912 the community became a corporate body, known as the "Village of Milk River."

In the years prior to 1912 public revenue was collected from the subdivision by the provincial government and was procured from land value taxation only. Following incorporation and the need for greatly increased revenue the usual agitation for the taxation of improvements was presented, and as improvements increased this sentiment became still more pronounced.

This, of course, is the usual procedure in all new settlements but at this point the village of Milk River leaves the well beaten path. The proposal to exempt improvements and continue the taxation of land values was defended by a small but ardent group of Georgists who had made this community their home.

In so far as village authority extends, Milk River is on a strictly land value tax basis. With the exception of a nuisance tax on dogs, every dollar which is expended is derived from ground rent. Land values, plus improvements, are assessed and levied upon for public school purposes. Our school district includes land outside of the village limits and the provincial authorities direct the method of collection of revenue for school purposes so that improvements in the village are assessed and taxed for school purposes.

The policy of collecting economic rent has been carried to a point where it has become unprofitable for anyone to hold land out of use in anticipation of an increment in its value. The result is that nearly all unimproved land has been acquired by

## A Canadian Laboratory

(The municipal application of the social appropriation of rent is not a mere theory but a practise, and a very successful one where it has been fully applied. One of the localities where this system of municipal finance has undergone a practical test is Milk River, Alberta, Canada. Milk River's experience is described by Fred Pease in an interview reported by Charles Pittsworth of The Lethbridge, Alta., Herald. Mr. Pease, a student of economics for forty-seven years, has served on the village council for thirteen years, four of them as mayor. He is known throughout the province as the father of the land value tax system and is one of a group of followers of Henry George in the village, including such men as J. B. Elbert, who are among the most intelligent and devoted in the movement.—The Editors.)

the village under tax recovery proceedings and is readily available, by lease or purchase for a nominal sum, to those wishing to use it.

No difficulty has been experienced in raising revenue sufficient for the needs of the village. The small loss due to abandonment of unimproved land by speculative holders is more than offset by the additional use to which land has been put.

Laboring men have found it possible to build small homes rather than pay high rents.

Farmers have built homes in the village for winter residence and business men have been able to refuse to pay high rents demanded for use of business premises because they have found it possible to obtain favorable sites on which to build without having to pay capitalized ground rent to a landlord.

Our main problem is to decide how to expend increasing revenue to the best advantage as we find it nec-

essary to increase the land value tax in order to prevent speculative holding of land.

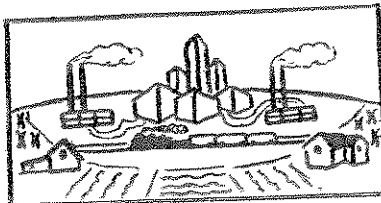
It must not be supposed the progress of the social land value taxation movement in Milk River has been all clear sailing. It has been a continual struggle. We have faced and still face the most bitter opposition. The opposition of land owners in the village has to a great extent disappeared but there is abundant evidence that large vested interests throughout the province are very much opposed to what they are pleased to call our policy of "confiscation" of land.

Successive provincial governments, too, have clearly indicated their lack of sympathy toward our policy. Some years ago the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, then owners of practically all unimproved land in the village, engaged us in litigation in connection with our policy of "confiscation." We were able to defend our policy successfully in the courts.

During 1927 the provincial legislature enacted legislation compelling villages to assess improvements at two-thirds of their actual value and to levy on that assessment at the same rate as the levy on land values. This legislation, of course, completely upset our policy of raising revenue exclusively from land values.

Alone and unaided this village fought for an amendment permitting villages to decide for themselves whether or not improvements would be assessed and taxed and after two years of unremitting effort the village succeeded in obtaining the enactment of the desired amendment. It promptly returned to the policy of raising all revenue from a tax on land values exclusive of improvements.

During the two year period when continuance of the Georgist policy was in doubt, land values rose rapidly and practically all unimproved land was acquired by a few speculators who hoped to make a profit from the normal growth of the village and the demand for land.



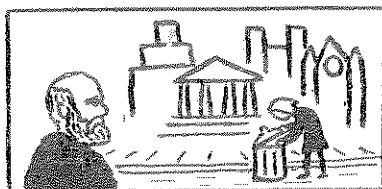
With the return to the social land value tax and exemption of improvements from taxation their hopes vanished and they allowed their holdings to revert to the village. As before stated, the loss in revenue from these unimproved lands is insignificant when compared to the advantages which are to be derived by the whole people from the increased accessibility to land for business purposes and home building.

In conclusion it may be pointed out that the village is in sound financial condition. It has no indebtedness whatever and it carries over at the end of each fiscal year a surplus of approximately the amount of the current year's tax levy.

Public improvements compare quite favorably with those of any village of its approximate size in the province and because of the general absence of speculative holdings of land the development of the village has been orderly and compact, which makes for economy and efficiency in carrying out public improvements. Milk River has the finest graded streets and drainage of any village in southern Alberta. Public services show a similar record. Residents needing hospitalization or indigent aid are promptly taken care of out of the treasury funds.

In 1929 the village eliminated all taxes on improvements and placed the complete burden of public revenue collection on land values. At that time the village was in debt to the bank over \$1,500. Today, the village does not owe a dollar, with a surplus of \$2,760 cash on hand.

The municipal authorities do not desire to accumulate a large surplus in the treasury year by year, but to give it back to the people who paid it in, by public improvements, labor and services without additional levy on improvements. It works and has been very successful and satisfactory to the ratepayers of this village.



## O TOMB OF CULTURED, KINDLY MEN!

MY CITY . . . Rich, hemm'd thick all around with the sailships and steamships, an island sixteen miles long, solid-founded . . . Numberless crowded streets, high growths of iron, slender, strong, light, splendidly uprising toward clear skies . . . tides swift and ample well-loved by me, toward sundown . . . The flowing sea-currents, the little islands, larger adjoining islands, the heights, the villas . . . The countless masts, the white shore-steamers, the lighters, the ferryboats, the black sea-steamers well modell'd . . . The downtown streets, the jobbers' houses of business, the houses of business of the ship merchants and money-brokers, the river-streets . . . The carts hauling goods, the manly race of drivers of horses, the brown-faced sailors . . . The summer air, the bright sun shining, and the sailing clouds aloft . . . The winter snows, the sleigh-bells, the broken ice on the river, passing along up or down with the flood-tide or ebb-tide . . . The mechanics of the city, the masters, well-form'd, beautiful-faced, looking you straight in the eyes . . . Trottoirs thronged, vehicles Broadway, the women, the shops and shows, a million people—manners free and superb—open voices—hospitality—the most courageous and friendly young men, city of hurried and sparkling waters! City of spires and masts. City nested in Bays! MY CITY!

Walt Whitman. 1819-1892.

## Fascism's U. S. Champion

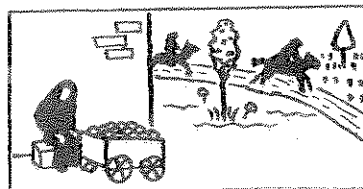
For good and sufficient reason, one man in America sees eye to eye with Mussolini. He reports that in Italy all taxes on real estate are levied against its net income, which is simply the gross income minus maintenance and operating costs. No effort is made to establish an "imaginary" sales price for each property, as in this country. In other words, where land has no income it is free from taxes; no levy is made on capitalized rent, immediate or potential. This is the heaven the land speculator always dreams of.

MY CITY . . . A sparkling mass of diversified wealth greater than any other mass fused together by concerted human labor. An island created by God and completely covered and concealed from the eye of the new-born child by mortgages, deeds, leases and keepoff signs . . . institutions of learning teaching the conventions desired by the institutors . . . beautiful institutions, some Gothic, some Roman, some Greek, displaying the esthetic, hiding the land question, therefore pathetic . . . Pierre's, Cartier's and the Missions . . . numberless crowded tenements, numberless empty buildings . . . crowded streets, fenced-in empty lots . . . the downtown streets, the jobbers' houses of business, empty, no jobs, but much blue sky . . . the winter snows, the beggars sleeping protected from the cold in subways, happy dreams perhaps of mother and younger days in the open . . . the broken ice on the river passing with the tide sometimes up sometimes down, children at the dead-end sucking ice . . . debutantes at the other end not interested in the real problem of rent, sipping frappés . . . Hospitality, for so much . . . courageous and friendly young men and women willing to work and marry but who cannot afford it . . . city of hurried peoples (if they would only think) . . . City of Spires and Masts of sights and blasts . . . City nested in bays and watched over so attentively by the landlord . . . MY CITY! MY GOD!

R. Joseph Manfrini, 1938.

This American champion of fascism is Herbert V. Nelson, executive vice-president, National Association of Real Estate Boards. His statement is head-lined in the real estate section of the New York Tribune. When fascism comes to America, who will be its backers?

—F. C.



# Coin Slogan, Dodge Tax

By Harry Gunnison Brown

A recent article by Buell W. Patch in Editorial Research Reports urges direct taxation of all incomes above the subsistence level. Citing Senator LaFollette and others, the author contends that this would make many more citizens tax conscious, that a graduated income tax conforms to the principle of ability and that indirect taxes do not conform to this principle.

Alas and alack. When will "liberals" stop mouthing the word "ability" and get down to some real analysis of the tax problem? Probably never, for our supposedly progressive groups, including our political leaders of the most reputedly "liberal" proclivities, seem to have been completely sold on the "ability" slogan and concern themselves little or not at all with the matter of sources. The income tax is very wonderful, they think, because it can be based on "ability," and the ultra-liberal among them and those of quasi-communistic bent can glory in the thought that their favorite tax provides a way to "soak the rich."

It may, indeed, be very well contended that income from constructed capital, such as buildings, machines, orchards and steamships, is as truly earned as is income from work. For those whose saving has made the construction possible have benefited the community by whatever additional output this capital enables the industrial system to produce. Perhaps, therefore, if our people are determined to tax incomes of all kinds regardless of source, it might be plausibly argued that income from capital should bear no heavier burden than comparably measured income from labor.

But the method of measuring the income from capital and from labor, respectively, surely ought to be comparable. And in the case of income from capital, repairs and an allowance for depreciation are subtracted before there is reckoned any net income to tax. Only that income which,

if depreciation is regularly put aside and wisely invested, would go on forever, is taxed.

How about the income from labor? Do we subtract an allowance for repair of the source of the income and a further allowance for depreciation of this source, before we reckon the taxable income? We do not. And because we do not, the income tax bears more heavily on the incomes men earn by their work than on the incomes earned by their accumulated capital. No wonder owners of property when they can't arrange to have the public needs taken care of by commodity and sales taxes on the poor, eagerly "whoop it up" for income taxes as the next best way to get "tax relief for real estate."

But there is a far more fundamental distinction which our professional "liberals," whether in public life or in editorial sanctums, never stress and to the understanding of which by the common run of folks they never make any contribution. This is the distinction between income on capital which would not have come into existence except for the owners' saving and which really adds to the wealth-producing efficiency of industry, and, on the other hand, income from ownership of the earth.

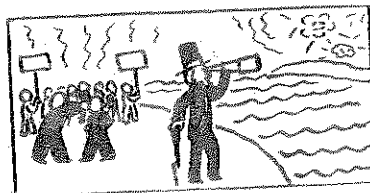
New York Harbor was made by geological forces operating before the dawn of history. With the settlement in the continental United States of over a hundred million persons, spreading out from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and with the building of roads and railroads converging on this harbor, the demand for men and women to work in and about New York City, in transshipping goods from railroads to steamships and vice versa, in manufacturing, in banking and in other lines serviceable to the

entire country, and the demand for men and women as clerks, taxi drivers, waiters and waitresses and in other work have come to be very great.

In order that the needs of all the people of the United States may be adequately served, millions of persons must live near and around New York Harbor. And those comparatively few who own this part of the surface of the earth can charge the workers literally hundreds of millions of dollars every year for granting these workers permission to work and to live where the rest of the people of the United States must have them work and live if their work is to be done effectively.

Is there no difference between an income received by an individual from an orchard he has planted or a boat he has built or share in a factory the construction of which his saving has helped to make possible, and, on the other hand, an income which owners of the earth about New York Harbor can secure as the price of permitting work to be done there and permitting men and women to live there? Is there no distinction which such contributors and editors think worth emphasizing, in their enthusiasm for the rights of the common man, between an income based on individual contribution and an income secured by charging others for community-produced location advantages?

