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After the War, Jobs for All

AN ADDRESS
IN COMMEMORATION
of 104th BIRTHDAY of
HENRY GEORGE

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*May the New Year
bring peace
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ADDRESS IN COMMEMORATION
OF 104th BIRTHDAY
OF HENRY GEORGE

The Henry George theory may be simply stated in these words: the value of bare land is created by the community and should be taken for community purposes.

SOME people may ask, why in this hour of desperate global war, with the tramp of marching feet in every country of the world, with millions of men engaged in mortal combat, with the generals and the admirals strutting their day, and sometimes emblazoned in glory—why is it important to stop and honor on his birthday the memory of Henry George in every part of the world where free men still are free to think? The answer is simple: he showed how to abolish unemployment and poverty—and today every nation in the world is thinking of unemployment and poverty after the war, almost as much as each nation is thinking of winning the war.

The nations of the world know that when tens of millions cease fighting and hundreds of millions cease the production of materials for war, it will be immediate jobs that mankind

will have to have to live, to heal the sick, reduce human misery and hunger, provide adequate housing and pay for the cost of the war.

If I were to describe the life of Henry George in a few words, I would say that his life symbolized that it were better to die on fighting feet than to live on your bended knees.

He was born 104 years ago in Philadelphia, 117 miles from Gettysburg where one great battle for freedom was fought and one immortal speech was delivered; born in Philadelphia where our Declaration of Independence was signed. Today his dust lies mingled with the soil of America still free.

Henry George lived idealistically and courageously. He believed in humanity. He believed in liberty. We commemorate his birthday, however, not because of his courage and ideals, but because he made of the dismal science of economics a science of hope, and fixed it in the heart of mankind so that it can never die.

In imagination I can see him writing in the long days and nights, "Progress and Poverty"—the book that clangs like a fire bell to awaken the souls of men to a worthwhile struggle. In imagination I can hear him eloquently expounding his philosophy before spellbound audiences in all parts of the world. He dreamed a dream of a world devoid of involuntary poverty and filled with happy human beings. With cold logic and powerful words he showed the

path that men could follow to attain that Promised Land.

Youth looking forward to peace—in fact all of mankind looking forward to peace—asks opportunity to work and produce in liberty to the fullest; asks an economic system of plenty, not a planned economy of scarcity; a government of free men and women, not a bureaucracy or dictator governing a servile people; government the servant of the people, not the master of the people.

Land is the source of all employment, the natural element indispensable to all work. We in the United States are all pioneer people, or the children or grandchildren or great grandchildren of pioneers, who with bare hands and stout hearts sought this country to apply their labor to the soil, and finding here fertile fields, rivers, harbors, and untold wealth underneath the fields, created the wealthiest nation in the world. They conquered the wilderness and a continent, and formed a mighty nation dedicated to the proposition that all men are created free and equal, and with certain unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Yet even in this country of unlimited opportunity, poverty in peacetime found its place.

Henry George's remedy for poverty and unemployment is simple—to abolish all taxes except a tax on the full rental value of the land irrespective of the improvements, for

land values are created by the community and should be taken by the community for community purposes. This tax would force all land into its fullest economic use, creating more jobs than men. Wages would go up, and with greater production of goods, the cost of living would come down, and the erection of homes, factories, buildings, and the expansion of industries would be encouraged by being free of additional taxes.

Every time a fine park is created by a city, state or nation, or a fine road is built, or a great public improvement is made, additional land values are created, but the owners of the land adjoining those improvements receive the benefits of those unearned land values thus created, commonly called "unearned increment". Every new industry brought to a town which brings additional people to the vicinity, also increases land values, but again those values are taken by the owners of the land.

Henry George believed that, with free access to the land in each nation, and with free trade between nations, wars would be abolished. He believed with Thomas Jefferson that that government is best which governs least.

Clear the road for peace and full scale production by taking off all taxes on industry, on labor and on all improvements, with the community taking the full rental value of the bare land.

Like Antaeus of olden myth, who, touching the earth regained his strength, so we, who do honor to Henry George, believe that mankind touching a free earth with free trade between nations will regain its strength, its peace, its brotherhood, its liberty.

Life, even with all economic problems solved, if without liberty, would be like a rope of sand which perishes in the twisting.

Henry George, in "Progress and Poverty," in that greatest chapter ever written in any book, called "The Central Truth," wrote:

"Only in broken gleams and partial light has the Sun of Liberty yet beamed upon men, but all progress has she called forth."

Henry George's glory shall never die while mankind remembers its men of ideals and wisdom, while mankind strives and solves the problem—why with all great progress comes great poverty.

When Henry George died, he threw the torch of his principles to those of us who have survived. It is for us to hold it high.

