

For the People



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HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL OF NEW JERSEY

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THE FUTILITY OF THE PRACTICAL APPROACH By GASTON HAXO

I do not know what kind of approach Henry George used to convert people to the Single Tax doctrine but the fact of his success proves that it was a good one, especially because his converts became active workers and the movement made progress.

In the short span of 17 years 1880-1897, the Single Tax movement was established not only through the United States and Canada but in South America; Europe and as far as Australia.

How come that after Henry George died, the movement started to steadily decline and by 1930 it had practically ceased to exist? I think the answer is "The Practical Approach."

What is the Practical Approach? In the case of a Single Tax campaign it was to remove certain obstacles or it was to pass certain measures which, while they were not the Single Tax, were, so to speak, steps in that direction.

Accordingly, from 1897 to 1915 in Colorado; Missouri; Oregon; Rhode Island; California and Texas, as the record shows, all our efforts were devoted to campaigning for such measures as: home rule in taxation; charter amendments; tax exemptions; local option; initiative and referendum; etc. so-called steps in the right direction, but, actually steps leading into a blind alley.

In the end all these measures were either voted down or adopted and repealed later. Much time (18 years) much effort and much money had been wasted. The voters had learned nothing.

In 1915 a Single Tax Party was formed in Philadelphia with a full ticket in a Mayoralty election. Shortly after New York and New Jersey came in and we had candidates on the official ballot until 1924. A National Party had been formed in 1920 and a national convention was held in Chicago. Our motto was: "THE EARTH IS THE BIRTHRIGHT OF ALL MANKIND - The Rent of Land Belongs to the People and the First Duty of Government is to Collect It." Our last campaign was the national campaign of 1924 under our new name THE COMMONWEALTH LAND PARTY. At that time we had National Committees in 37 States but the Party began to lose momentum and ceased to exist in the 1929 depression.

Why the Party did not survive we shall never know. For one thing we lacked money; 2 - Most Single Taxers including the rich ones, were not in favor of political action; 3 - many who preferred the practical approach; 4 - World War I and its aftermath did not help us and the 1929 depression killed us.

Then the year 1932 marked the beginning of a new era in the Georgist movement. The Henry George School of Social Science was founded in New York City by Oscar H. Geiger. It was a
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FUTILITY (Con't. fr. Pg.1)

success and in spite of the untimely death of its founder in 1934, the School prospered and extensions were established in several States.

Now after 45 years during which thousands of students have graduated, we still remain practically unknown. Why? Because what the School needed to fulfill its real purpose, but did not have, was a political organization to enroll its graduates to put to use the knowledge they had acquired. This lacking, the graduates took their diplomas home as souvenirs and that was that. The time and money was wasted as it was wasted in campaigning for the "Practical Approach."

Just 6 years ago, my good friend, Bob Clancy, in the International News Letter wrote: "Our ideas have been preached for 90 years and here we are, for the most part, unhonored and unsung." How true that was! And whose fault was it? Ours! Henry George had warned us: "For every social wrong there must be a remedy. But the remedy can be nothing less than the abolition of the wrong. Half-way measures, mere ameliorations and secondary reforms, can at any time accomplish little and can in the long run avail nothing."

Had the Single Taxers heeded this warning, we might be, today, living in a much happier world. We knew that a remedy to abolish a great social wrong will not find easy acceptance. Henry George had told us that also. But to advocate a partial remedy may not find acceptance either, and even if it should find acceptance, nothing is gained, for wrong is not abolished and further effort to abolish it may find a much increased resistance.

After a century of costly efforts to bring about a sound system of land tenure, we must admit that we have failed. Yet we know that our principles were right, hence the fault must be ours. So what shall we do?

The first thing would be to get together in an effort to find out what mistakes we may have made, and that must include Henry George. He made some mistakes we know about and there may be others.

The history of the movement has been recorded in books; magazines; pamphlets; private letters etc. and it is up to us to search the records and try to pick out the mistakes. This is a task to which every Georgist could contribute.

Once all this has been done we should call a Convention to found a national political organization and draft a political platform.

The new organization should first seek to reform the land system by means of amendments to the Federal Constitution. Secondly, reform the tax system; thirdly, the money system and fourthly the political system. Other needed reforms to follow. This would in no way interfere with the existence of State and Local organizations with less thorough-going programs.

The land reform is too vital and too fundamental to tolerate any compromise whatever. Moreover, in order to succeed it must be established and function in all the States at the same time.

This whole program calls for the one and only approach that can succeed and that is to tell the naked truth on a take it or leave it basis. Only by doing this can we be credited with having the courage of our convictions.

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THE PEOPLE'S SAVIOR
THE FEDERAL DRUG ADMINISTRATION

Everyone knows that there is nothing common about common sense, except, of course, the Federal Drug Administration. It considers common sense some kind of speciality beyond its capability. Once again it has demonstrated the superiority of its wisdom to common sense.

On the basis of highly questionable evidence, it is banning saccharin. This is a sweetener which is used as a substitute for sugar, and is particularly useful for diabetics, the obese and others who should consume as little sugar as possible. It has been in use for about 80 years without having ever been known to cause human cancer in any person.

