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America's Only Original Economist

By G. R. DAVIES

FIFTY YEARS ago the only distinctively American economist to win world fame died in New York. America has forgotten him, but the world of scholarship abroad gives him a high place in the Hall of Fame. His principal work was translated into all the important languages, and sold millions of copies. Even in this country it received the transient honor of a place in the Congressional Record.

It is strange that even though America has produced eminent business leaders, it has never produced a system of economic thought. Our economics—a blend of science and nineteenth-century ethics—has been almost altogether imported from Europe. The English classicists of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and the Austrian "marginalists," have been our teachers. Our own leading economists have merely echoed European teachings, or at best have contributed footnote commentaries. For this reason our present economic system, without our intending it, has drifted into the historic dilemma of hectic inflationary progress alternating with paralyzing deflationary employment—in Henry George's phrase, *Progress and Poverty,* the title of his chief work.

Insofar as Henry George is remembered here at all, he is remembered as an exponent of the so-called "single tax." The term implies a tax on land representing normal interest on its capitalized value. It was based on the Jeffersonian theory that "the earth is given as a common stock for man to labor and live on."

This theory of equal rights in the use of land is one of the oldest ethical concepts of history. It was held by the Hebrew prophets, and in somewhat modified form by classic and medieval philosophers. In an expanded form it was woven into Adam Smith's theory of small business. Hence merely in respect to the single tax, Henry George seems to have little pertinence in these days of world markets, high finance, corporations, and other forms of centralized business control. He seems to violate the truth that religious symbolism since the days of St. Augustine has clearly expressed: a man cannot return to the idyllic simplicity of a frontier Eden, but must look forward to a visioned Eternal City; in the poet's language, the "patriot's dream" of "alabaster cities . . . undimmed by human tears."

But Henry George is well worth remembering as a stimulus to American thinking. For nothing is clearer than that action and theory belong together in business and politics just as much as in chemistry and physics. . . .

If we wish to understand the philosophy of Henry George, we must ignore the single tax panacea. His thought went far beyond this, and if his whole philosophy is understood, one can see why he emphasized land rent as the initial form of taxation. What he really attempted was

a philosophy of history from the Christian point of view. His view of history is not unique but he gives it an optimistic coloring where others, such as Brooks Adams, succumbed to a pessimistic view.

As Henry George saw it, civilization began when land passed into private ownership without recognition of the nature of land rent. This, as George thought, was the economic aspect of the "fall of man"—not private ownership, but rather the failure to recognize the potential privilege of absentee ownership. He saw that in the usual operation of markets, land rent and derived capitalized real properties absorbed from a fourth to a half of the product of industry, and constituted a natural form of taxation, which became the perquisites of hereditary wealth. What he did not clearly recognize, however, was that such rent, at least in an accounting sense, is essential in an efficiently organized economy; and that, moreover, it has been the chief source of the savings devoted to new capital. Hence as an economic fact it cannot be treated lightly. . . .

George explained the rise and fall of empires in terms of man's failure to understand the nature of economic law. As trade expanded and centers of coordination arose, capital was consolidated in the hands of monopolistic ruling classes. The complexity of markets created insuperable difficulties which led to booms and depressions, as today. Depressions stimulated revolt, or wars of aggression. Then the wealthy nobility became warlords, or were supplanted by brutal usurpers. The Hitler episode is a typical modern illustration of this trend.

In George's view, as a consequence of distorted markets, the masses fell into slavery or servitude, and toiled chiefly for the benefit of others. Thus the ancient empires generally passed through periods of free enterprise, and matured into systems of centralized administration by financial and military power. Even benevolent monarchs could do little, since the masses increased beyond the apparent capacity of the country to care for them, as in the Orient today. And when vice and luxury limited reproduction, family life decayed, and the nation with it. The "strait and narrow way" that avoids extremes and maintains a progressive balance has always been hard to find.

So the early empires passed through the free-enterprise stage, only to mature and decline with the misused concentration of wealth. But on favorable frontiers trade again expanded, taking advantage of the culture developed in the old centers. The new nations thus initiated grew to a commanding stature before they in turn decayed. Thus Persia displaced Babylon, Greece displaced Persia, Rome displaced Greece, and England similarly expanded into the wide frontiers of a New World. Now America—the latest favorable frontier—has surpassed them all in commerce and war. Here, Henry George hoped, true freedom would at last be organized.

It is clear that George has not made a direct contribution to the solution of the problem of poverty and war, but he has done something toward a statement of the problem. We may object to calling the income of capitalized natural resources, as developed by corporations, a form of taxation. But at least such income has facilitated progress, even though it ultimately may mature privilege because, in the upper levels, it stresses aristocratic cooperation rather than competition. Obviously the real problem lies only indirectly in the details of organization and taxation. It lies chiefly in the subordination of all—rulers and ruler alike—to reason and conscience.

We are in a tragic crisis of history brought on by the expansion of trade far in advance of the financial and political means of its coordination. We have been betrayed by the superstition that the "law of supply and demand" will take care of us if we merely follow our selfish interests in the market. Consequently we have developed the material sciences far beyond the reach of our ethical and spiritual understanding. Our capacity for organizing destruction has outdistanced our mastery of the ways of peace. Let us hope that Henry George was right in his expectation that under the guidance of Truth a new age of peace and goodwill eventually will dawn.

In that case America's only original economist may have suggested the direction of our quest. Perhaps under adequate leadership American corporate finance, with its recognized right of quasi "taxation"—as Henry George implies—may become a potent factor in a unified world civilization.

A Word With You

By ROBERT CLANCY

These days we have but to mention the word "labor" and we have a problem. Brows knit in thought. "What to do about labor?" Emotions rise. "Are you for labor or against?" Laws are passed. "This law will be good—or bad—for labor."

And while discussions, emotions and laws wax—what about "labor?" It seems to have been all but forgotten that labor is the human effort necessary for producing the things we want. And in the forgetting, attitudes go awry. Some belittle "labor," contending that it should stick to its chores and "stay in its place." Others glorify it and remind us of "the dignity of labor."

Thus, in one or two easy steps, labor is stripped of human meaning and becomes an entity. The entity is given one job for one hand, another job for the other, and two more jobs for the feet. That's the schedule, and no back talk. To relieve this intolerable condition, the labor union enters. The entity now has only one job to do—a turn of a screw or a handle. Is the screw too greasy? Don't touch it, that's for the grease-wipers to do. No back talk.

And what if the entity says, "A few of us know this job pretty well now. Let's open a little shop of our own." "Insurrection!" cries organized management. "It will upset our established and efficient way of doing things." "Treason!" cries organized labor. "You want to become a capitalist."

The screw keeps turning. Independence becomes a quaint, old-fashioned virtue. Discarded is the idea that all of us are labor and that the easiest way to produce what we want is the best way. In all the debate on what is good or bad for labor, has it never occurred to anyone that it is good if we can produce the things we want with less labor? But as soon as you suggest this, it is interpreted that you want to rob the entity "labor" of its reason for existing—to work. But if we are all labor and want not work but the results of work, would it not be better to be able to produce more with less work? Would it not be better to open up opportunities rather than restrict them?

