

VENTURELLAGRAM

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Isaac Asimov
Asfm
Davis Publications, Inc.
380 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Asimov:

Your editorial, TAXES, in the June 1988 issue did more than strike a sympathetic note. I am confident that had not this latest change in IRS rules raked a sensitive nerve in your market-psyche it would have gone unnoticed.

Now that you have been made painfully aware of taxes seems to be an opportune moment to approach you on a subject about which I have wanted to speak you for many years.

I was once an avid reader of SF. I haven't lost my taste for it, but haven't had time for a few years to immerse myself in SF as I was wont in earlier days.

During the time when I had time to read, I found all the tales based on the assumption that there could be no other political and economic arrangement than that to which we are accustomed whether by present experience or historical record. How sad. How limiting.

Can YOU imagine a condition of no taxes?

Aldous Huxley, in a preface to the reissue of BRAVE NEW WORLD, said (not an exact quote) that his publishers had asked him if he wanted to rewrite the novel before the reissue. He says he read what he wrote and decided not to rewrite it, but that if he were to write the BRAVE NEW WORLD fresh then (c. 1950) he would have three alternatives to offer: the directed economy of the BNW, the freedom of the American Indians, and (with his subsequent reading) a way of life based on the politics of Peter Kropotkin and the economics of Henry George.

I've not read Kropotkin, but I understand he had a vision of a decentrist society. Henry George, I have read. The book jacket of the 75th anniversary edition carries a quote from John Dewey - "No man, no graduate of a higher educational institution, has a right to regard himself as an educated man in social thought unless he has some first-hand acquaintance with the theoretical contribution of this great American thinker."

Tolstoy said of Henry George, "People do not argue with the teachings of George, they simply do not know it. And it is

5015

teachings of George, they simply do not know it.' And it is impossible to do otherwise with his teaching, for he who becomes acquainted with it cannot but agree."

It is tragic that SF writers cannot conceive of any other social arrangement than those with which we are accustomed. A whole new world is possible; a world in which sovereign power is so diffused that special privileges cannot be granted or sold; a world in which passports are unnecessary, trade licenses are unknown, work is not drudgery.

The income tax which you now bemoan is the most onerous and unjust of all taxes. But imagine a society in which there are no taxes. Well, alright, by our way of thinking, or speaking (which is the same thing), there would be one tax or source of public revenue. But there is one great difference: our present systems (chaotic as the are, they are systems) of taxation adversely affect production (and thereby wages).

Mr. George would tax the value of privilege or the exclusive rights to natural resources, such as building sites, defined portions of the radio/TV broadcast spectrum, aircraft landing slots, seacraft docking or mooring slots, mineral rights, etc., etc.; thus there is no adverse effect on production. As it now is we pay private parties for all these things which are made more valuable by specific government activities; AND, we must also pay taxes. Yet by even the most conservative reckonings, the renting of use-rights would provide more than enough public revenue for all legitimate purposes of government.

Why should houses, stores, factories, warehouses, be taxed? These are useful. The person(s) who build these or cause these to be built provide a benefit not only for the direct and immediate users, but also for the community at large. Imagine not having these. Yet the owners are treated as criminals, and we fine them year after year. And why should each of our economic transactions be taxed?

Is your work as writer and teacher beneficial or detrimental? You are treated as though it is detrimental, and you must pay the IRS a goodly part of what you earn thereby, or from any legitimate pursuit. Yet those who contribute nothing, those who hold a piece of paper which gives them a property right to parts of nature, enjoy the fruits of the labor of others, are treated with respect, are kowtowed to, are given preference by our tax laws.

Chew on it if you can.

I'll be pleased to respond to your comments or questions.

Sincerely,


Sam Venturella

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