If the custom had developed of allowing individuals to secure income by charging other persons for permission to sail boats on the ocean and on lakes and rivers, and the general public had come to take the custom as a matter of course, it seems pretty certain that our conservative tax "experts," our "high-brow" magazine editors and our literary intelligentsia in general, would also take the custom as a matter of course; and the "intellectuals" of radical proclivities, along with the "experts" would claim they could see no difference between such income and income from man-made capital.





They would seek eagerly to have taxes based on "ability" so that the executive who received \$20,000 a year for efficient work, the retired worker who received \$20,000 a year from capital the construction of which his saving had made possible, and the man who received \$20,000 a year for permitting steamboats to operate on his personal section of the Hudson River or of Lake Erie, could all be taxed at the same rate.

They would discover various economic likenesses between lakes and factories to show that there was no real basis for any difference in tax policy. They would insist that the important thing was to "soak the rich" and not to worry about such unimportant trifles as differences in the source of incomes.

And presumably they would discover plausible reason for a similar attitude if some persons were charging others for the enjoyment of the sunshine!

\* \* \*

Meanwhile, the more conservative writers and tax advisors and "experts" would vociferously seek "tax relief for lakes and rivers" and "tax relief for sunshine" as a means of helping the common people, and they would point out how necessary it was to "broaden the tax base" so as to make more people "tax conscious" or to levy sales taxes so as to make everybody "tax conscious."

I hope it will not appear to the reader that I am trying to arouse any undue sympathy for the person with a \$75,000 income who, because of a graduated income tax, must contribute a large amount to government. But I do want to emphasize that an income from property ought to be distinguished from an income gained by labor. And especially do I insist that an income derived from capital which is brought into existence by labor and saving and which adds to the wealth-producing efficiency of the community's industry must be distinguished from income that an individual gets through being able to make others pay him for permission to work on and live on the earth and to enjoy community-produced advantages.

If we do not make this latter distinction, we penalize efficiency in serving the community. If we do

## FREE SCHOOLS, BETTER, WORSE, THAN NONE

By Bolton Hall

(In the following article Mr. Hall discusses the issue, why public schools, from the viewpoint of radical laissez-faire liberalism. The issue was discussed from the opposed viewpoint of radical social liberalism by Dr. John Lawrence Waldman in the April number.—The Editors.)

In a recent issue *The Freeman* raised the issue, "Why safeguard our public schools?" My answer would be, under present conditions, probably free schools are like what Carlyle said about gush:

"Beautiful, noble sentiment—like calico gauze, beautiful and cheap. Behold! thou art infinitely better than nothing—and also worse."

Under free conditions we should and would destroy them. Schools are misnamed "free" which are paid by taxation. What we really do is, having under the forms of law robbed the worker so thoroughly that he doesn't feel that he can afford to pay for such schooling as he would like to give his children, we then tax him some more in order to es-

tablish "free schools" to which he is compelled to send his children.

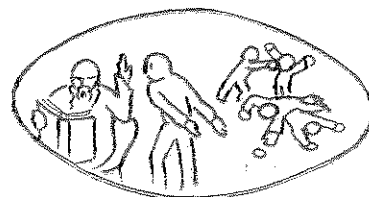
Naturally, a school run by the Government will not teach anything that the Government does not like; and the Government assumes all kind of control of what the teachers teach or do. For example, no teacher could hold his job who proclaimed himself a Communist, an Anarchist or a Bolshevik, or, even a radical thinker. We go so far as to decree whether the teacher should or should not marry.

Germany has the most thorough-going system of such schools, so good and so cheap that, as I am informed, private schools are unknown in Germany; so that, if you want a child educated at all, you must have him educated governmentally, and so, mentally enslaved; that is, that the first of the many things he is taught to do is to salute the flag, to praise the Powers that be, and to Obey. Incidentally, the child gets a lot of militarism and regimentation.

Hitler found a race of slaves ready to bow down to him.

not make it, we penalize thrift and the accumulation of capital. If we do not make it, we leave to the owners of sites, however progressive may be our income tax, a large part of the community-produced annual rental value of land. If we do not make the distinction, we facilitate speculative holding of land. If we do not make it, we open the way for high sale prices of land, with slums and congestion, with inadequate playground space and with wide-spread tenancy in place of easy ownership of homes by those who live in them.

Is it to be our "liberals," our "friends of the people," our radical "high-brow" magazines and our New Deal enthusiasts, to whom we shall finally owe these consequences?



## Facing the New Barbarians

A new political party, the National Progressives, was born recently in Madison, Wisconsin. Its proclamation of principles contains "five points." One looked for something new in this platform, something different from what is customarily found in political platforms. There was no disappointment. The novelty: "We will build stockades and forts to safeguard our industries."

—F. C.

## Hess Against Society

The sidewalks of New York are not entirely public property. There's a triangle, only two feet on each side, that's purely monopoly privilege, for it bears this inscription: "Property of the Hess estate which has never been dedicated for public purposes." It is necessary to "trespass" on this triangle in order to enter a busy Greenwich village cigar store. The store tenant pays the Hess estate a rental for the use of the triangle, and the estate pays a nominal land tax.

—F. C.

# Toward a Sound Urban Land Policy

By Wayne D. Heydecker,  
Director of State Planning,  
State of New York

## V.

After twenty-one years of zoning experience most of the zoning ordinances still permit building bulk developments so greatly in excess of any that are likely ever to occur, and so much more area has been zoned for business than will ever be used for such purposes that in the aggregate they do not control or limit congestion, they encourage more congestion. As a result miles of street frontage zoned for business lie fallow. Business will probably never have need of it. Homes are not likely to be built there while the business zoning stands. Only filling stations, garages and hot dog stands develop in these areas blighted by such improper zoning.

If zoning is to develop to its full utility as a tool in the shaping of our cities, legal sanctions must be found for the limitation of areas zoned for business to something reasonably approximate to their probable future development.

The constitution of the State of New York says in Article I, Section 10:

"The people of this state in their right of sovereignty, are deemed to possess the original and ultimate property in and to all lands within the jurisdiction of the state; \* \* \*"

In furtherance of that solemn declaration, too often forgotten, it is submitted that a sound urban land policy, conceived in the spirit of conserving those constitutional rights for all the people, while at the same time dealing justly with those to whom under our present laws and practice the management of such lands has been temporarily entrusted, might conceivably include the following:

### I. Preparation of Plans

1. In every municipality and county an official planning board competently manned and adequately financed, a master plan, an official map and a zoning ordinance.

(The fifth section of the notable paper, "A Suggested Municipal Land Policy for the State of New York," concludes Mr. Heydecker's summary of personal views. The paper was presented here through the courtesy of William P. Capes, editor, "Proceedings of the New York State Conference of Mayors and Other Municipal Officials." Comment and criticism is welcomed.—The Editors.)

2. The development of plans for self-contained neighborhoods, with some appropriate form of legalized neighborhood organization, to work with the local planning board in the development of such neighborhood plans.

3. Master plans for the development of each county as already provided by statute, such master plans in turn to be harmonized with state plans.

4. Local planning laws, so amended as to permit local governing bodies to appoint the county planning board as their agent in all local planning matters.

## II. Regulation of Private Property

1. The modernization of all zoning maps and ordinances to provide more effective limitations as to permissible bulk of buildings, and to reduce the excessive areas now allocated to business, apartments and other intensive uses.

2. Legal sanctions to permit the zoning of land in open areas for specialized uses not now included within enabling acts, such as agriculture, recreation, foresting, watershed purposes, flood control and the like.

3. County zoning ordinances for unincorporated territory.

4. A requirement that before adopting or amending local zoning ordinances the governing body of

each municipality should be required to procure thereon an advisory opinion from the county planning board.

## III. Subdivision Control

1. Authority to county planning boards to pass upon plats (townsite development plans) in unincorporated territory.

2. Authority to cities and villages, where they so desire, to designate county planning boards to act for them in passing upon subdivisions.

3. A requirement that other city and village planning boards should procure an advisory report from the county planning board before passing finally upon a plat with perhaps a three-fourths vote of the local planning board required to over-ride an adverse report by the county planning board.

4. Authority to all planning boards to require that as a condition precedent to the final approval of a plat, the developer at his own expense should install or give bond to install the physical street improvements deemed by the planning board to be necessary in the interest of the public health, safety and general welfare as recommended by the Joint Planning Committee.

## IV. Improvements in Legal Procedure, with Respect to Land

1. Simplification and strengthening present law for registering land titles in the so-called Torrens System as recommended by the Governor.

2. Amendments to the present cumbersome system of foreclosing tax liens as recommended by the Special Committee of the Conference.

3. Immediate repeal of the present provisions in the tax law by which, outside of Westchester County, town supervisors may compel county treasurers to pay over in cash the amount of all uncollectible town taxes in exchange for tax liens so as to make each unit of government solely responsible for its own errors of judgment in making expenditures for improvements far in advance of need.

## VI. Land Acquisition and Management for Public Purposes

### Acquisition

1. Authority to all counties and



municipalities by improvements in tax foreclosure procedure to secure promptly and inexpensively title to all land that has been tax delinquent for more than two years, in order to clear the tax base of these fictitious assets.

2. Appropriate amendments to procedure for acquiring land to enable counties and municipalities to purchase land on a businesslike basis, efficiently, quickly and at fair prices.

3. The acquisition under both these processes by counties and municipalities as rapidly as funds permit of so much of the land as may be necessary to secure reasonable control of the market for vacant land for housing enterprises, industrial sites, sites for slum clearances or the rehabilitation of blighted districts and such other public purposes as may be necessary to the realization of their master plans.

#### Management

4. Enabling legislation to permit each county and municipality at its option to establish under civil service a real estate bureau to purchase and manage in the public interest all lands however acquired by the county or municipality.

5. Such real estate bureaus upon the recommendation of the official planning board to set aside such lands as may be suitable and necessary for the fulfillment of the master plan, and pending their ultimate utilization for such purposes to lease such lands at public bidding on a temporary basis subject to appropriate conditions and for uses not incompatible with such master plan and zoning ordinance so that the public may enjoy a revenue therefrom.

#### Sale or Exchange of Lands

6. Such bureau to have the power to sell or exchange such publicly owned lands whenever in its opinion and that of the official planning board, such sale or transfer will contribute to the realization of the master plan, the former owner of record of any improved parcel to have cer-

tain priorities in any such sale or lease.

#### VII. Federal Assistance for Such a Program

1. Loans or grants by the Federal government subject to appropriate conditions to assist the local governments to purchase land for two purposes.

- a. To provide low rent housing for families unable to afford shelter of minimum standards.
- b. To stabilize the value of residential neighborhoods whenever protection by zoning regulations is incomplete.

#### VIII. Possible Corollary Changes in Assessment and Taxation of Land

1. A change in current assessment practice to lay greater weight upon true values, i.e., capitalized earning power, actual and potential, and less upon the fiction that a sale price ar-

rived at between a free and willing buyer and a free and willing seller is the determining index of real value.

2. Serious consideration of legislation to permit municipalities, at their option, to provide for a partial exemption of buildings as has been done in the second class cities law in Pennsylvania, under which the reputedly successful Pittsburgh Graded Tax Plan has been operating since 1913.

Because of the importance and complexity of all these problems and because of the growing interest of both citizen and official in them, I respectfully suggest that the New York State Mayors' Conference appoint a representative committee on urban land policies to study this whole matter, to report recommendations as to broad policy and specific suggestions as to appropriate enabling legislation to carry out the policies such committee finally recommends.

#### Comment on The Freeman

Julian P. Hickok, Pennsylvania: "Pleased to report that *The Freeman* gets better continually. There is no question that it meets a great need. It should sell itself, only that it has to be brought to the attention of prospective subscribers."

W. L. Wells, Montana: "A line of appreciation to the thoughtful people who are getting out each month this most delightful and friendly publication, *The Freeman*. On my table are six other periodicals (. . . three of which are \$5 each) none of which have the clear insight and wide sympathy that we find in *The Freeman*."