Happy will be that day when every man shall sit under his own tree with none to make him afraid —and look back on all this, and laugh.

VIEWS OF THE NEWS

By SYDNEY MAYERS

"[Freedom of the press in the U. S.] does exist to a degree of near-anarchy and irresponsibility. There is no body or agency or censor or official or law to tell a newspaper what to publish or what to leave out . . . This unhampered freedom may be good or bad." We quote this editorial gem from The Newspaper PM, champion of the people's rights.

Now empowered to open private mail carrying "suspicious" contents, Britain's Treasury Department will use X-rays and fluorescent screens to search for contraband valuables. Calmly observes The London Evening Standard: "This latest infringement of individual liberty brings the country a long way down the road to a police state."

After a special survey, the U. N. Economic Commission for Europe reports a current manpower deficit in European countries of 1,130,000 workers. We suggest introducing the commission to the International Refugee Organization, now trying desperately to settle 1,500,000 "displaced persons"—they ought to get together!

A European flight requires making out over 500 papers; a U. S.-Australia round trip calls for about 5000 sheets; an air traveler to Europe returning via South America must supply the same data 26 times; it takes 1600 pages to print our foreign air travel restrictions. Did somebody ask what's holding up aerial progress?

Thanks to continuing world-wide dollar shortages, barter transactions are steadily increasing, with ten or more nations engaging in highly successful barter-trading. Yes, as any student of "P. F. T." will brightly points out, international trade is an exchange of commodities for commodities—money or no.

Confounding critics who decry New York's neglect to provide much-needed housing, our fair city's authorities are planning a new $6,600,000 structure, sufficient for 800 tenants. But before you dash out to reserve quarters there, be advised that the proposed building is to be the new Brooklyn City Prison.

Complaining that a proposed U. S. grant of $300,000,000 would be "a drop in the bucket," China's Vice President Sun Fo declares: "I've always had a hidden suspicion that American friendship was not dependable." "This will compel China to work out its own destiny," bitterly concludes the son of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, emancipator of his country.

In a Britain-wide broadcast, the Minister for Economic Affairs urged "cheerfulness on everyone's part." A few days later, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a new tax program, "designed to drain some $832,000,000 from expendable funds in the pockets of British taxpayers"—adding greatly to the cheer, no doubt.

A city plan to widen Montreal's busy Dorchester Street provides that 20 per cent of the cost will be payable pro rata on the municipal valuation of the land, without buildings, in the affected district. Oscar Boelens points out that this levy will encourage building construction, since in no other way can landowners recover the assessments they must pay.

Counsel for the National Cooperative Milk Products Federation warns that "the American farmer may be faced with competing effectively in the world market" under the new 23-nation tariff agreement, which limits subsidies and price supports. He adds the new program is an "advanced concept of free trade"; we add: "Is that bad?"

Normally we eschew the subject of politics, a dubious field of endeavor; but when political reactions are rooted in economic phenomena, we feel loath to ignore it. We wonder if the severe Labour Party setbacks in recent English, Scottish and Welsh elections reflect the results of the government's bungling Fabianism—we just wonder, that's all!

The Citizen's Public Expenditure Survey discloses that of the $9,804,089,407 contributed (?) by New York State's taxpayers to federal, state and local governments, over 76 per cent came from personal income and business taxes. Lest you feel that at least a small part of this burden might fall on land-monopolies, the survey emphasizes that it includes no "real estate" taxes—which account separately for 8.1 per cent!

Among Our Contributors

HARRY GUNNISON BROWN, Professor of Economics at Missouri University (Columbia), author and lecturer, prepared the unique Extension Division course described elsewhere in this issue. He thinks it important for students to learn to reason from cause to effect, rather than to spend much time memorizing definitions. Asked, somewhat jocularly, by Barbara Schmitz whether a man had to be a social philosopher to be an economist, he replied that "a man with a heart can be an economist." After a pause he added, "An economist could conceivably be a man with no heart if he could reason accurately from cause to effect, since then his reasoning could serve as guidance in human affairs even though he had himself no interest in the welfare of others."

G(EORGE) R. DAVIES, sociologist and professor of statistics in the College of Commerce at the University of Iowa (Iowa City), has been for eighteen years, editor of the Iowa Business Digest in which his article here published first appeared. This monthly Digest which reaches business men and former Iowa graduates is a very human blend of business philosophy and statistics. When Editor Davies wrote his article about *America's Only Original Economist* he was not aware (as he is now) that there were any schools in which Henry George's principles were being taught. He is the author of *Social Environment, National Evolution,* and *Introduction to Economis Statistics.*

MILDRED JENSEN LOOMIS, co-editor of the well known decentralist paper, The Interpreter, lives in Brookville, Ohio. She majored in economics in Nebraska University but did not explore *Progress and Poverty* until ten years later, at which time she became a teacher of its principles. Three years ago she published, with able assistance from Ralph Borsodi, Vol. I, No. 1 of the semi-monthly periodical which continues to interpret "current events for people concerned with the achievement of normal living." Its philosophy is based upon Belloc and Chesterton — Henry George, Jefferson, Warbasse and Virgil.

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Georgism and Decentralism

By MILDRED JENSEN LOOMIS

MUCH AS WE deplore the use of "ism," those three letters when attached to a root word, help identify an ideology or set of ideas. To me, Georgism means the fundamental analysis of economic realities which Henry George made—his differentiation between land and capital, his statement of the laws of rent and wages, his suggestion that site-rent go for public use while all labor products be reserved for private ownership of individual producers. Though it stands as a negation to the current trend of Centralization, Decentralism is likewise a positive philosophy and practice.

"Centralization," says Ralph Borsodi, whose name is most often linked with specific definition of centralization and decentralization, "is that method of planned action in which control of any activivties—industrial, financial, educational, political or religious—of individuals or of the people as a whole, is concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer people. Decentralization is that method of implementing human aspirations in which individuals satisfy their wants as far as possible through *personal action* (including that of the family) and rely *as little as possible* upon group action and institutions for their satisfaction."

Most Georgists will sense and agree with the underlying principle of individual liberty which Decentralists thus put foremost. But they will doubtless quickly note that Decentralists put less stress on group action than do Georgists. Decentralists, for the most part, favor a culture in which a majority of people have some part in primary production—in the creation of their own food, clothing and shelter. My understanding of the teaching of most current Georgist leaders is that they do not question (as George did not, in *Progress and Poverty*) an almost limitless specialization of labor and an almost endless labyrinth of exchange. True, people could escape the dehumanizing aspects—the monotonous factory assembly lines and uncreative transporting of goods—if free land and full competition existed, but this does not obviate what seems to the convinced Decentralist an over-emphasis from many Georgists on "group action." From George's statement that three or a hundred people working together can produce more than three or a hundred working alone, has resulted a wholesale and unquestioning insistence on three or a hundred combining in the production of *everything*. Even milk, bread and butter, where both experience and research prove it is more efficient—on the hard basis of cost as well as concomitant satisfactions—to implement the desires for these necessaries in the Decentralist way—"through direct personal action, relying as little as possible upon group action and institutions."