#### Domain. But Eminent?

It is not important that Miss Nichols got only \$5,299 out of the \$51,498 award she won through the Federal court, after a forty-three-year fight to collect for land which had been appropriated by the City of Cleveland for a park. The important fact is that she perpetuated, for the landlords, the sanctity of the private ownership of land—and, whether she or her lawyers got it, the people of Cleveland paid for this extra rivet in their shackles.

—F. C.

#### Rentier Subsidy, from Wages

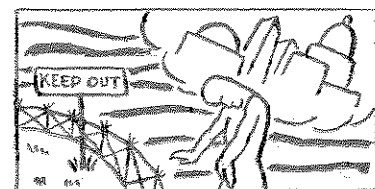
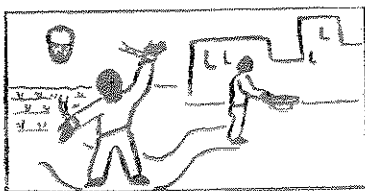
Mayor LaGuardia has proposed an amendment to the State constitution that would give the City wide powers to provide low cost housing. In a statement accompanying the draft, the Mayor indicated that housing funds would not be raised from real estate taxes but from "new sources of revenue." What new sources are there? How solicitous are our "liberals" for the welfare—of our landowners!

—F. C.

#### One Jeffersonian Standard

James A. Farley made a speech the other day in which he compared the president with Thomas Jefferson. The speech contained no reference to the statement by the author of the Declaration of Independence—"the land belongs in usufruct to the living, and the dead have no claim nor right over it." Just an omission?

—F. C.





# The City's Decline - and Fall

By George R. Geiger

Here, in "The Culture of Cities" by Lewis Mumford (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1938), is a book on the city which does not blink the problem of urban land values. Too many accounts of housing and slum clearance, of zoning and garden cities, of planning and beautifying, have been mere counsels of perfection. They have characteristically forgotten or refused to consider the rather obvious fact that increased land values, both legitimate and speculative, and high rents would be the only sure effect of civic improvement; that the landlord and not the tenant would be the only ultimate beneficiary.

This accusation can in no way be brought against Mr. Mumford. He writes, for example, that "to have permanent tenure in land under modern conditions and to ensure a measure of security to the individual worker or occupant, the community must be prepared to assume the active responsibilities of ownership.... By owning the land, the community will dispense with the economically inert (that is, privileged or piratical) role of the private landlord: it will then be able to collect in the form of rent all those values that derive from social organization."

Again, "Henry George, viewing the process of settlement in the Far West, observed how the congestion of population automatically raised land values: thus, so long as land remained in private hands, it imposed a tax upon all those who either directly or derivatively were forced to use expensive land. The more advanced the machine industry, the more complicated the transportation net, the more dense the population, the higher the private tax in the form of rent."

In fact, the pecuniary exploitation of land value, Mr. Mumford points out, has been largely responsible for the blighting of the city. The failure to socialize land rent and land usage has meant the inevitable failure of urban civilization.

"The Culture of Cities" is a monumental history of the city from the early Middle Ages to the latest developments in civic planning. But it is much more than a history of the city. It is a profound study of urban civilization itself. The psychology and sociology of city life have never perhaps been presented as clearly, and their implications traced as thoroughly, as in the present work.

We who take cities for granted, who love or hate them, who live in them or flee from them, have too seldom understood what scope the powers of urban life have really embraced. We appreciate the obvious forces and influences of architecture, trade, politics, and education; but, unless they are presented to us in a book such as this we are likely to ignore what the city has done to personality, sex, religion, sanitation, esthetics, thinking itself.

\* \* \*

But here we see the city—above all, megalopolis—as the conditioner of the most profound and intimate human feelings and ideas. We also see the necessity for a change in many of our stereotyped notions, for example, our concept of the medieval city and its horrors. Mr. Mumford is far from being a sentimental worshiper of the Middle Ages, and he does give us a realistic picture of many unsavory features of the feudal town. But, as compared with the "insensate industrial town" of the early nineteenth century, the health, sanitation, beauty, and functional adaptability of the earlier city were by no means relics of the "dark ages."

Mr. Mumford's present study must be understood as a companion to his much discussed "Technics and Civilization," published four years ago, which presented a painstaking and

original interpretation of machine civilization. Of course, the machine and urban civilizations, the industrial and the megalopolitan cultures, are complementary and inseparable, and these two volumes can be looked upon as giving us a profile of recent and contemporary industrial life. The author's work must also be understood in terms of the vocabulary and contributions of Patrick Geddes, famous as a pioneer in the field of civic planning; and likewise in terms of Mr. Mumford's own significant contributions in the Regional Planning Association of America.

"The Culture of Cities" is a work in history and sociology; it is not an economic study. In fact, possibly the only serious criticism that may be made of it is that, although Mr. Mumford clearly recognizes the uselessness of civic planning without fundamental economic change—he writes, "the slum is the outward expression of physical impoverishment: slum demolition is poverty demolition, or it is nothing"—yet he fails to present any specific program for necessary economic reform.

\* \* \*

He does indeed emphasize the civic importance of the co-operative movement and of the trades union, and he does see great values in a "socialized" approach to economics. (His criticism of Henry George is in his attempt to dissociate business enterprise from landlordism. "In a society where pecuniary values were uppermost and where no social motives were permitted to stand in the way of financial aggrandizement, such distinctions could gain no hold upon the industrial interests. The displacement of privilege in land could only come through the initiative of the community as a whole, with an enlightened and militant working class as the spearhead.") But there does seem to be a lack of force or nerve when the book turns to fundamental economic problems. As is so often the case with proposals of much less significance, the social ends are clear, but the economic means are misty.

However, this possible incomplete-



ness must not be exaggerated. After all, no author can be fairly criticized for not writing a book which he did not write. . . . The present work is a sociological and historical survey of urban civilization, with concrete specifications for large-scale and far-reaching changes in city life; it does not purport to be a treatise on economics. In terms of what the book intends to do, it is a superb contribution. No one can read it without becoming sensitive to great segments of modern industrial city life which were hitherto wholly unappreciated. And no reader (especially if he is also a reader of *The Freeman*) can leave the book without feeling that the significance of the land question and of the taxation of land values has been placed in such a clear light that it can be ignored only by sufferers from myopia and astigmatism.

## THE CHARITABLE MARQUIS DECREES EVICTION

By Lancaster M. Greene

The Marquis of Ailsa owns, among other lands, an island off the British coast. Tenants of various predecessors of the present Marquis of Ailsa have lived here for a long time. "A poor thing but mine own, subject, of course, to rent to the Marquis," one hears an islander say of his modest hut. The island folk raise cattle and sheep and little else but families. Not enough wealth, says the Marquis.

Recently this island made the news; a rumor had run among the inhabitants that the Marquis had decreed they should move. The rumor was confirmed; orders were given to abandon homes, get what sheep, cattle and pets they could into boats on a day set by His Grace, and, with all their families, they would be met by a ship, sent by none other than their patron, the Marquis. It could not come inshore for there was no harbor and the waters were none too easy to navigate.

No time for regret, no chance for the old to stay and die in their homes. Cattle and sheep which cannot be caught or be shoved into boats at the hour appointed are lost to the tenants. "While Britannia rules the wave, no Briton shall be

## TROUBLE-SHOOTING, NOT TROUBLE-SHOUTING

The communistically-minded who want to blame all the ills of life on "capitalism," on "the profit motive," on "exploitation" of the "proletariat" by the "bourgeoisie," appear to feel that the completion of their theoretical system requires the inclusion of their special explanation of business depression and unemployment.

They—and the literary intelligentsia who follow them from a sufficient distance so the reflected red looks only pink—have no use for the view that wages above the marginal productiveness of labor makes it unprofitable to hire the labor and so tends to unemployment; they have no interest in noting that the speculative holding out of use of large areas of good land and natural re-

sources, reduce the available opportunities for employment, except at lower wages than would otherwise be necessary; and they have no interest in understanding the complications of our credit system and how an ill-advised credit policy may—as it most certainly can—turn active business into severe depression. That by removing tariff barriers, maintaining competition in most industries and effectively regulating rates in the public service industries, appropriating to public use the community-produced rental value of land, and controlling our monetary and credit system in a way to stabilize the general price level, we can maintain the essentials of individualism and make it work effectively to the common good, they never admit,—or even seriously inquire.

Such inquiry would involve extended study of the nature and mode of operation of our economic system, and careful analysis of the factors at work in that system. It is easier for communists, socialists and the literary intelligentsia of Marxian leanings to denounce "capitalism," "the profit motive" and "capitalistic exploitation," than to seek to discover the specific causes for each specific economic evil from which we suffer.

It is easier for our "intellectuals" of literary proclivities and "pinkish" inclinations, to regale us with literary allusions and superficially clever bon mots than to set themselves to work getting a real understanding of the complications of our economic orders.

Just as the dissatisfied workman, resentful of his low wages or of a recent layoff, but unfamiliar with cause and effect relations in our economic life, sometimes attributes his unhappy state to "the boss" or "the grasping stockholders," who are no more responsible than he is for depression or for the conditions that bring about low wages, so the literary intelligentsia too readily attributes our collective economic misfortunes to the vague scapegoat "capitalism," with no intelligent comprehension of precisely what it is in "capitalism" that makes the trouble.

Harry Gunnison Brown

slave," one recalls; these are free people, subject only to the rights of a land owner, whose special privilege is subject to the will of the people. Neither of them seem to know that this privilege is subject to the people, because the privileges claimed by landowners have been claimed so long and so vigorously that what once was wrong has become right. It is all quite legal, arranged by the very best minds "for the good of society."

His Grace, of course, removed these islanders for their own good, he said. They could not live well enough on this island; it is too barren there for human beings to eke out an existence, especially human beings within the beneficence and charity of Ailsa. Is one to doubt His Grace because he might get more rent from these tenants in a place where they could raise more? Never! Well, hardly ever, Your Grace!

By the way, the Astors, Goetts, and a few others own most of the land under the island of Manhattan! Suppose they decide to move us for our own good?



# Subsidies for Groundhogs: A Fable

By W. D. Hoffman

And it came to pass that a Delegation of Good Citizens visited the Slums where many thousands of Workers dwelt under conditions of overcrowding, ugliness, filth, stench, poverty and disease. Horrified, the Delegation paused to make inquiry.

"But why do you dwell here in such misery?" asked the Questioner. "Your Hovel here by the stinking river is little more than a piano box, yet many thousands of Firms possess the facilities and would be overjoyed to build all of you nice modern Houses or Apartments."

And it chanced that the poor devil who dwelt in the Hovel with his large family and several of his unemployed relatives was also a Thinker.

"Because," answered the Thinker, "we are only Workers who receive Low Wages and often we are only part-time employed, hence we cannot pay Rent for Better Housing."

"But in this deplorable condition of overcrowding, Disease and Crime take a tremendous toll," insisted a Welfare Worker. "Councilman Vladeck of the City of New York has compiled Statistics showing infant mortality is twice as high in the Slum as elsewhere; tuberculosis three times as high, venereal disease eight times as high. Rather than stay in such a place it seems to me you would move into the Country."

The Thinker smiled. "Some of us have tried that, many times," he answered. "But the Farming Land is all taken, and those who work for established Farmers must live in tents or shacks even as bad as these. Besides, we are attached to the City, because the only Jobs we could get, even at Low Wages, are in the Factory or as underpaid Workers in stores, offices or along the waterfront." He shuddered at the pall of smoke from the Factory and the stench from the neighboring Tenement. "We do not live here out of choice, Good Citizens. We do not get Wages high enough to pay more Rent."

"The Slum is a blot on our Civilization. It must Go," declared the Welfare Worker.

"Yes," seconded the paunchy Legislator, one of the Delegation. "It is purely a Problem of Better Housing."

"Better Housing," echoed the others of the Delegation, in unison. "You have sounded the slogan, Honorable Legislator. Better Housing is the Solution. It must be Done."

"Very good," assented the Thinker, motioning his ill-clad, ill-fed children back from the doorway. "But how shall we pay for the Better Housing when it keeps us scratching day and night to pay for these miserable Quarters in the Slum?"

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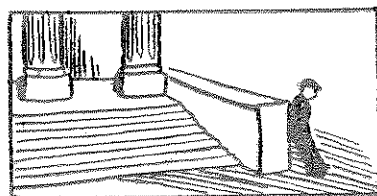
"A Way must be found," the Welfare Worker affirmed, determinedly. "Perhaps if you were more economical with your Wages—"

"You mean," interrupted the Thinker, "if we went to the Opera less or denied ourselves the Moving Picture Show we might be able to pay more Rent?" He seemed to be laughing at them; perhaps because he was a Thinker.

It chanced also that among the Delegation was a Real Estate Operator who represented many of the ground-owners of the Slum district. "Gentlemen," he said, "there is only one Solution. To quote Councilman Vladeck's report: 'U. S. Senator Robert F. Wagner was one of the first outstanding men in the United States to understand that neither Slum Clearance nor Rehousing of any kind for the low bracket families of our population is possible without a Subsidy.' That is the word, gentlemen—a Subsidy."

"A Subsidy!" echoed the Delegation.

"At last we are getting somewhere!" enthused the pompous Legislator.



islator. "Indeed, the Wagner-Steagall Housing Bill is the Solution. Under this law, five hundred million dollars will be advanced by the federal government to municipalities for low-cost Housing within the next three years, as a starter. In addition, the Mayor of New York recommends an appropriation of \$500,000 additional to get the thing under way. Under these Subsidies the Slum Clearance Program can be started immediately."

"The Subsidy is the Answer, gentlemen," declared the Real Estate Operator. "Our Inquiry need go no further." His hand raised in a grand gesture. "Already we can vision a great Building Boom, with modern Apartments rising on the site of the Old Tenements, as the Vladeck report has it; with New York City alone spending each year \$31,500,000 on the basis of the Housing Bonds at 3 per cent; with this construction money employing 25,000 building workers the year around, exclusive of architects, technicians, clerks, supervisors, etc.; with the Building Trades and the entire Supply Industry enjoying an unprecedented Boom."

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The Slum Dweller who was a Thinker frowned thoughtfully. "This Subsidy, then, is a Gift?" he asked.

"From the Government, federal and municipal," assented the Legislator, beaming.

"These Vast Sums are to be raised by Taxes, I presume?" the Thinker went on. "Since Taxes always fall most heavily on the Ultimate Consumer, a majority of whom are poor also, then we are to be subsidized by other Poor like ourselves? And because these Poor will be more heavily burdened by the Subsidy than now, they in turn will be driven into Poorer Housing because of the additional burden of the Subsidy?"

"The Rich will pay a great part of the Taxes," defended the Legislator.

"And shift those Taxes to the Poor, as always," the Thinker reminded. "However, that is not the important point. Does the Subsidy so gener-

ously bestowed by the Government attack the Cause of the Slum?"

"The Cause?" asked the puzzled Legislator.

"Low Wages and High Rents are the Cause of Poor Housing. In the matter of Building Costs, for instance, would the Subsidy bring them down?"

"No, no!" the Real Estate Operator hastened to say. "Building demand would increase, hence prices would tend to rise, making more Prosperity."

"But excessive Building Costs are one reason why we can't afford Better Housing," the Thinker reminded. "If part of that Subsidy money were used to break down Trade Agreements and Monopoly in the Building Industry, it might be a step—"

"That's out," snapped the Legislator.

The Thinker smiled wanly. "I understand. There is another reason why Building Costs are so high—Taxes. From raw materials to the finished product Taxes pile up from lumber yard, to mill to contractor, from ore chute to hardware. The Subsidy would not reduce such Taxes?"

"Taxes must be increased to pay the Subsidy," admitted the Real Estate Operator. "Otherwise you will never have Better Housing."

A hard glint flared deep in the Thinker's eye. "There is a final point that troubles me, gentlemen. The Slum, as you know, rests on Valuable Ground, due to nearness to the City Center and Population. In fact, most of the High Rent for our miserable Quarters comes from the Ground Charge, rather than from the Buildings. Since the People make this Ground valuable, and since the People pay this Subsidy, then surely part of this Vast Sum must be used to reduce this Ground Charge?"

"Reduce it?" flared the Real Estate Operator. "Man, you certainly are ignorant of the Real Estate Business. Can't you see that the immediate effect of Better Housing in any community will be to raise the Value of the Land?"

"The People's Subsidy will do that?" asked the Thinker innocently.

## WE SCRAPPED COMMUNISM—IN 1623

By O. K. Dorn

When the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth in the Autumn of 1620, there were no immediate considerations of either private property or the profit motive. This was due to the fact that the whole body of colonists had bound themselves together in a pact, the terms of which provided that for seven years they would work together, put their produce in a common warehouse and receive their subsistence out of the common store. At the end of the seven years there would be a settlement with the London merchants who had furnished funds to finance the Mayflower trip, purchase supplies, clothing, household utensils, furniture, farm implements, tools, equipment and such sundry articles as were needed in making a settlement in a barren new land.

There were other problems which were more pressing and immediate than the ones of owning property and of obtaining credit for labor. The first and most important was of survival in a cold, unfriendly wilderness and that problem was not solved any too well. During the first Winter more than half of those brave adventuring souls died and you will recall from your early readings in

history that the graves were carefully covered over so that the Indians would be unaware of this great reduction in numbers.

When the first Spring arrived the problems then became those of clearing land, planting crops, and building cabins and without any hesitation the little group banded together and worked as one in the fields. The crops would be for all. The primitive attempts at farming were immediately supplemented by fur trading, fishing and lumbering, all of which furnished cargoes for the return voyages of visiting ships.

After the lapse of the third year, the system of common tillage, which even in those earliest of colonial days rewarded idleness and paralyzed industry, was given up and each family was allotted land for its own cultivation. After chafing three years more under the bondage of the London merchants, the original contract was set aside and the colonists bought outright all claims of the original investors. So after six, instead of the original seven years, the colony became one in which the institution of private property was finally evolved and where private initiative dominated in economic if not in religious matters.

"You mean that the effect of the Subsidy will be to raise Rents?"

"Certainly. But what's that to you, as a Slum Dweller, since the Government will help you pay it, by reducing carrying charges, interest and amortization?"

"And you, the Real Estate Operator representing the Ground Owners, will in the end get the Subsidy?"

"Gentlemen, I think the Delegation has finished its Inquiry," grunted the Real Estate Operator. "The man must be crazy."



## Society Encourages Heroism

At the age of twelve, Bryan Untiedt, a normal boy, saved his school-fellows who were marooned in a bus in the snow by braving the blizzard to bring help to them. President Hoover honored the deed by inviting the boy to the White House.

At eighteen, he was the sole support of his incapacitated father and six younger sisters. In his work he drove a truck. He earned so little that he could not pay the license fee. He was arrested and fined \$7. Society invited him to jail.

President Roosevelt has solved the ex-hero — ex-jailbird's problem by giving him a job on a public works project. An honest, brave, willing worker has been forced by our society to become a proud ward of the government.

—F. C.



# Coolie Crop for Californians

By Frank Chodorov

First came the forty-niners to California. Out-mortgaged farmers, under-waged workers, venturesome youth whose economic horizon in a monopolized world seemed too crushingly close, were lured by the free and rich land that lay across the continent. Labor is a most fluid force. It rushes to high wages like a river to the sea. Nothing can stop it, neither oceans nor mountains, privation nor tomahawks, laws nor custom house officials. Urged by its unsatiable desire to make a better or easier living, labor o'er-vaults every obstacle save one—the title deed in fee simple. However, that obstacle, in the form of Spanish and Mexican grants, the forty-niners did not recognize in California; but they brought the homespun variety with them, to frustrate the aspirations of future migratory laborers.

Then came the tramps. But, between the gold prospector and the vagrant worker, California had undergone the alteration common to all new countries—the mutation under the law from a free to a confiscatory economy. The agricultural part of the State, its largest section, had been divided into predatory ranches. Thirty per cent of large-scale agricultural operations in the United States are in the California valleys. From homesteading farms, through purchase, merger and foreclosure, the ownership of the land underwent a gradual centralization. Today a holding of 2,500 acres is ordinary. A most important fact is that while the area of the State under cultivation has not been increased since 1885, in the last five years (during the "depression") holdings in excess of 1,000 acres have increased 37 per cent, while those under fifty acres have decreased.

The way to operate such large agricultural tracts profitably is to have on hand always an abundant supply of cheap labor. Since the land of the State was confiscated not long after the gold rush the supply of

cheap labor has always been abundant. At first they came from the failures among the gold-rush immigrants, mainly the late arrivals. These migratory field and shed hands made possible the earliest development of the agro-industrial fruit ranches, which were given added impetus by the development of rail transportation and the refrigerator car. As technological improvement increased the productivity of this land the tendency to larger holdings was accelerated, and therefore the opportunity for labor to employ itself on it was blocked. Wage-slavery was the necessary result. "Fruit tramp" became the name of a trade and a calling for thousands.

Then came the Chinese coolies. Prior to 1860, 40,000 of these Oriental laborers, fleeing from their sub-marginal existence in the homeland, had migrated to California to work in the mines. Racial troubles—that is, economic struggle with other workers who seize on racial differences as a plausible reason for their low wages—drove them out, and they took to the railroads and eventually to the ranches. Labor contractors began playing the yellow against the white, which was possible since neither had access to the soil, and the inevitable result was subsistence wages. By the turn of the century many of the Chinese had saved enough money to return to the land of their forefathers.

Then came the Japanese—the "yellow peril." In 1907, 30,000 entered the port of San Francisco and they were rushed to the ranches in the valleys. This new supply of cheap labor, however, proved too shrewd, too venturesome to be complacently adjusted to the wage-slave system that had been perfected on these fruit-growing factories; they bought land. Exclusion laws followed. As a result of the controversy they colonized their own lands or moved to the cities.



Then came the Mexicans—or, rather, they were imported to augment the supply of cheap labor. But, while at first these workers seemed quite happy with a dollar a day, for various reasons the Mexicans became restless. During the twenties, when it was first observed that the Mexicans were getting out of hand, Filipinos were brought in. But they quickly became enamored of the cities, and those who remained on the land centered their activities in the asparagus fields and the rice marshes.

A new labor supply was needed. And the gods who protect the landlords brought on the dust-bowl refugees—the poor farmers who had been eking out a living on marginal land by overworking it, until it became completely unproductive dust and was blown away. In search of a living, like the slaves out of Egypt, they are migrating to western valleys where, while they know all the land is pre-empted, at least there is no dust to fill their lungs. Choking is perhaps a less uncomfortable way of dying than starvation.

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The Americans are coming—and they are Americans, by several generations of birth, by education, by traditions. Yet they are being conditioned to an even lower economic status than the foreign-born migratory who preceded them; for the Chinese and Mexicans were men, while whole families of Americans labor in sheds and fields for a family-wage of between \$1.20 and \$1.50 a day. The most fortunate of them live in government camps (shades of Hitler and Stalin) where for ten cents a day they are given a platform on which to pitch a tent. Others live in rented shacks, for which they pay, on an average, \$8 a month. The next lower group live in ranch camps, where sanitation facilities are limited and water must be carried long distances. Finally comes that group whose homes are in hovels on the banks of irrigation ditches beneath cottonwoods. To such low lev-



els has the "independent American farmer" been reduced by our system of land tenure. Not peasants—coolies.

"They could be one of the great assets of California if given land and the self-respect that goes with it," said a government agent in one

of the resettlement camps. But, so long as absolute private ownership of land persists, they will obtain neither land nor self-respect.

# Mapping a War on Slums

By J. Charles Laue

At last an authoritative book for those who are "slum blight conscious" and tax conscious—a book that depicts in broad strokes the financial consequences to cities of having neglected for generations to conserve their biggest asset, the land. In gathering the facts for "Urban Blight and Slums," the author, Dr. Mabel L. Walker, has ranged the related fields of taxation, city planning, zoning and housing. She sets forth the practical remedies that are at hand before still greater fiscal errors occur, such as handing to land speculators our socially created treasure house a second time.

New York City studies from an important part of the volume. It shows the depopulation of the blighted lower East Side. In spite of this the density of some of these areas is appalling as it is shown also for Boston, Pittsburgh and other cities. Dr. Walker's book is most timely for those who spend the housing millions and those who are taxed for these subsidies.