My former faith in what I now term *over*-specialization, was one deposit of a college major in economics which George's fundamental economics did not upset. But the Borsodi School of Living and seven years of decentralist home-production have shown that high diversification and much exchange, for many things, is not efficient in terms of cost, nor desirable in terms of freedom. For instance, I have produced hundreds of pounds of nutritious whole wheat bread at less than 3 cents a loaf, when under the "institutional, group action, diversified-labor system" it was selling for 11 and 12 cents. We grind our own wheat in an inexpensive electric mill, knead the dough in an electric mixer and bake it in an electric oven. When prices were "average," we entered the cost of the wheat at 2 cents a pound, added cost of all other materials, figured in depreciation, interest and overhead, taxes, etc. Actual labor is only the proportionate share of the few minutes needed to assemble materials.

Granted that the price of commercial baker's bread is looaded with taxes and monopoly items which George's system would eradicate, but so are the costs of our mill, motor mixer and stove which we pro-rate to each loaf we produce. However, our loaves do not carry advertising, selling, transporting and a dozen other costs inherent in the mass production of bread. Our mechanical equipment is, of course, the result of specialization in labor, which Decentralists approve. All we ask is that we de-centralize into personal family action all those activities like production of food-stuff, most clothing and other items, totaling almost two-thirds of the average family's budget, which modern technology and electricity make more efficient there than in the exchange system.

Moreover, the Decentralist doesn't reckon simply with cold cash as the only cost of a productive activity. He rates high, as any realist must, the inevitable social, esthetic and character-forming aspects of all "economic" activities. Granting that "only individuals exist," the Decentralist plans for himself the day by day life which involves the largest area of actual significant decisions which he himself must make. Viewed from the needs of a whole life-span—including that of the small child and of the aged persons—the productive, self-sustained farmstead offers a greater number of such choices than almost any other place. Elbow-room is an essential to the Decentralist type of freedom. We feel the need to move from an environment in which people are so inter-dependent that no one of us can take any action which does not affect the others, and so subjects us all to some common and restricting regulation. Because of these and other considerations, the Decentralist movement centers in a rural emphasis, which generally speaking, is absent from the thinking of many Georgists.

Decentralists also take exception to the implications in George's famous dictum, "Human desires are never satisfied." Too often this means that if one has an ice-cream cone, a suit of clothes, an automobile, or a home, it therefore follows one will want ten ice cream cones, six suits, a speedier car or an ever larger home, and that life is "better" if that be accomplished. The fact is that human beings are distinguished from animals in possessing reason—the ability to reflect on, alter and direct desire. Human desires are, and always have been, subject to "influence." Decentralists suggest that desires be educated in relations to "norms" or standards which will issue in the fullest development of all the capacities in the human personality. These capacities, they maintain—the biological, manual, ethical, intellectual, artistic, psychological capacities—find an essential environment and adequate stimulus for full, rounded development in the well-equipped family homestead; in the direct production of the simple necessaries of food, clothing and shelter, plus the health, recreational and cultural effects which result.

Georgism and Decentralism are together in wanting to limit government to (1) guaranteeing equal opportunity and (2) protecting life and property. Many Decentralists—not all—see the public collection of site-rent as a prerequisite to equal opportunity. But the Decentralists who have given most thought to this are not satisfied with the vague Georgist concept that "government" should collect the rent. Too often this denotes or implies the *federal* government, and this to a Decentralist is anathema. Decentralists reject centralized government for even so good an end as collecting site-rent. They insist that only in *small* government units—the local, face-to-face communities—will justice be sure and democracy approximated. They therefore promote the organization in each local community or township, of a Land Association to administer surface land and its rent. Site-value of rivers, harbors and forests should be regionally administered, and the site-value of oil, ores and minerals go to a *world* trust fund.

The word, decentralization, is coming into common usage. A growing number of agencies are forming to foster some resistance to increasing regimentation, urbanism and centralization. Some of these have definitely participated in the two-year-old National Decentralist Conference, an informal association for the exchange and integration of the various ideas which motivate them. To suggest that the word "Decentralism" has, as yet, the same meaning to all of them, or that it means all that has been discussed here, would be misleading. Some groups are fostering primarily the decentralization of industry—the physical removal of plant and equipment from large urban centers to the open country or small towns; some are working to enliven the small communities; others are against the chain store and seeking legislation to protect small business men; many are fostering the diversified farm, the productive home and the modern homestead; some are most concerned with the conservation of the soil, and the building of human health through proper soil and food culture. For the most part, the cooperatives which seek to bring business into the hands of the consumer or producer are decentralist; several which make their special emphasis on eradicating the monopoly in money and currency are included, and certainly the Georgists belong in this group, though many will never have heard the term decentralism.

To bring them all together—to enable each one to realize that theirs is but a partial answer—and to focus the energy of all to a sufficiently intelligent program to meet the crisis of our time is the function of the Decentralist Conference. It is in that group that Georgists can make a real contribution by sharing their findings, and by learning from the others what is being undertaken. In due time the Decentralist Conference can become the *action program* for every person who loves liberty and wants to restore responsibility.

Ground Due Part of Danish Language

By F. FOLKE

LOOKING BACK from my 74th year I can see clearly the pattern my life has followed since early childhood. My father was a farmer, born in deep poverty, who at the age of nine was sent away from home and forced to support himself. My mother was from a home of old rural culture, and her poetic mind had been deeply influenced by a visit to a Folks High School. Both my parents were devoted disciples of the founder of these schools, N. F. T. Grundtvig—a great religious personality and promoter of liberty and justice. He died a year before I was born.

It is now 100 years since Grundtvig expressed his views on the land question in words which might be translated thus:

"In every country the people are the proprietors of the land and can never by any law lose this right of possession. It is only the utility and use of the land that can rightly be settled by the laws of the country and be bought and sold. *Injustice never can by any law be* changed into justice."

Could Henry George have said it better?

In this spirit of devotion and freedom I grew up as an only child. My youth was stamped with the violent struggle of the common people against the aggression of a landed aristocracy for the preservation of their constitutional rights and liberty. I went through the Technical High School and graduated in 1898 as a civil engineer. Four years later on my wedding trip to England my young wife and I found ourselves one evening listening to a lecture by John Wilhelm Rowntree on "The Garden City of Tomorrow." I did not then realise fully how much this would influence my later life, though I had a premonition of it.

We both felt strongly the influence of the speaker's personality when in his clear and convincing demonstration he told how the housing problem had hitherto been neglected in our modern society. As an engineer I had been educated to the promotion of technical progress, especially in city life, and there before me stood that prophetic young man, pointing out that the modern city with all its facilities, is not a flower of our civilization but rather a tumor upon it—a sign and source of social sickness.

My professional work in the civil service of Fredericksberg (an independent part of Copenhagen) chiefly concerned with water supply and fire fighting, gave me the opportunity to follow and occasionally to influence the evolution of the housing problem, and to take part in the discussion of it. Gradually a number of people became convinced of the necessity of a radical reform but none was able to find the way.

It was therefore a revelation when I met Henry George and felt that at last I had discovered the fundamentals. That conviction has never left me since the time, in 1909, when I entered the Danish Henry George Union, of which I was chairman for 23 years. The purpose of this Union was, briefly, to promote the solution of social questions through the economic liberation of the people along the lines indicated by Henry George—complete land value taxation, free trade, and the abolition of all taxes on income and values created by labor.

We have sought to realise this object through education of public opinion by means of public addresses, writings, and political activity within all parties. It has been a long and troublesome way, but always worth the effort as we marched along, step by step. In 1911 we succeeded in having a first tentative land valuation and in 1915 a common valuation. But not until 1922 was a common state tax founded on land values. In 1926 the same principle was adopted in communal rating. In 1932 we got a land value increment tax of two per cent in principle but with great deductions [exemptions] and now this year, we hope to have it raised to four per cent and to have the deductions reduced.

This last step has been possible because finally an increasing number of people have come to understand that the speculation in land values is at the root of our housing crisis. When, during the first world war, such a crisis arose, a committee on the housing question was appointed by the government. As a member I then tried in vain to convince them of this underlying factor. Nevertheless the truth is always marching, how ever slowly.

Though the idea or spirit of Henry George is even now understood by only a small minority, the principle of land value taxation has been adopted by a strong majority, even by the Socialists and Communists—but only as a component of an exorbitant taxation. Today the taxes on land values amount to less than one per cent of the state taxes. When I retired in 1945 I became editor of our periodical *Grundskyld*. This name means "ground due," or "duty toward the community," as contrasted to *taxes* which depend upon the power of the State. Through constant reiteration by us, this word has now become a part of the Danish language and has been introduced into our legislation. With this much accomplished it should be easier for succeeding generations to carry on the battle for justice and to experience the joy and happiness which is its certain reward.

Ici France

OUR FRENCH colleagues are busy reviving Georgist activity in the land of the Physiocrats. We are especially gratified to see the reappearance of *Terre et Liberte*, the French Georgist quarterly, which was obliged to suspend publication during the war. The July-August-September issue has reached us, and its masthead proudly announces that this is the 16th year of publication. While the journal must be mimeographed for the time being, we note at least one significant advance—it is published simultaneously in France and Belgium, in the French and Flemish languages. A. Daude-Bancel is editor of the French edition and Marcel Cortvriend edits it in Belgium under the title *Grond en Vrijheid*.

Dispatch from

By T. A. M

IT SEEMS that Gino Callaioli, one of the many thousands of sharecroppers, has "gone Communist." There are 500 more like him on the ancient Corsini feudal estate which covers 60 square miles, about 38,400 acres

Gino lives in abject destitution. Water must be carried several hundred feet to this house He has no stove, so meals are cooked over an open fireplace. He works 18 hours a day in the summer; 12 in the winter.

The Communists promise Gino they will oust the Corsini family, and give him the 25 acres he works; and all kinds of other things, *free*.

What does Gino want? Not much. He would like to own what his labor produces, and not to share it with the Corsinis. He believes this would give him a better life, and as the Communists promise to do this, he is for them. No other relief is offered him.

What to do? A *"do-nothing"* policy, a "let things revert to the status before the war" will fail. Dividing the land into minute peasant farms is not the answer. Russia has tried this in conquered Prussia and the peasants are worse off than before. Who can say whether Gino should have the 25 acres he cultivates. Some other farmer may receive 15 or perhaps 40 acres. Or, better or poorer quality soil. Possi-

———O

America's Answer

ORGANIZED at the University of Notre Dame in September 1945, the national Decentralist Conference met for the fourth time at Parsons College, Fairfield, Iowa. Referring to the conference theme, "Decentralization—America's Answer to Communism and Monopoly." Upton Close explained to a large luncheon audience Communist strategy for taking over the reins in the United States. Later he joined Ralph Borsodi; R. J. Blakely of The Des Moines Register, and Don Berry, publisher of the Indianola Record; in defining the *American Way* as the way of initiative and freedom from monopoly as well as decentralization of ownership, control, government, production, population, and education.

Ways of implementing decentralist ideas were presented by able leaders on "The Productive Home," "The Small Community," and "The Challenge of Rural Life." Ralph Borsodi of Suffern, New York; Noah Alper of St. Louis; Louis Weitzman of Newark; and Royal Rood of Detroit; participated in a discussion of "De-Centralization of Control" presided over by J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco.

A gala fall festival of dancing and original rural songs concluded the two-day sessions. An executive secretary will be employed to further integrate the efforts of various groups whose aim is to resist regimentation.

"The Decentralist Answer," by Mildred Jensen Loomis, a reprint from The Christian Century; together with a valuable bibliography by Mrs. Loomis, originator of the Conference; will be sent to any reader, upon request.

Chianti Hills

eHENRY

bly the superintendent of the Corsini estate may be worth many times Gino's yearly value to society, and the latter can make more working for him on a large farm than for himself on an uneconomical tiny subsistence one.

Italy should immediately free all land—city and farm—for its best possible use. It can do this by collecting all land rent in taxation. Then he who can produce most—and benefit himself and society most—will pay the highest rent and use the land. No one then would hold land from its best use; the small farmers would have equal rights with the Corsinis to the land of their birth—Italy.

How could it be done practically? All taxes should be removed, as quickly as possible, from the results of Gino's labor—his cattle, his crops, and his home. And, of course, from the product of the labor of all the people in all Italy—city and country, both rich and poor. Trade should be free with the whole world, so that *the Ginos* can sell in the highest market and buy in the cheapest. Support government by a full tax on the value of land.

Phoenix-like, a great Italy would arise from the ashes of war, and a free people would mock the efforts of the communistic state slaves. But, do nothing and *the Ginos* will succumb to the wiles of the siren.

Price Shrinking

By R. G. LeTOURNEAU

WE WILL NEVER freeze the spiral of inflation until we thaw out the law of supply and demand. Legislation cannot, in my opinion, abolish the black market in autos, building supplies, steel or other materials and products. Why, legislation—yes, legislated economics—is the villain who got us into our present pickle. How then can he be the hero to rescue us from it?

Bringing pressure to bear on the producer of goods to hold his prices down and at the same time featherbedding the worker is like putting water in a tin can, sealing it tight and then building a fire under it. It can stand considerable pressure, but eventually it will let go with a bang.

Shortening of work hours and raising wages to produce worker prosperity is a dog chasing its tail. It just can't catch up. The only way men can have more than they produce is by banding themselves together to take more than their share at the expense of other workers. But even that they cannot do for long. Others will follow suit and the end will be poverty for all, for production will decline progressively.