Dr. Walker's summary based on this mass of data follows:

\* \* \*

"It would be easier to accept the conclusion one frequently hears to the effect that nothing can be done concerning the problems of urban blight and slums if one did not see on every hand such a variety of things which could be done. There is no single solution of the problem and this may account to some extent for the discouraging attitude so frequently met. But there are many possible lines of attack each of which offers considerable promise.

"The most important objectives appear to be as follows: 1. An adequate city plan. 2. More logical zoning regulations. 3. More effective control of subdivisions. 4. Better

and more standardized building regulations. 5. Clear and sufficient legal powers for the creation of state and local housing authorities. 6. More effective methods of land assembly at fair prices, and of the exercise of eminent domain for housing purposes. 7. Reform in the system of taxation. 8. Wider use of excess condemnation for replanning purposes. 9. Improvement of home-financing policies. 10. The creation and rationalization of a real home-building industry. 11. Extensive government research in the various aspects of the problem. 12. Government demonstration projects. 13. An intelligent and informed public opinion."

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In the conclusion Dr. Walker well says:

"Our most promising attack, therefore, is the creation and rationalization of a large-scale home-building industry which can meet the people's housing needs, and strict governmental regulations concerning planning and building with a vigorously enforced condemnation and demolition policy and a reformed tax system. We do not have to build cities, but to rebuild them."

Among the points brought out are: "Progress in social reform does not spring full grown from the brows of governmental Joves. We cannot expect public officials to be very much ahead of the wisdom and temper of their times.

"Temporarily and perhaps permanently, a Federal housing subsidy is needed. . . . It should not be a rent subsidy, a tax subsidy, nor a subsidy to land owners and holders of obsolete property. . . . Nor should cit-

izens be taxed in order to make things easy for the landlord. . . .

"If the local governments wish to subsidize housing it should be by direct grants rather than through tax exemption."

"It is regrettable that social reformers, using that word in its better sense, do not collaborate more closely with those groups working for improved methods of government and public finance. There are many instances of socially minded groups, actuated by the highest motives, promoting policies that are in conflict with the generally accepted standards of students of government and taxation. During recent years we have at times seen educational groups campaign for the regressive general sales tax and we have seen housing groups recommend the unwise and unfair policy of tax exemption. Other instances could be cited. The ultimate aims of such groups are sound. Cooperation should reveal a way to realize their objectives without using methods which are likely to cause greater evils than they cure. . . ."

\* \* \*

"An alternative is a thoroughgoing shift in the incidence of real estate taxation whereby ALL improvements would gradually become partially or wholly tax exempt. . . . The untaxing of all improvements would afford relief to all the low-income groups."

This book is tax education in one volume. The book's importance is attested by the sponsorship of Lawson Purdy and Harold S. Bottenheim. The volume of 442 pages is No. XII of the Harvard City Planning Studies. It may be had from the Tax Policy League, 309 East 34th Street, New York City for \$4.00. It includes an excellent bibliography on the subject.



# Valuing Land for a Rent Tax

By George C. Olcott

Land values, like the value of stocks, bonds and commodities of all kinds, handled on exchanges, are determined by the law of supply and demand. On the exchanges, it is the higgling of the market. In real estate, it is the haggling of the market. The only difference is the element of time. In securities, and in commodities of a consumable nature, the velocity turnover—is greater than in durable goods. In both cases they move. In the one case it is readily perceivable. In the other, it is not so apparent. The movement of the hour hand on a clock is not as apparent as that of the second hand. But it does move, measurably.

There is no a priori way in which the value of real estate may be ascertained. It has to be found out empirically, by following the market closely. The three most potent factors in determining land values are, first, sales; second, bid prices, if any; third, asking prices. It is only by keeping all the data obtainable as to these factors, that any rational opinion of the value of lands can be arrived at.

Rents are useful in arriving at a conclusion of values but they vary so, both as to the dates at which leases have been executed and also as to the nature and condition of the improvements that they do not provide precise data; at the best, only an approximation of ground values may be arrived at in that way.

The most modern aid to determining land values is in the form of land value maps. Many cities have adopted this method of assessing the value of the land under their jurisdiction and have maps prepared for that purpose by the various assessors but they are not generally put out to the public. Cities like New York and Cleveland have such maps published and may be obtained on application to the office of the assessors.

Only in Chicago and Los Angeles, so far as is known, is there a land value map book published and cir-

## DISAPPEARANCE OF SELLING VALUE—A PROBLEM?

For almost thirty years George C. Olcott, head of George C. Olcott & Co., Inc., publishers and appraisers, of Chicago, has been supervising the appraisal of land values in that city and publishing the results in the well-known map book, "Olcott's Land Values Blue Book of Chicago." He discusses here the problem of modernizing land assessment valuation practise, which was discussed in an earlier number of *The Freeman* by Harold Sudell of the Manufacturers Appraisal Company of Philadelphia, another veteran appraiser.

Mr. Olcott, like Mr. Sudell, is a man whose professional reputation depends upon the accurate measurement of land values as facts and not as hypotheses bred of prejudice and bias; therefore, like Mr. Sudell but unlike a declining minority of professors of public finance, he does not consider that the social appropria-

tion of rent will raise more than a practical problem of measurement, a problem for which a solution is at hand.

In a letter to *The Freeman* which accompanied this article, he said that one point he would like to make was that "Under the social appropriation of rent, after selling values had disappeared, instead of giving the capitalized value of the land I could substitute the annual lease value per front foot, using the same depth and corner tables as I do at present."

Less practical professors have described the problems as insuperable, a strange commentary on the dated character of the knowledge they expound when compared with these opinions of men who do not sit in a swivel chair and guess about land values but actually go out into the field and measure them.

—W. L.

culated by private parties. Of these, the Chicago book was the first published, starting in 1909.

The method adopted in Chicago to ascertain land values is to have appraisers start out in the fall of the year and, beginning at the north end of the city or suburb, to drive carefully over each mile of territory, noting any changes that may have been made since the previous year, such as in building operations, new pavements, sidewalks, curbs, underground improvements, etc.

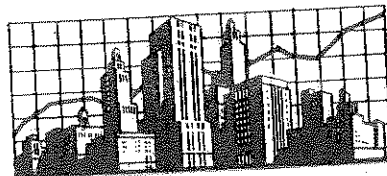
With this knowledge in this mind, the appraiser consults the local dealers on their ideas of any changes in values that may have occurred since the year before. Most of them co-

operate. Data is secured upon any sales, asking prices of vacant lots offered for sale and the rentals that are being paid. With this data in hand and with a compilation of the transfers made up in the office from published lists in the real estate publications and the asking prices printed in the daily papers in their want ads, a conclusion as to values may be formed.

A plan for arriving at land values in smaller towns or for farm lands, modified to suit the situation from a plan designed for a large city, has been formulated by the writer as follows:

Have the assessor divide the district under his jurisdiction into, say, twelve subdistricts, one for each month. Appoint a deputy assessor to conduct a survey of the whole district. Have him prepare, with the aid of assistants, land value maps for the different districts.

Send a copy of the tentative val-



ues arrived at, on outline maps of each block in the district under consideration, to all taxpayers of record in that district. Call a meeting of those taxpayers and have a large wall map hung up so that all may see.

Determine first the block in the district of highest value, either business or residential, and get the approval of those present as to the selection made. Then proceed to affix a value per front foot of lots in that block, of a unit depth of 100

feet or 125 feet as the case may be, not coming under corner influences.

Prepare tables for determining the value of lots of a greater or less depth than the unit. Also establish corner rules to apply, the unit for inside lots having been agreed upon. Have the deputy assessor prepared to defend his figures with data of actual sales or asking prices. Any taxpayer present is to dissent if he wishes to, provided he is ready to back up his objections with actual facts. If it is the concensus of those

present that the unit so arrived at is practically fair and just, pass on to the next best block and so on to the end.

Upon uniformity of judgment depends equity in taxes and for that reason have one man supervise all the tentatives values and preside at all the meetings. Values so arrived at should be final, as objection, if any, should be made at meetings so held. The tax payer having had his day in court, no appeal should lie.

## GROUND UNDER THE TAX MILLSTONE

*By Frederic Cyrus Leubuscher*

The annual report of the Fifth Avenue Coach Company of New York City strikingly illustrates the evils of our paternalistic system of government. Though this is a corporation with a capital of only six millions, during 1937 it was "obliged to make 127 separate and distinct reports to various public agencies of the city, state and nation, taxing and otherwise, at an estimated cost of compiling and filing such reports of approximately \$10,000."

The figures show that for 1937 as contrasted with 1930, while the gross operating revenues decreased 31.56% and the net decreased 95.53%, the direct taxes assignable to operation increased 32.37% and operating and non-operating taxes per each \$100 of gross operating revenues increased 100.60%.

Out of a total of 39,213,604 fares collected it required 6,271,316 to pay the taxes and only 6,806,394 to pay for materials, gasoline, rents, etc. Wages took 21,933,542 fares and damages for injuries, depreciation, etc., 5,055,506. Indeed, the number of fares fell short of meeting operating expenses and taxes by 853,155, if the report is an accurate statement of the facts. Had there been no taxes the company would have had a net operating revenue of about \$55,000 or 1% of its capital stock, even in the 1937 depression year.

The average wage per employee was \$1,826.01 and the direct taxes per employee paid by the company \$499.71 or 27% of wages.

The report significantly adds: "To

the 'direct' taxes paid by the company there should be added the cost of hidden or 'indirect' taxes, all of which are included in the cost of everything the company buys. In the absence of a reliable medium of indicating the exact amount of such 'indirect' taxes, it is nevertheless obvious that with diminishing income and increasing outgo, 'indirect' as well as 'direct' taxes become con-

trolling economic factors in establishing and maintaining rates of pay and improving working conditions."

By its franchise the company is restricted to a maximum ten cent fare, so it cannot, by increasing the fare, recoup its taxes.

Companies which have not been granted the exclusive privilege of providing the goods or service they now provide have a sorrier tale to tell. It is recorded in the declining index of business activity.

## DOVE'S 'HUMAN PROGRESSION' AGAIN IN PRINT

In 1850, almost thirty years before "Progress and Poverty" was published, there appeared in London a limited and anonymous edition of "The Theory of Human Progression and Natural Probability of the Reign of Justice." Later it was discovered that this book had been written by Patrick Edward Dove, a Scotch landed gentleman, scholar and traveler. In his book, Dove attempted to trace the elements that are present in the development of civilization and to discover whether there is a hope for the coming of the scriptural millenium. It is largely an ingenious attempt to reconcile Christianity and the sciences by means of a division of the sciences so fine that they gradually pass from their own realm over into that of theology.

However, in a book entitled "Application of the Theory of Human Progression to Man's Political Conditions" Dove advanced the identical solution for man's social ill-being that was later proposed by Henry George. While he did not reach his conclusions through a comprehensive study of political economy, yet the line of reasoning that he followed

was precisely similar to that used later by George.

First, there is the thought, a basic one with George, that human poverty is not the result of divine neglect, but rather of man's ignorance and his failure to follow natural law. Then, there is the statement of the cause of involuntary poverty and the prediction of a class struggle, not between capital and labor, but between the landed and the landless. There are passages which are almost word for word anticipation of many pages of "Progress and Poverty," and which contain the same lofty vigor and the same note of prophetic warning.

Recently an abridged edition of this book was gotten out through the munificence and zeal of Miss Charlotte Schetter; and through her the Henry George School of Social Science is able to offer copies of the work of this predecessor of Henry George at the nominal price of twenty-five cents, postage pre-paid. Every student of Henry George should read this book. Orders should be sent to national headquarters, 211 West 79th Street, New York. —F. C.

# Job for the Government?

By George L. Rusby

The question whether the government should establish a Federal Bureau of Fine Arts is being debated with much heat in the popular press. Advocates of the proposal, pointing to the national theatres of some European countries as precedents, hold that the encouragement of the theatre, painting, sculpture and music may properly be assumed by the government. Opponents cite a variety of objections. Sight is being lost of the real issue in the controversy: is the operation of a Bureau of Fine Arts a proper function for the Federal government?