What is real prosperity? As we have said before, it is not merely having a fistful of folding money. It is having available an abundance of the things we want. Such abundance is possible only through mass production, and mass production is possible only through well-tooled and well-directed labor.

The answer then to inflation isn't legislation —it's perspiration.

Study Relation of Men to the Earth

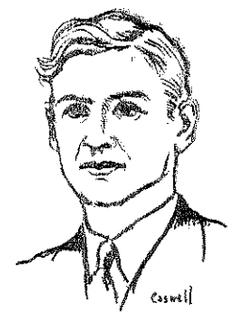
By HARRY GUNNISON BROWN

THE HENRY GEORGE School of Social Science, compared with our various universities and colleges, has only insignificant financial support. It has, in the main, only part-time, unpaid, volunteer teachers. Yet it is striving to spread information and understanding on a phase of economics which has, with only a very few exceptions, been either entirely neglected in the universities or treated briefly, with gross inadequacy and with inexcusable bias. The Henry George School is striving to do what the teachers of economics in the schools, colleges and universities ought to be doing and, indeed, ought to have been doing for at least the last five or six decades. Had the professors of economics thus taken pains to make clear to their students just how a land-value tax system would affect our economic life—and why—we might by now have widespread sentiment for and be well on our way toward realization of this overwhelmingly important reform. Unless and until the professional teachers of economics will assume this task, the Henry George School of Social Science is needed desperately.

The Henry George School should continue to stress "fundamental economics," i.e., the economics that considers especially the relation of men to the earth and the right of all men to work on, to live on and to draw subsoil deposits from the earth, without having to pay a few men for *permission* to do so. If ever the time should come when the School ceases to stress such fundamental economics or when its teachers cease to do so, it will no longer have a right to its present name.

But this does not mean that the leaders and teachers of the School ought to be unfamiliar with all branches of economics except those that have been especially contributed to and clarified by Henry George. In fact, some who have been rather close students of Henry George are thus quite unfamiliar with highly significant contributions to economics, including contributions which shed a good deal of light on some of the very questions in which they are most interested. Many times, when pondering how the Henry George School might increase its prestige and its influence, it has seemed to me that an important means to this end would be an increased understanding, by some of its teachers, of these other branches of economics. Such understanding would help them to see Henry George's contributions in their proper setting as part of a larger body of knowledge. It would enable them to discuss with persons outside of the School, and to illuminate for these outsiders, aspects of economics which, now, they do not themselves understand. Thus they would win added respect for their own insight and added respect for the School.

Among various aspects of economics with which Georgists are, often, altogether unfamiliar are many important facts regarding capital, regarding the "marginal productivity" of capital and, therefore, of *saving* and regarding the relation of the rate of interest to this marginal productivity. Yet no one who lacks this background is completely equipped to puncture the fallacies in the socialist and communist (the Marxian) theory of "surplus value." And for lack of this background not a few whose social idealism was first stirred to life by Henry George have afterwards become socialists themselves.



Another branch of economics on which the great majority of Georgists appear to be uninformed is that dealing with money, commercial banking, inflation and deflation of commercial bank credit (checking accounts), with the relation of such inflation and deflation to average prices, wages, etc., and, when prices (including wages, interest and rents) are "sticky," the relation of such inflation and deflation to fluctuations in business activity.

Certainly not all, nor even a majority, of alumni and students of the Henry George School can be expected to go far into these various diverging aspects of our economic set-up. Many of these alumni and students are indeed very busy persons upon whom rest other and important obligations. And I would repeat here what I said in my beginning paragraph, that there is desperate need for a group and an institution which shall stress above all else the relation of men to the earth on which and from which all men must live. Nevertheless, if it is possible for alumni and students who do not themselves yet have complete understanding of the operation of the economic system, to *point to the Henry George School of Social Science as an institution among whose leaders and teachers such understanding is to be found* and if, from time to time, the contacts of these understanding leaders and teachers with persons outside of the School serves to reveal such understanding, surely the prestige of the School and its influence will be appreciably enhanced.

This Is to Announce—

A CORRESPONDENCE course in General Economics identical with that taught on the campus of the University of Missouri and currently being taken by about 900 students, is now being offered to readers of the Henry George News. Assignments and questions were prepared by Professor Harry Gunnison Brown as part of the Adult Education and Extension Service of the University, and students who have the proper prerequisites may, by taking this course, earn a credit of five semester hours.

Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* as abridged by Dr. Brown, and two books by Harry Gunnison Brown will be used as texts in this course which is as fundamental and exhaustive as its length permits; and the fee is only $20. Papers will be read and commented on by a reader at the University. The long list of topics to be covered (available on request) will be of vital interest to all Georgists. Here is an invaluable opportunity for students and teachers to test their knowledge and add to their mastery in the field of economics.

ROMANCE that flowered under the very noses of the staff members of HGSSS-Chicago without their knowing it, culminated in the marriage on October 24, in Chicago, of Miss Grace M. Campbell and Robert Tideman.

Bob, son of Dean Henry L. T. Tideman, is education director of the Chicago Extension, and has served as teacher, speaker, and publicity and advertising director. A graduate of the University of Illinois, he was an electrical engineer with the Public Service Company of New Jersey from 1941 to 1943. During this time he was an instructor in the Newark extension of the School. Upon returning to Chicago he helped organize the Chicago extension's speakers bureau. He was employed by Hotpoint Company, a division of General Electric, until 1945 when he joined the School's full-time staff.

Grace first studied with the School in 1940 on the recommendation of "my sister, Eileen" Campbell, an instructor. She joined the staff in 1945 and now heads the mimeographing and mailing department, always handling the work with such aplomb and cheer that she charms all those about her.

Mr. and Mrs. Tideman are now at home at 1650 Nelson Street, and as usual, at the School headquarters, 236 N. Clark Street, Chicago.

—CECIL CHAMNESS

Ottawa

The Ottawa Henry George Society is a flourishing body of seriously-thinking members who meet on Monday evenings in the home of H. G. Barber, their Director. This class has a membership this year of twenty-four members, representing many professions: Government Service, teaching, commercial and business callings.

They have most dignified surroundings for their meetings, having for a background countless shelves of books, in a quiet atmosphere far from the noise of street cars and the blaring of wurlitzers. Each member feels most fortunate in having the opportunity of attending.

Lively discussions take place and, later they hope to relate here some of these discussions because, as time elapses, they should become increasingly interesting.

The Ottawa Society takes this opportunity of wishing all other Societies the compliments of the season, and may the year ahead prove the best each ever has had.

Boston

Boston, the dignified home of the "Bean and the Cod" unbended Halloween evening when the Henry George School held its second get-together of the year in the form of a quiz program.

The quiz-masters of the program were John S. Codman, J. Robert Nichols, Mitchell Lurio and Sanford Farkas. Questions were thrown at the experts with great speed, but these seasoned Georgists could not be stumped and the evening ended with some lively round table discussion. One heckler present insisted that the money question was the cause of the social problems of the times. The audience very quickly pointed out that the money problem was not basic; the effect of this reform would be similar to the effect of a labor-saving invention resulting in an increase in progress. So long as the land question was not solved, no permanent results would be obtained. Land owners would receive all the gain, and the forces of progress would tend to push those who labor, downward to a

A Merry Christmas

greater degree. Many present asked that the quiz program be made a monthly feature of the school's activities. Fortified with clear, terse answers, they went forth to help in the work of getting students for the winter term.

The Commencement dinner for the Fall term classes will be held at the Fox and Hounds Club in Boston the evening of December 12th. Six graduates will give short talks on "What the course in *Progress and Poverty* has done *for me.*" The main speaker will be Mr. Cecil Pasco of London.

Chicago

Eugene C. Phillips will speak on "Why I Chose America" at the Chicago Extension's fourth monthly commerce and industry luncheon in Marshall Fields' English Room December 10th. Mr. Phillips was formerly head of G. C. Siegle Company and Kast and Ehringer, chemical manufacturers with plants in Austria, Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Bulgaria. He came to the United States in 1938 after Hitler invaded Austria and is now assistant sales manager of Pettibone Mulliken Corporation.

Mr. Phillips follows W. W. Kester, consulting economist and instructor in the School, who spoke in September on "A Practical Economic Program for Commerce and Industry"; Louis E. Nelson, president of the First National Bank of Maywood and treasurer of Cook County, who addressed the commerce and industry group in October on "A Banker Looks at the Treasurer's Office"; and Jerome Joachim, publisher of the Berwyn Beacon, also a member of the School's faculty, who spoke to the group in November on his successful experience with the "incentive plan" in his plant.

Speaker in February will be F. Dewey Anderson, president of the Wilmette State Bank.

The commerce and industry luncheon is held on the second Wednesday of the month and is attended by Chicago executives and business men who are graduates of the Henry George School.

Los Angeles

Henry George is to be on the air December 20th. Through the efforts of our good friend, Herman Ellenoff, the stirring tale of the Prophet of San Francisco will be broadcast on the American Storybook Program over Station KLAC, Hollywood (570 kilocycles) Saturday, December 20, at 1:15 P.M. The American Storybook program is produced by the Los Angeles City Recreation and Park Department.

Mr. Ellenoff wrote a letter to the director of the program, suggesting that Henry George be included. Following are excerpts from the reply: "Thank you very much for your suggestions. It is letters like yours that keep us on the air and how we do appreciate them! Yours was read to every member of the cast. To be given a "request" is something we had hoped for, but never quite expected. So thank you again." This shows what one person can accomplish. Every one of us can write letters to programs such as this, and, who knows, we might be surprised at the results.

In line with the policy of launching a program of community activity among graduates in each neighborhood, a group of the most interested graduates and some instructors in the Santa Monica Bay area had a supper meeting at the Helen Foster Restaurant, Monday evening, November 3rd. After a delightful magic exhibition by Herb Sulkin, who filled a tumbler with water to about half an inch above the top without spilling any, the group discussed enthusiastically intellectual, social and promotional activity programs for their community. Those present were: Mrs. Margaret F. Austin, Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Hartmann, William Johe, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence T. Mariner, Herbert Sulkin, John Will, and Mr. and Mrs. Wm. B. Truehart.

Ohio

Mrs. Juanita Grant devoted several paragraphs of her interesting column in the Zanesville, Ohio News, "Here and There with the Old Gossip" to an explanation of the program of the Henry George School, urging readers to attend classes.

Robert D. Benton, who is conducting two fundamental courses in Zanesville and one in Philo, is always being told he looks like somebody else. "I must be sort of a cosmopolitan mug," was his recent retort.

Allan J. Wilson, Cleveland instructor, was the contributor of a splendid three-part editorial entitled "Henry George—Apostle of Freedom" published in the Cleveland Plain Dealer in October. He was invited to write this in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the death of Henry George.

Cincinnati students opened three full classes in Fundamental Economics. One is meeting in Hughes High School under the leadership of Carl Gailey; and Carl Strack, accomplished linguist, is teaching in the Wehrman Avenue Christian Church. The third is being conducted by Rabbi Michael Aaronsohn, author and scholar, whose inspiring book, *Broken Lights* should be read by every Georgist. Behind the scenes stand the Reverend W. L. Weber and Harry Kuck, two ardent Georgists who deserve much praise for the cooperation they have given.

Fred Rothfuss of Columbus is teaching a class in the First Unitarian Church, just across the street from Ohio State University and hopes a number of university instructors will join.

Edwin C. Esten, Lima Public Library instructor, hasn't lost a single student since the opening of his class. Verlin D. Gordon, director of the Ohio Extension, who lives in Lima, spoke before a recent gathering of the Women's Guild of St. John's Church, at Lorain. Dr. E. M. Mowry of South Charleston plans to resume teaching in Springfield soon.

San Diego

The San Diego, California, extension held early finishing exercises this Fall, to beat the Thanksgiving holidays, although the classes were completing their work only that week. The event was observed Tuesday, November 25, in First Unitarian Church.

J. E. Addington, lately of Los Angeles and Pasadena, where he served on the Henry George Board of Directors and faculty, but recently moved to San Diego, delivered the address, "Earnings vs. Winnings," to some fifty graduating students of basic classes, with a large assemblage of friends and well wishers, besides other students of post-graduate courses.

And Happy New Year

A question period and lively discussion followed the lecture and awarding of certificates.

Captain Jesse B. Gay, U.S.N. Retired, a highly esteemed member of the faculty of the San Diego, California, extension, has been in the Naval Hospital here for a check-up, but is out again, with flying colors, and back on the job of teaching a small select group of "real estate speculators" who, incidentally (or rather, quite naturally, considering the instructor they have) are turning out to be 100 per cent Georgists!

Bessie B. Truehart, director of the extension, substituted for him during his absence.

Newark

Requests for speakers have fairly overwhelmed Newark headquarters and the Dean, Alexander Goldfinger, is kept busy. A meeting which revealed an unusually interested group took place in November when he addressed the National Meeting of the Newark Hard-of-Hearing League at Batcheller Hall, Y.W.C.A. Some of those present are planning to take a special class at the school. The dean is scheduled to speak to about 500 students of the Essex County Vocational and Technical High School in December on the subject, "The Science of Economics and Its Relation to Current Events." He will also address the Men's Club of the Elizabeth Avenue Presbyterian Church of Newark on December 10th.