A & B discuss the merits of Prohibition. A contends that Prohibition is desirable and supports his contention with what seems to him a good reason; B opposes with a counter reason as to why Prohibition is bad. And after an interminable exchange of opposing views, A & B stop, exactly where they began. Why? For the same reason that nearly all discussions are similarly futile and useless—there is no pre-agreement on a premise as a starting point, no agreement on a basic principle by which to test to correctness of any view held. It is not possible to add up two columns of opposing opinions, subtract, and arrive at a convincing difference. Without agreement in advance as to a basic principle, a discussion nearly always becomes merely a talk fest—a valueless hodgepodge of superficial opinions.

Where and how shall we find a basic principle by which to test the propriety of any and every activity of government, actual or proposed? In seeking such a principle, let us begin at the beginning, deciding, first, what the proper purpose of government should be; then selecting the principle, or rule of action to be followed by law-makers in advancing that purpose; and, finally, discovering the functions necessary for government to perform in applying the principle. If, in this procedure, we

adhere to sound reasoning, we shall emerge from the realm of vague opinion and feel secure in the knowledge that our conclusions can be satisfactorily demonstrated.

(1)—What is the proper purpose of organizing government? I think it safe to take for granted that there will be general, if not universal, agreement that the only proper purpose of government is to promote the general welfare of the community.

(2)—What is the principle, or rule of action, by which government can best advance this purpose? In answering this inquiry let us first marshal and enumerate all possible principles from among which a choice must be made. This it is entirely possible to do with accuracy—the same accuracy as that with which we declare that “a thing is equivalent to the sum of all of its parts.” For the avowed aim of government cannot but be, on the one hand, to maintain the greatest possible degree of equality of individual liberty among its citizens, or, on the other hand, to maintain more or less inequality. It is obvious that any departure from equality must constitute a corresponding inequality. The three principles from among which a choice is necessary, are:

a—governmental action shall be limited to insuring that, as nearly as possible, everyone shall have opportunity to do as he will up to the point of infringing the equal opportunity of another;

b—the same as “a,” excepting that government may depart therefrom, within certain limits prescribed by the government;

c—government shall be clothed with unlimited power over the individuals comprising the governed. Subjecting the above to examina-

tion we find: “c” is abhorrent, and unacceptable; “b” constitutes a complete self-contradiction—as will become at once apparent if we attempt to specify wherein and to what extent a governing body shall be authorized to deviate from the standard set in “a.” It is like stating that seven times seven always equals fourty-nine, excepting that it sometimes doesn’t.

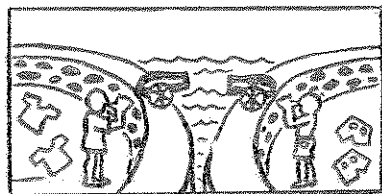
Therefore in the pursuit of the purpose of government (to promote the general welfare), we are forced, willy nilly to adopt “a” as the principle to which government shall adhere in all of its activities and law-making.

(3)—If, then, the only proper purpose of government is to promote the general welfare, and if the only principle, or rule of action, in accord with this purpose is to insure that, so far as possible, every citizen shall have opportunity to do as he will up to the point of infringing the equal liberty of another, the next question to present itself is, what functions does government have, what must it do, in order to apply this principle?

There may be a third, but to the writer it is inconceivable that these functions exceed two in number: first, government must exercise the police power (in its various forms), preventing one from infringing on the person or property of another; and, second, must maintain equality of economic opportunity among all.

\* \* \*

At first thought it might seem as though it would be impossible to reduce the activities of government to such simplicity—impossible to have government abandon so many of the things it now undertakes—things which we are so accustomed to seeing the government do. But just as one step in a wrong performance necessitates two more to support it, so, every time government departs from its two simple functions, a condition is created which demands a further and further departure, until we find ourselves in our present precarious and threatening situation, where step is following step in increasingly rapid succession toward





the fate which is inevitable unless the direction of our course is reversed.

Of these two proper functions of government, the exercise of the police power promptly appeals to practically all of us as quite logical, and its propriety would be contested by few. But as to the other governmental function, that of maintaining equality of economic opportunity, this is not so easy of comprehension and acceptance, undoubtedly due to the fact that there is such a meagre knowledge of basic economic principles.

Equality of economic opportunity can be secured only by creating a condition of "more jobs than men,"

using that word "job" to include all of the activities of Capital and Labor. And this condition can be attained only by government collecting all ground rent, and thus making it unprofitable to hold any natural resources (land) out of use.

So, while the answer to the question, which prompted this contribution remains specifically unanswered, a specific answer is not required. The most convincing way to answer the question "do the inhabitants of the inaccessible African jungle live by eating food?", would be to demonstrate that all men live by eating food. Furnished with a clear con-

ception of the proper purpose of government, the only practical principle by which government can attain the purpose, and the two necessary functions of government in applying the principle, it takes but a moment's reflection not only to decide the question in the negative, but promptly to decide, negatively or affirmatively, any other question that may arise involving the propriety or impropriety of governmental action. If a proposition stands the test, if it be found in accord with the above presentation, yes!—if not, no! We should never lose sight of the significance of these five words—"the universality of a principle."

# Land Monopolists Sabotaged Resettlement

By George H. Duncan

The Resettlement Administration, during its heyday—the fiscal year ending June 30, 1936—operated on three different but associated lines:

1. The Rehabilitation Division made loans, ranging from an average of \$200 in Alabama to \$800 in Minnesota, to about one and one-half million persons having possession of farms, either tenants or owners. The prerequisites for borrowers were two: (a) That the applicant be unable to procure funds elsewhere; (b) That he agree to follow a "balanced farm plan" giving promise that with the assistance of the goods and equipment available by the loan, he could produce sufficient additionally to enable him to repay the loan in instalments;

2. The Land Utilization and Resettlement Division contemplated government purchase of submarginal land for retirement, the seller using the funds thus available as an initial payment for a better location, with the new purchase financed by government on a long-term amortization basis;

3. The Subsistence Homesteads Division planned to develop small holdings along modern lines, in which the incumbent could enjoy the comforts of life, while supplementing his outside earnings by production for his own use, development also to be

(Mr. Duncan is well qualified to write the accompanying article. From November, 1935, until July, 1936, he was one of four Special Agents of the Investigation Department of the Resettlement Administration attached to the Washington office with a special assignment to "bird's-eye view" or "overall" surveys of the administration's work.—The Editors.)

repaid on a long-time amortization basis.

In each of these undertakings the evils of our present land system were continuously and everywhere manifest, handicapping the program.

In Subsistence Homesteads, despite efforts to maintain secrecy as to the location of the project, initial land prices were so high as to preclude material advantages to the homesteader while assuring full repayment to government for the cost.

In Land Utilization and Resettlement, those sought to be "retired" were found to be the victims of previous land speculation, of such lands to a point where amortization payments well-nigh would absorb additional income.

In Rehabilitation, applicable most-

ly to tenants, a modest increase in productive power was the signal for a rent increase sufficient to absorb the advantage offered by the loan.

While the life of Resettlement Administration was too short to exhibit the major development of these tendencies, in Alabama, where a single cash crop (cotton) made an almost complete cycle in one year, it was possible to reduce this tendency to a money basis.

In Alabama in 1935, Rehabilitation had 13,000 clients, 90% tenants, to whom a total of about \$2,600,000 was advanced. Requirement (a) above indicates that they must have "started from scratch," and in fact, almost all were from the relief rolls. As of December 1, 1935, when the cotton had been marketed, \$1,000,000 had been repaid on loans, Resettlement retained a lien on \$700,000 worth of recoverable goods, while clients had on hand \$1,000,000 worth of feed and foodstuffs, with practically all rents paid.

It is clear, then, the 13,000 clients gained an aggregate of about \$100,000, or \$8.00 per family.

For all share-croppers, of course, the landlord already had taken an increased "cut," while cash renters and owners retained the increase brought about by the use of seed, fertilizer, equipment and the nine thousand single steers purchased for motive power for cultivation.

At this time leases were being





completed for the crop year 1936; and it was extremely significant as showing that the landlord and not the worker benefitted in the end by the program, that rentals per family, averaging \$50 in 1935, were averaging \$60 for 1936—an increase tending to absorb all the advantages brought about by the activities of Resettlement.

It is evident that such a far-reaching, experimental and individual program as that of Resettlement, no

matter how efficiently carried on, entailed a terrific overhead, while the benefits, if any, would be so minutely divided as not to be manifest except on the closest scrutiny. Thus, with the political campaign of 1936 in the offing, and the opposition dwelling on expenditures and minimizing the small gain, the Administration couldn't "stand the gaff." Resettlement's funds, \$287,000,000 for fiscal 1936, were cut to \$89,000,000 for fiscal 1937 the organization grad-

ually "folded" and later was transferred quietly to the Department of Agriculture for interment.

But all through the organization were those who saw and pondered the problems discussed here and who realized that the program of Resettlement with modifications such as to eliminate the landlord, is imperative if the millions of share-croppers and tenants now a festering sore in the body politic are to be set on the road to economic security.

# Streamlining the Tax Debate

By William C. de Mille

In all the current discussions of taxation one finds uppermost in the debaters' minds what is probably the most mistaken of the ideas that have been inherited from the past—our habit of looking upon land as wealth and taxing it as we tax wealth instead of taxing it upon the different basis it deserves.

Land is not wealth; it is nature just as air is nature. Man is labor and wealth is the product of man's labor applied to land. All wealth comes originally from the land, and those who control the right to use land control the opportunity to create wealth.

Unfortunately the average citizen does not realize that the direct or indirect use of land is utterly necessary to sustain the life of every individual in the world.

Because land can be used indirectly through civilization's complicated processes of exchange of labor, many people do not see that the meek little bookkeeper in a publishing house has, in effect, helped to raise the cattle whose hides form his shoes; has helped to grow the vegetable he eats; has helped to forest the trees which make the very paper on which he writes.

Air, on the contrary, while no more necessary than land in sustaining life, has to be used directly and individually; no process of exchange having been worked out which permits individuals, as in the case of land, to forego their right to use per-

sonally as much of the life-giving atmosphere as they require.

There would be an interesting change in the general point of view if some great company, consisting of, let us say, twenty per cent of the population, found it possible to extract all the oxygen from air, confine it in metal tanks and then charge every one ten cents per cubic foot for its use.

If people objected to giving up some of their wages to buy this necessity of life their only alternative would be to stop living. "Absurd," you say, but probably the only reason air has not been treated as wealth is because hitherto it has been impossible to do it.

In the case of land it has been done, and not more than twenty per cent of the people do own all the usable land. Thus by treating land as wealth we have arrived at an economic situation clearly analogous to the condition which would exist if we treated air as wealth. Of course we have been educated for countless generations to believe in the sacredness of private property in land, while "free as air" has always signified the right of the human being to use, without charge, that part of nature which he must use in order to live.

No generation can alienate the right of the next generation to its use of air, but eighty per cent of all children born into the world find themselves forced to pay some one for the right to use their share of the earth's surface.

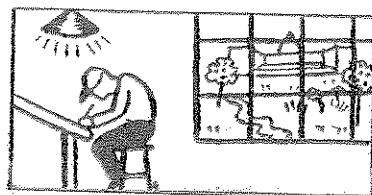
Ethically the two cases are much alike; practically, however, the right of an individual to obtain exclusive use of a given piece of land seems to be a necessity of civilization. How then can the theory of land as nature be brought into harmony with the fact of land as private possession?

The thing can be done merely by changing our mental attitude in regard to property rights in nature.

If land were conceived to be the inalienable property of the people as a whole, and each individual landowner were conceived to be the tenant of his fellow men, paying them rent in the form of a tax to the state, the economic injustice resulting from twenty per cent of the people owning all the desirable land would at once disappear. If this conception were carried out in the manner of levying taxes on land there would be neither land-rich nor land-poor.

This may seem not to differ from the present system for the landowner is at present to some extent the tenant of the state; his land is taxed today, and if he fails to pay that tax he loses the land.

But because land to-day is taxed as wealth and not as a special privi-



lege, it is taxed upon the wrong basis and to the wrong extent.