Among the faculty members teaching some 17 classes in Newark and environs are: H. F. Badgley, Frank A. Bermingham, DeWitt Clinton, Mrs. Geoffrey W. Esty, Lewis R. Harris, Dr. Edwin C. Hart, Robert A. Hayward, William A. Kraiss, Michael Merlin, George R. Meyer, Mrs. C. A. Miller, Frank Oliver, William Perkins, Louis N. Perma, Dr. William R. Rinkenbach, and Mrs. Andrew Thompson. One of the new instructors is contemplating formation of a class of top executives in Newark who will meet at headquarters. Class attendance has been kept up by a series of telephone calls from the instructors, with the result that many classes have added new students toward the middle of the course. Students make up the previous work by taking the true and false correspondence lessons.

Another innovation tried out by the new director, Miss Marjorie Sweet, was to circularize, periodically, in lots of 100, some of those who failed to enroll for the classes; suggesting that the correspondence course be taken instead. This has brought in 65 enrollees so far and the students are doing splendidly, with a percentage of errors as low as one, two and three, indicating a good type of student indeed.

St. Louis

Noah Alper had the delightful idea some ten years ago, of writing to Father Dawson in Dublin, who knew Henry George and undoubtedly admired him. Father Dawson replied to the St. Louisan's letter (Noah was then living in California) but he sent his reply to Mrs. Anna George de Mille. Shortly before her death Mrs. de Mille came upon the flavorful letter and sent it to Noah. A brief section follows:

"I can well understand the regret that is felt, by those who understand this Social Problem, when they consider how little is done by the Catholic Church to bring things round to a good and just conclusion. But we ought to acknowledge what really has been done by Church authority, and what enormous difficulties stand in the way of doing more.

"1. In 1891, soon after Cardinal Manning in England, and Bishop Nulty in Ireland, had explained the meaning of the Land Question, Pope Leo XIII published to the whole world an Encyclical Letter on The Condition of Labour.

"2. In the Encyclical of 1891, there was a little passage which caused some alarm. These 3 or 4 lines seemed to say that Henry George, in his teaching concerning public rights, was not quite in agreement with the ordinary reasonable and Catholic teaching on the same subject.

"3. Thereupon, in the same year 1891, Henry George, in order to explain himself very fully, wrote a little book which he called *The Condition of Labor.* Shortly afterwards, he received (as he told me himself) an assurance that his book had been 'received, and read, and understood.'

"4. In 1892, the representative in America of the Holy See made a very precise examination of the Henry George Doctrine concerning private property in land, calling into council with himself four learned American priests. The decision of the Papal Delegate was to the effect that in that doctrine there was no contradiction of the ordinary doctrine of the Catholic Church.

"5. In 1931, the present Holy Father, Pope Pius XI, issued the Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno,* dealing with the same subject as the Encyclical of 1891. In this new pronouncement the few lines mentioned above are not repeated, but stress is laid upon the fact that the Church has always sought to promote the best interests (even temporal interests) of the whole people and to protect the private rights of individuals. Private lawful progress or prosperity is always helpful to the neighbours, and to all the people. And from the public prosperity (not wickedly made private) advantages in abundance flow freely into private life."

Anyone wishing to read the entire letter may receive a copy from Noah Alper, director of the Henry George School, St. Louis, Missouri.

Wilkinsburg

The secret is out. Richard E. Howe, who admits he's a firebrand, is not nearly so much afraid of the bricks hurled by Communists as he is of the fact that his wife may divorce him for making her a "single-tax widow."

"I wish you people in New York could get together," says he. "Writing all information in triplicate arouses my individualistic ire against bureaucratic red tape."

Instructor Howe is teaching within Union U. E. C. 10, "believing that only amongst the multitude can direction to the top be given." He has 14 graduates and 5 students in the Union with some 30 taking the correspondence course. This is a union of 17,000 controlled by 60 Communist party members. He has been nominated by the Rank and File for Financial Secretary, an executive board position, but is taking this under advisement.

New York

So many interesting class lectures are taking place at 50 East 69th Street that we could not begin to cover them all, not to mention the brilliant Friday evening series which includes, for December, such eminent Georgist speakers as the Reverend W. Wylie Young of Batavia, New York, and Alexander Goldfinger of Newark, New Jersey.

Since the ever pleasing English visitor, Cecil Pasco, has several times proved himself the idol of audiences, we may as well admit that he gave a second command performance in New York speaking on current labor problems, with accustomed eloquence and grace.

Said Mr. Pasco, after analyzing the problems of management and the problems of labor, the "security of labor weighs against the security of management. A lot of people do not think they can settle down and work together. I don't agree."

During the last twelve years, it was pointed out, management has been very conscious of the growing power of labor, and has sought to break down the barrier separating the workman and the manager, as well as to dispell the horrible feeling of distrust existing in the minds of the workers. He gave examples of the umpire method as employed by Henry Ford and the United Automobile Workers, and quoted James F. Lincoln, whom he referred to as a "very wise man";—"since we cannot command we must make him [the worker] a member. We call that incentive management."

"People are trying controls," said the speaker. "Watch the papers and you will see that people are beginning to think some kinds of controls are necessary; and so they are being accepted." (In Russia completely, in England partially). Looking at controls you might say they do succeed. Russia has had a moderate success; and in England there is six per cent more production in man hours (as compared with 1939).

But notice that "under any other control, particularly from an outside source, a man gives up his freedom. Controls breed controls. Controls usually say 'you *must* do so and so.' This never does work. You see how it breaks down in war time. You can't make a man work. You can make him give a *semblance* of work. You can *stop* a person from doing things—you can't *make* him do things. If these controls were right, man would accept them."

Houston

From an apartment in Eagle Street, Houston, comes news of the birth of one more Texas Georgist. James Allen Parker was born on July 29th. If all goes well in the Texas district, the director, Foxhall A. Parker, plans to begin classes about next January, by which time James Allen should be ready to take his first steps in the quest for justice.

Also planned for January is an essay contest offering $200 in cash awards, with the winners speaking over one of the local radio stations. Publicity from this event should attract a number of new students to the Houston class in Fundamental Economics.

We began with news of a marriage and ended with the announcement of a birth—just to prove that the Georgist movement is human, vibrant and alive. And now we wish to say in rebuttal, to Ottawa in particular—we *thank you* for your thoughtful Christmas wishes—and on behalf of all Henry George Schools in the U. S., directors and members, we heartily wish you and all Canadian friends, the same.

BOOK REVIEWS

WILLIAM S. O'CONNOR, Editor

MODERN MAN AND THE LIBERAL ARTS. *By Francis Neilson. New York. Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.* 1947. 339 pp. *Indexed. Cloth.* $3.50

In this companion piece to his earlier work, *The Roots of Our Learning,* Francis Neilson challenges the opinions of such men as John Dewey, James B. Conant and Arnold J. Toynbee. The result is a group of critical essays written with clarity, simplicity and enthusiasm.

Throughout his long life, Mr. Neilson has watched and taken part in educational, political and economic movements. Thus, in his essays on education he speaks as one who has seen at close range the experiments of modern educators and is able to weigh in the scales of achievement the results so far attained by the so-called progressives. Mr. Neilson is strongly of the opinion that we are losing out in the educational field by present-day methods. He is firmly convinced that to be truly educated, a man or woman must be steeped in the wisdom of the past, must have studied the successes and failures of bygone civilizations, and must really know what he is talking about when it comes to such important matters as, for instance, human liberty and economic justice. He finds little to comfort him in the current scene. "There is an illiteracy of the educated today," he says, "that is far more dangerous than the illiteracy of the illiterate."