If we hold to our conception that each individual owner is a permanent tenant rather than an absolute owner, the amount he should pay for the use of his land is the whole annual rental value of the bare land, as determined by the pressure of population upon the land in that locality.

And if each owner should pay to the people of the state the true rental value of that portion of the people's land which he wants to keep for his own use alone, it is obvious that he would not be depriving his fellow-men of their fundamental rights in the soil; he would not be getting unearned wealth and he would not be acquiring an advantage over his landless neighbors which he can bequeath to his children as an advantage over theirs.

As all wealth is created directly or indirectly from land its distribution will be much affected by the relative tax on land compared to the tax on various forms of wealth.

If land is taxed too little the landlord is in a position to demand part of labor's wages before permitting labor to use the land it must have in order to create wealth. This is the starting point in the unfair distribution of wealth. Its keystone is the right of the landlord to demand part of labor's product before labor is allowed access to land.

Since all wealth is a product of labor while land is not, the more we tax wealth the more we tax labor. This does not hurt the man who can acquire labor's product simply by owning land; to him this tax on wealth is not too much to pay for his franchise to appropriate a part of wages in the form of rent. The tax on wealth does hurt the laborer who has to give up part of his product for the privilege of working. The poor pay the tax on wealth far more than do the rich, and they pay it in the added cost of food, clothing and shelter.

The more we tax land according to its value, on the other hand, the less advantage there is in owning it except as we need to use it, and the less labor product the landlord retains after paying taxes.

See: "Progress and Poverty," pp. 337-338; 399-402; 418-421; p. 436.

## A Skeptic Reports

The following letter, under the headline, "No Catch," appeared in the "Voice of the Advertiser" column of Advertising Age, leading advertising publication, of April 11:

"To the Editor: Last January I received a folder inviting me to attend a free 10 weeks course in economics at the Henry George School of Social Science. Being curious by nature and believing this a new kind of racket, I decided to attend the first class on the designated evening.

"When I got to the classroom I found ten other skeptics waiting to find out where the catch was. Well to make a long story short there was no catch. Everything was as advertised. We didn't pay one penny for that evening or for nine succeeding weeks of instruction by an able instructor.

"I'm passing on this story to other advertising people, not because this course is free, but because I believe it a valuable education for everyone in our business. I have taken several years of courses in college economics but never have I found such vital truth as Henry George teaches.

"I understand these 10 lesson courses are now being offered free in over 100 cities in the United States. I urge every advertising man who wants a real education in fundamental economics and social philosophy to attend one of these classes.

"Alexander Fox,

"Merchandising, Chicago."

## Brokers Need Sales

In a recent Market Letter of the New York Title Insurance Company was the following lesson in economics:

"No one outside the city or on the fringe of the town is worrying about the record increase in the tax rate. If anything, brokers in the outer limits of the city are pleased about it, because the sharp rise (in taxes) is compelling land owners to unload their holdings and take a more reasonable attitude with regard to price and terms."

The time will come when real estate brokers will learn that their bread is buttered with high land value taxes.

—F. C.

## Outcasts of the City

The great main liners come and go from busy Newark Airport—symbols of the cooperation that is civilization. The passengers travelling to and from New York in streamlined buses, see a hundred rabbit hutches, made of discarded tin, and bits of sheet iron and wood held together by string and wire. Each is surrounded by reclaimed patches of the Jersey Meadows or salt flats; men, women and children are scratching the surface of these fields.

Yes, these are not really rabbit hutches but dwellings of human beings willing to produce wealth for the satisfaction of their desires, but forced to do it with what tools they can find and in constant fear of eviction from these bits of land on which they "squat."

How much more they could produce on vacant or poorly-used land in Newark or on any of the 40,000 acres of such land in New York City. Idle land—idle people! Given the best land and who is to say they might not be the best people?

Lancaster M. Greene

## Washington's Wardman

Harry Wardman came to Washington, D. C., some thirty odd years ago from Australia, with a few shillings in his pocket. Looking for some way of servicing his fellow-man and thus meriting his trade (which is the modus operandi of civilization), he hit upon the idea of building homes for government employees. He built in all about 9,000 houses, valued at \$30,000,000. Recently he died, a poor man. In 1930 he lost possession of all his major hotel and apartment houses. The builders sow; the landlords reap.

—F. C.

## Why Do They Work?

William J. Campbell, Illinois director of the National Youth Administration, recommends that 2,500,000 "working wives" give up their jobs in favor of unemployed youth. Did he include in this estimate the unfortunate women of the brothels? They work, too. And for the same reason.

—F. C.

## NEWS OF THE CRUSADE AGAINST ECONOMIC ILLITERACY

Edited by Madeleine Swarte

**Henry George School Distributes 18,562 Copies Of George's Books in Record Five-Year Period**

NEW YORK—In five years the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, publishers of the works of Henry George, has sold to the Henry George School of Social Science 18,562 books by George, principally his classic, "Progress and Poverty," according to the record of the Foundation.

The following record of sales to the School is received from the foundation:

May 1933 to May 1934 .....	200
May 1934 to May 1935 .....	1568
July 1935 to June 1936 .....	3035
June 1936 to July 1937 .....	4892
July 1937 to April 1938 .....	8867
Total for five years .....	18,562

This distribution of books on economics by the School—the figures do not, of course, include sales to book stores, colleges and individuals by the Foundation—is more significant from the standpoint of increase than from the quantity itself.

The initial orders for the school year 1938-1939 are for 5,000 copies of "Progress and Poverty," 1,000 copies of "Protection or Free Trade," 500 copies of the "Science of Political Economy." Past sales indicate that these accounts will take care of less than half the year's requirements.

**Seek N. Y. Amendment**

NEW YORK—A proposal for a constitutional amendment permitting differentiation between taxes on improvements and land values was put before the Citizens Union Committee on Revision of the State Constitution, May 12 by William Exton, graduate of the Henry George School. Harold S. Buttenheim also submitted a similar proposal which was referred to the executive committee of the Citizens Union. George Hallett, legislative representative, will bring the proposal before the Taxation Committee of the Convention.

**H. G. F. Chapters Called**

HARTFORD, Conn.—A meeting of the Federated Chapters of the Henry George Fellowship will be held in New York City July 3 and 4, according to Nathan Hillman, national president.

**"Science" in New Edition**

NEW YORK—The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation has announced a new printing of "The Science of Political Economy," in the same format as "Progress and Poverty," "Social Problems" and "Protection or Free Trade." The new book will sell at one dollar.

**Speaks on George's Writing**

BROOKLYN, N. Y.—Dorothy Sara, graphologist, spoke on Henry George's character as revealed in his handwriting in a broadcast on station WBBC May 12.

**Mail Course Promoted**

NEW YORK—In a series of full page advertisements headlined "Our Lopsided Taxation," readers of the leading weekly reviews are being urged to read Louis Wallis's new book, "Burning Question" and to take the correspondence course in fundamental economics given by the Henry George School of Social Science. The series has been arranged by Mr. Wallis at no cost to the School. The copy calls attention to The Financial World's arresting article under that head, explains the economic consequences of the existing medieval system of taxation and concludes, above coupons, "You can do two things about it right now."

**White House Gift**

WASHINGTON—John H. Allen, director of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation and president of the Jersey City Chamber of Commerce, presented a set of Henry George's books, donated by the foundation, to the White House Library, the shelves of the incumbent of the presidential mansion, on May 2.

President Roosevelt, in a letter to the foundation May 9, expressed his gratitude for the gift. It had been suggested by Morris Van Veen, veteran Georgist. Miss V. G. Peterson of the foundation staff made the arrangements.

**Speaks of Danish Progress**

MONTREAL, Can.—Miss Margaret E. Bateman, associate editor of The Square Deal, bi-monthly publication of The Single Tax Association of Canada, gave talks recently on Denmark and the practical application of Georgist principles there before the Single Tax Association in Toronto; the West-End Cooperative, Montreal; the People's Forum at Sherbrooke; the C.C.F. Youth Group; the Emmanuel Youth Forum; the Dalhousie University Alumnae, Montreal; the Deer Park School, Toronto, and Mrs. Louise Boudler's Henry George School class.

**Club Chooses "P. & P."**

NEW YORK—The Book of the Month Club has chosen the Modern Library of "Progress and Poverty" for its list of free books to subscribers and it will be included regularly in each Book of the Month Club bulletin. Five thousand copies were recently published in the edition by arrangement with the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.

**Aid Spanish Brother!**

NEW YORK—The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation has been requested to donate fifty copies of "Progress and Poverty" in French for the use of Prof. A. Matheu Alonzo's students in the National College of Tarragona, Spain. As its book fund is depleted, the foundation will welcome contributions, \$26 plus carriage is needed.

**Owens at London, Ont.**

LONDON, Ont.—H. T. Owens, secretary of the Single Tax Association of Canada spoke on "The Eradication of Poverty" recently to the economics students of the University of Western Ontario. The lecture was arranged by Miss Mary Barker of the University staff and Dr. Logan, head of the Department of Economics.

**Protests "Masses" Ban**

GREENVILLE, Texas—The Greenville Evening Banner, in a leading editorial May 7, protested The New Masses' action in banning advertisements of Louis Wallis's book, "Burning Question." Quoting from The Freeman's protest over the Communist paper's discrimination against a Georgist book, the Banner declared the New Masses' action was evidence the Communists want "the press to print only one side of every issue—the bright, lovely, shiny side of a Utopia of communism."

**New Commonwealth Launched**

MATAMATA, N. Z.—The New Commonwealth is the new organ of the Commonwealth Party of New Zealand and succeeds the Commonwealth formerly published at Wellington. The editorial offices are located on Hohair Street.

**Alumni Greet Mendelson**

NEW YORK—A group of alumni and friends of the Henry George School of Social Science were introduced to Dr. Walter Mendelson, intimate of Henry George, at an informal gathering held by Anna George de Mille, daughter of the philosopher and president of the Board of Trustees of the School, at her home April 21. About thirty five guests were present.

**Hillman a Delegate**

NEW HAVEN, Conn.—Nathan Hillman, Hartford Extension Secretary, was a delegate to the Connecticut Convention of Young Democratic Groups May 7. Although his resolution advocating social land value taxation was lost in committee, he made a fight on the floor against the wage-hour bill, arguing that he measure could not raise real wages. He was the only one of the 400 delegates who spoke against the bill.

## New York's Spring Term Classes to Mark Commencement at Dinner on June 14

NEW YORK—The commencement dinner of the Spring Term classes of the Henry George School of Social Science in New York will be held on Tuesday, June 14, at the Roger Smith Hotel, 40 East Forty-first Street.

The speakers at the exercises will be J. Charles Laue, William Quasha and C. O. Steele, members of the faculty. Sidney Manster, another instructor, will

be toast master.

"Oscar Geiger, founder," will be the subject of the concluding address by Joseph Dana Miller, editor of *Land and Freedom*, and a Trustee of the School since its founding.

It is expected that over three hundred will be present. Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Dancing will follow.

## Army Chief Praises Course

WASHINGTON—The Office of the Chief of Chaplains, United States Army, in the War Department, has called the attention of army chaplains to the correspondence course in fundamental economics and social philosophy given by the Henry George School of Social Science in Circular Letter No. 187 of April 27 as a low-cost reading course "commended as worth while for those interested in politico-social problems."

The Circular Letter was sent to the School May 4 by Chaplain John F. Monahan, in behalf of the Chief of Chaplains, with a note, "We feel confident that several of our chaplains will be eager to avail themselves of the course."

## Headquarters Train 25

NEW YORK—Twenty-five selected students of the Henry George School of Social Science at national headquarters here, who had completed twenty-six weeks of study of fundamental economics and social philosophy and additional supplementary reading, began a teachers training course under the guidance of Frank Chodorov, director, May 2. They will probably devote the entire summer to the course. Another teachers training class is to begin shortly, so that enough instructors will be available to staff one hundred classes in New York in the fall.

## Babson Paper Notes Book

BABSON PARK, Mass.—Babson's Reports for April, circulated among business men and investors, praises Louis Wallis's new book, "Burning Question." It says: "Another appeal for the reduction of taxes on producing enterprise and labor, and for increasing taxation on unproductive land. A few words on the fulfillment of this Henry George principle in Australia and New Zealand. A question perhaps closer to us than most realize."