In sharp contrast to this century's crop of miseducated youngsters, hopping off the collegiate assembly line every twelve months, Mr. Neilson cites Henry George whose Alma Mater was no vine-clad hall but the crowded forecastle of a four-masted Indiaman and the ink-splashed office of a printer's shop. Yet, in his later years, Mr. Neilson points out, this self-taught scholar wrote a book which reveals "not only a tenacity of purpose, but a thoroughness of review which covers all the known works of the chief economists . . . during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Moreover, *Progress and Poverty* shows a familiarity with studies that lie on the fringe of the science of political economy. There are innumerable references to authors who are not mentioned by writers on economic subjects, even so late as John Stuart Mill." And Mr. Neilson concludes: "To a man like Henry George, the pursuit of knowledge meant toiling to the heart of the subject along the rough road of thorny problems; the best way in the end for a man to equip himself with the thought of his worthy predecessors."

In a two-part essay entitled, "The Conspiracy Against the English Peasantry," the author traces in short compass the war of the nobles against the tillers of the soil. For seven hundred years at least, through forced enclosure of the land, the villages were depopulated and the people driven into the towns. "It was a great misconception," it is stated, "to treat the so-called Industrial Revolution as a cause of the impoverishment of the people. There was evidence enough to be found in the first records of the Fabian Society to convince any earnest student that . . . the migration of the country men to the towns resulted in a superabundant labor market, with the result that wages fell as prices of commodities rose." The true story of this dark period in English history has been ignored by the chief historians, but here it is told in a way to make its sober lesson clear.

The author's own career in British politics gives him the source material for his discussion of Liberalism and Radicalism. In "The Decay of Liberalism" he traces the historical background and scope of the movement in England from the time of its inception, through the days of its greatest influence, to its decline and death at the beginning of World War I. He also examines Dr. Conant's stand on American radicalism and the possibility of its revival.

Mr. Neilson deplores the loss of virility in our present-day political movements and the absence of vigorous protest against the wrong-doings of those in power. In his essay, "The Silence of the Opposition," he says, "We have no Swift to make a frontal attack upon the bastions of political iniquity . . ., no Hazlitt to shake the very foundations of an Edmund Burke; no Junius to reveal the sordid methods of statesmen and their toadies. The opposition is silent."

Against a broad cultural background the theme of these essays is brought to a dramatic climax in the two concluding pieces and the author's discussion of the various philosophies of historical interpretation. Here he compares and contrasts Spengler and Toynbee, Freedman and Brooks Adams, Vico and Burckhardt in a manner which leaves no reader confused as to his purpose and must strongly impress every thoughtful person with the importance of knowing how to apply the knowledge of the past to the conditions of the present day.

Mr. Neilson is also the author of *The Eleventh Commandment, In Quest of Justice, The Tragedy of Europe* (five volumes), *The Roots of Our Learning, Man at the Crossroads,* and many other works. Now in his eighty-first year, he is an indefatigable writer, and his articles are constantly being published in such distinguished magazines as *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology. Indeed, it was in this* Journal that many of these essays first appeared, and the enthusiastic reception which they received there encouraged the author in the compilation of the present book.—V. G. PETERSON

ON UNDERSTANDING SCIENCE. *By James B. Conant. Yale University Press. New Haven.* 1947. 145 pp. $2.00.

The introduction to Dr. Conant's book inspires confidence in the man and respect for the philosopher. Fittingly in the preface he has sought to appraise and set in proper perspective the atom bomb. The scientists, he relates, had hoped that their researches would develop atomic energy for power and demonstrate the impossibility of an atomic explosive. But, since the discovery of the bomb was in a sense inevitable in a scientific age, he is consoled with the thought that the democracies were fortunate in the timing. Noting the many beneficent discoveries of science he invokes the wisdom so abundant in one of the greatest of all philosophical essays, Emerson's Law of Compensation. "With every influx of light comes new danger. . . . There is a crack in everything God has made. . . . But the doctrine of compensation is not the doctrine of indifferency."

The main treatise reveals the scholar in action—a stimulating and enlightening teacher. He cites the growing importance of science with the attendant need for clarification of popular thinking about *methods* of science that it may be assimilated into general culture. The demonstration of objective, factual analysis based upon controlled experimentation would, he believes, tend to give greater weight to the rational elements as determining factors in a progressive free society. It is not sufficient to be well informed about science. The essential thing is understanding. He prefers the historical rather than the philosophical approach for achieving this end.

His demonstration of his theories is an absorbing and fascinating story. He combines the technique of the laboratory with the eloquence of the lecture room into a living, documented history of the evolution of scientific method and discovery. At the dawn of the 17th century Aristotle's dogma that nature abhors a vacuum continued to hedge the concepts of the scientists. When Galileo pondered the reason why water would not fill a vacuum more than 34 feet above the level of the source he sought to extend the vacuum concept by speculating that the column broke of its own weight. His pupils, Torricelli and Viviani, equipped with the long used mechanical pump and the known but little considered weight of air concept, abolished the vacuum theory by supporting a column of mercury with air pressure. Pascal gave additional evidence of the "spring of air" by showing that the mercury column shortened with its elevation above sea level. Von Guericke devised the Magdeburg hemispheres that with air expelled defied the strength of horses to separate them but fell apart when the atmospheric pressure was equalized within and without. Robert Boyle with more elaborate contrivances confirmed Torricelli by demonstrating the rise and fall of the mercury column as the air pressure upon it was increased and decreased.

The twitching of a frog's leg in proximity to an electrical machine attracted the excited interest of Galvani. Volta through controlled experiment revised Galvani's speculative concept and the electric battery was born. Roentgen investigated what others had noted—the fogging of photographic plates near an electrical discharge—and by the route of accidental discovery and planned experiment the X-ray was evolved. How the arbitrarily entrenched element, phlogiston, in a long battle of polemics, accidental discoveries and controlled tests, was transmuted into the scientific concept of combustion is dramatically but factually unfolded and chemical science was emancipated from the Aristotelean concept of the four elements, earth, air, fire and water.

The reader is left with the longing that Dr. Conant will reconsider his original concept—a guide for teaching the methods of science—and expand in his own engrossing style the glimpse he has exposed of a magic world into the complete panorama of science. And in the process we wistfully hope that he will again consult the great masterpiece of his—and our—favorite philosopher, Emerson's Law of Compensation, and extend his great talent to the field of social science with his mentor's admonitions constantly in mind, "Nature hates monopolies and exceptions. . . . Things refuse to be mismanaged long. . . . If you tax too high, the revenue will yield nothing. . . . Nothing arbitrary, nothing artificial can endure."

—W. S. O.