## Seek Thompson Program

HUDSON, N. Y.—The advanced class in the principles of international trade of the Henry George School of Social Science here memorialized the sponsors of the Pall Mall radio program, which features Miss Dorothy Thompson, noted newspaper writer, to have Miss Thompson discuss the philosophy of Henry George. Willie A. Snyder is the instructor.

## New Henry George Club

CINCINNATI, O.—A Henry George Club was organized May 15 at the home of Albert Colby here. Twenty were present. Its purpose is to advance the movement in every way possible, reported George W. Hughes, who expressed confidence that the organization "will accomplish much."

## Capital Picnic June 5

WASHINGTON, D. C.—The annual picnic of Georgists in Washington and vicinity will be held Sunday, June 5, at the home of Mrs. Jessie Lane Keeley, 112 Jackson Ave., Riverdale, Md. Frank Chodorov, director of the Henry George School of Social Science, and John Lawrence Monroe, field director, plan to attend.

## Buffalo's First Class

BUFFALO, N. Y.—The Buffalo Extension of the Henry George School of Social Science will open its first class, a summer course in fundamental economics, at the West End Presbyterian Church June 1. The Rev. William Wylie Young, formerly of Toledo, Ohio, will be the instructor. Contributors to the Buffalo extension fund include Henry C. Stark, Henry H. Work, Thomas H. Work, Dr. John B. Emswiler and Charles D. Blackhall. Assisting with the secretarial work is Frank D. Silvernail.

## Geneva, N. Y., Class

GENEVA, N. Y.—The opening session of the first extension class of the Henry George School of Social Science was held April 21 at the home of Henry B. Graves, official of the Ontario Sand and Gravel Co., Inc. John Lawrence Monroe, field director, outlined the course. Mr. Graves will be the instructor.

## Judaism Society Class

NEW YORK—The Tuesday Evening Group of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, 15 West Eighty-sixth Street here, of which Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan is leader and Rabbi Ira Eisenstein acting leader, is taking the course in fundamental economics of the Henry George School of Social Science. Ezra Cohen of the faculty of the school is the instructor. The class is being entertained by each of its members, consecutively.

## Class Honors Forkosch

NEW YORK—Morris D. Forkosch, instructor of the advanced class in the science of political economy at the Henry George School of Social Science, was honored at a dinner given by the class at the Hotel Embassy May 12. Two albums of records were presented to him.

## Hartford Trains Teachers

HARTFORD, Conn.—A teachers' training course conducted by the Hartford Extension of the Henry George School of Social Science was scheduled to open May 27. Nathan Hillman is the instructor.

Frank Chodorov, director of the School, and Morris D. Forkosch, president of the New York chapter of the Henry George Fellowship, will be the speakers June 22 at a commencement dinner for seven classes. A reception will be held June 29 at Hartford High School in honor of the new graduates.

## Jersey Bill Passes

NEWARK, N. J.—The Sanford Bill which would permit shifting of municipal taxes from improvements to land values has been passed by the New Jersey State Assembly 31 to 23. The Progressive League of New Jersey is now pressing for its passage by the State Senate. Alfred N. Chandler, Chairman, said that "progress toward getting this legislation has been made solely by educating legislators, editors and others of influence on its merits."

## 416 Enroll in Mail Course

NEW YORK—During the month of April, 416 new enrollments were received by the Henry George School of Social Science in the correspondence course in fundamental economics and social philosophy. About half of these came from persons recommended by students who had taken the course.

## Barton Commends Wallis

NEW YORK—Representative Bruce Barton, business man turned legislator, in a series of recent speeches here, urged a thorough overhauling of the present tax system as one that tends to hamper, strangle and diminish production and also one that rewards non-production, pointing out that "it enriches speculators in unused lands." He recommended Louis Wallis's "Burning Question" as a statement of the case for tax revision.

## Phila Commencement June 14

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.—Mrs. Anna George de Mille, president of the board of the Henry George School of Social Science and daughter of Henry George, Frank Chodorov, director, and Dr. Henry George 3d have been invited to speak at the commencement dinner of the Henry George School here on June 14. Lester A. Jenks is chairman of the fete, which will be held at the Y.M.C.A., 1431 Arch Street.

### Liverpool School Thrives

LIVERPOOL, Eng.—Keen interest in the study of economics is being shown by the Henry George School students at the Liverpool League's room, 21 Harrington Street, at "Beechcroft," and at Birkenhead. Waterloo and Crosby and preparations are being made to insure larger attendance at future classes.

### Portsmouth Pushes School

PORTSMOUTH, Eng.—Practically all the activity of the local League for the Taxation of Land Values here during the month of March was confined to the weekly classes of the Henry George School held in Wesley Central Hall, Fratton Road. Report of two of the meetings appeared in the local Evening News.

### Seeks Clitheroe Class

Manchester, Eng.—Mrs. Sumner, of the Manchester League for the Taxation of Land Values, presiding over a Labour reunion in Clitheroe recently, told the meeting that extensions of the Henry George School of Social Science were being established in all parts of Britain and appealed for the formation of a class in Clitheroe.

### Mrs. de Mille Broadcasts

PHILADELPHIA, Pa.—Anna George de Mille, president of the Board of Trustees of the Henry George School of Social Science, daughter of Henry George, broadcast an address from Station WIP March 23.

### White Boosts Freeman

KANSAS CITY, Mo.—The Kansas City chapter of the Henry George Fellowship adopted a motion urged by Edward White, veteran Georgist, that subscriptions to *The Freeman* for present students of the Henry George School of Social Science be paid for by the alumni association.

"Some time ago, the alumni association subscribed for all who were members at that time, and also all who were then students, so that at this time all graduates are on the subscription list, as well as some others who are not graduates," Mr. White said. "Would it not be a good idea to suggest to the various alumni associations in other cities that their members be subscribed for in a body? That seems to be an important thing and one that an alumni association could well get busy about."

### Linn on Budgets

SEATTLE, Wash.—George Dana Linn has just published a 16 page pamphlet, "How to Balance Budgets, Federal, State, County, Municipal," which shows the evils of land monopoly and the tax muddle resulting from the failure of the public to appropriate ground rent and advocates the Georgist proposal for social land value taxation.

### New Translation Weighed

SANGLI, India—John L. Goheen of the Sangli Industrial and Agricultural School here, a foundation of the American Presbyterian Mission, and an influential lawyer of this city, are considering translating the Teachers Manual of the basic course of the Henry George School of Social Science and Henry George's classic, "Progress and Poverty," into the vernacular in use here. Mr. Goheen obtained a copy of the manual through George E. Evans, president of the Henry George Foundation of America, Pittsburgh.

"A good deal of headway may be made in interesting people in the Henry George movement, especially in British India," Mr. Goheen said. "The situation today seems to be more favorable for such effort than probably it ever has been."

Mr. Goheen and the member of the Sangli bar are associated in an effort to develop a model village in this native state. Their efforts have won wide commendation here as a concrete example of practical Christianity.

### Studies U. S. Radicalism

NEW YORK—Charles Rumford Walker, free-lance writer of Wilton, Conn., has received a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation in politics and economics "to study the influence of radical political movements in the United States since 1917."

### Harvard Recommends 'P. & P.'

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—To interest its student body, alumni and the general public in the study of American culture, Harvard University has distributed 4,000 copies of the "Harvard Reading List in American History," which recommends study of Henry George's "Progress and Poverty" for the understanding of nineteenth century reform movements. George's work is one of sixteen recommended in this connection. Copies of the list may be obtained free from the University Publication Office.

### R. C. Bryant Pamphlet

LOS ANGELES, Calif.—Robert C. Bryant is the author of a new pamphlet, "The New Earth," which attacks absolute private ownership of land and proposes the substitution of the more rational system of tenure which would result from public appropriation of economic rent. Attractively printed, it is published by the Weitzel Publishing Co., 336 South Broadway, Los Angeles, at 10 cents a copy, 15 copies for \$1.

### Campbell on George

MONTREAL, Que.—A. C. Campbell presents an interesting study of the ideas of Henry George as "the true inventor of plenty," a way of economic life, in "The Man Who Invented Plenty," an article in the March issue of *The Canadian Unionist*.

### Who's Who in Georgism

Joseph Dana Miller

Joseph Dana Miller, editor of *Land and Freedom*, international journal of the Georgist movement, and one of the world movement's leading writers, was a colleague and personal friend of Henry George in the economist's campaigns for social reform.

As secretary of the Hudson County Single Tax Club, he fought with George for ballot reform, a campaign which at last triumphed and resulted in the adoption of long steps toward representative government in many parts of the United States. He became well known as an orator and debater at a great meeting for ballot reform in Jersey City. Mr. Miller delivered an address which the *New York Times* called "the best speech of the evening."

He has edited *Land and Freedom*, a bimonthly publication, since 1901 but has found time to contribute many articles on economics, political science, and on general subjects, as well as many pieces of verse to virtually every major magazine in the United States. He has also contributed to the learned periodicals here and abroad studies in Georgist social theory and his editorial leaders and articles in *Land and Freedom* have been reprinted in many countries of the world.

For a period he did a great deal of literary criticism for *The Literary Digest*. He was the first magazine writer in the East to review Edwin Markham's, "The Man With a Hoe," which appeared in *The Criterion* during the editorship of Rupert Hughes. With other business, professional and political leaders, he has been a leading spirit in *The Fossils*, a famous organization of men who as boys wrote and printed their own newspapers.

For many years he has centered his activities in the Georgist movement. In 1917 he edited and published the *Single Tax Yearbook*, a notable contribution to the literature of social land value taxation. In 1926 he published a book of verse, a veritable encyclopedia of the movement in all lands, a book of nearly 500 pages, "Thirty Years of Verse Making." One of the late Oscar H. Geiger's closest friends, he aided Mr. Geiger in establishing the School from the outset and has been unflinching in his activity and support.

### Recent Gifts to the Library of the Henry George School

**Bolton Hall**, donor. "God and the Social Process," by Louis Wallis, University of Chicago Press, 1935.  
**Bolton Hall**, donor. "Dictatorship" by Ryllis Alexander Goslin, Foreign Policy Association, 1936.  
**Bolton Hall**, donor. "The Stagnation of Industry" by Emil O. Jorgenson, James A. Bell Co., 1935.  
**Bolton Hall**, donor. "Land Value Policy" by James Dundas White, United Committee, London, 1934.  
**Bolton Hall**, donor. "Taxation of Land Values," by John Orr, P. S. King & Son, London, 1912.  
**Bolton Hall**, donor. "How to Abolish Poverty" by George L. Record, George L. Record Memorial Association, 1936.  
**Bolton Hall**, donor. "The Tragedy of Man" by Imre Madach, translated by William N. Loew, Arcadia Press, 1908.



# The Theory of The Land Question

by GEORGE RAYMOND GEIGER, Ph. D.

AUTHOR OF

"THE PHILOSOPHY OF HENRY GEORGE"

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This book was written with the conviction that the significance and, in fact, the very meaning of the land problem are not appreciated by contemporary economic theory. It is an attempt to show that the land question may offer a much needed synthesis in economics that will deemphasize the purely technological and pro- or anti-"capitalistic" approach that seems so to intrigue present day writers.

**FREE** *With five annual subscriptions to the Freeman—at the Special group rate of 40c. each.*

It opens with a comprehensive definition of land, one that should help remove the parochial and strictly "agricultural" connotations that the term "land" too often suggests. Next follows an exposition of the meaning and peculiarities of land value; it includes a discussion of many of the controversial points in value theory. There is then attempted a distinction between land and capital, undertaken with the insistence that both the socialistic and the orthodox fusion of land with capital are mistaken. The land question in its relation to socialistic theory is elaborated. Then, there is included a brief history of the land question, purporting to show the universality of the land question, and pointing out that land has been the foundation or the background for all economic exploitation. Finally, there is an essay on land value taxation which introduces some novel amendments to what must be considered an integral part of current fiscal discussion.

The book, by the author of the well-received "Philosophy of Henry George," should appeal to any one who has the slightest interest in and acquaintance with economic or social philosophy. 224 pages, with index, cloth bound, attractively printed. A permanent book, with a valuable contribution to economic thought.

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