In Canada some tests on rats who were fed a diet containing 5% saccharin indicated that cancer developed. The equivalent dosage for a human being would be 800 12 ounce cans of soda containing saccharin, daily. Before the cancer, if any developed, on that basis, a man would have drowned in the dosage he consumed.

The excuse offered by the FDA is that the law states that any additive which causes a malignancy in humans or animals must be forbidden. This brings home the point that Congress, in its almighty wisdom legislates in matters in which it has no competency. Of course, this assumes it has competency in other matters, which is quite an assumption.

But, the FDA did not need to ban saccharin. Anytime a bureaucracy wishes to get around a ruling, it can. That's why all bureaus have a horde of lawyers on their staffs. Their function

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is not to tell the bureaucrats what they cannot do, but to tell the bureaucrats how to do what they want to do despite the law.

If saccharin is to be banned, why not tobacco? There is little doubt that smoking tends to cause lung cancer if indulged in over a long period of time. Few people doubt this--all the evidence supports it. Although advertising is banned, the sale of tobacco is not. The excuse, again is that tobacco is not a food, and technically does not come under the ban. But since tobacco is chewed as well as smoked, no doubt, ingenious lawyers could easily put tobacco within the frame of the law.

Probably the reason tobacco is ignored is that it is a much bigger industry, with powerful vested interests. Farmers carry a lot of political clout. So, expediency calls for looking the other way where this cancer inducing substance is concerned.

Saccharin vested interests are nowhere nearly as powerful as the tobacco interests. Nonetheless, the FDA has found that it has bitten quite a bit off in attempting to ban saccharin, now is talking about treating it as a drug which one can obtain by means of a prescription. But if the FDA is to prevent the use of cancer inducing substances, why permit it to be obtained at all? All prescriptions do is to put more money in the pockets of physicians and druggists at the expense of the mass of the people. Probably most of those who should not consume sugar are the elderly and the poor, the ones least able to pay the increased costs which would result.

How sweet it would be if banning this sweetener woke people up to absurdity of the government trying to protect the people from the womb to the tomb. What gives to government bureaucrats that wisdom and knowledge to tell us how to live our lives?

The essence of freedom is the right of an individual to make a fool of himself. If I wish to smoke myself to death, that's my business. If I wish to consume saccharin and eventually it induces in me a cancerous growth that's my business. It is one thing to warn me of the dangers involved. It is another thing to prevent me from doing whatever foolish thing I want to do on the theory you are protecting my life. People know smoking is cancer inducing. Yet, today they smoke more than ever. The satisfaction they gain from smoking more than outweighs the possible after-effects they will suffer. They know the facts; they have made their decision. That is their right.

Isn't it fortunate that Moses did not have to submit the Ten Commandments to government for its approval. Maybe government would have forbidden the Ten Commandments on the grounds that no human being could live up to its precepts.

If there is any banning to be done, why not ban Congress from passing any laws for the next decade except laws to repeal other laws. Is that too sweet a thought?

OSCAR B. JOHANNSEN

SENSE & NON-SENSE

After all the hoopla about offshore oil pollution, we find out that oil spills do little real harm to wildlife or to man himself. After extensive research it has been found that nature is well able to overcome the blunders of man. In early 1976 a barge sank at the mouth of the Potomac River, spilling 250,000 gallons of black oil into Chesapeake Bay. The marshes were fouled, many birds killed, and all kinds of predictions of what would happen to the shellfish industry. But, after a cleanup of six weeks, the beaches had virtually no oil, the marsh grass was thicker than ever and no effects were detected on mussels and oysters.

Nature is just much too powerful to be overcome by anything that man does. Some day more people will recognize that fact. Until they do, we will have to live with all the cries of the pessimists and do-gooders everytime some untoward event occurs. The environmentalists have had a field day up to now. Possibly, as knowledge spreads that nature can take care of itself, we will have a little less interference from them, which will be a good thing, as they have caused all kinds of unemployment as well as wasted effort in attempting to do what nature will do by herself.

Great Britain is well on its way to becoming a third or fourth class country. What Hitler could not do to England, the British are doing to themselves.

The Labor Party is in control of the government, and this party is really a farout socialist party. The Fabian Socialists of pre-World War I days have more than succeeded in getting their views adopted. Bernard Shaw and the Webbs, no doubt, must be rejoicing in their Valhalla for their success in changing Britain into a truly socialistic country.

Britain is scraping along on the basis of massive loans from the U.S. and West Germany. Will these loans

ever be repaid is a question which must be troubling the lenders. Incentive has been almost wiped out. Income tax rates run up to 83%, and the rates on so-called unearned income rises up to 98%. Of course, this means that those who are most productive are leaving the country in droves. In 1975, 65,000 professional people fled to other countries. The smart ones are getting out before the government effects bars preventing them emigrating. A man and wife with four children can get as much net income from welfare as a man working and earning \$145 a week, which is a very good wage in Britain. Is it any wonder that the country is in such straightened conditions. The real ruler of Britain is not the prime minister but Jack Jones, the leader of England's most powerful union. He is the man who visited East Germany last year and told a press conference he felt "at home" there.

Is there any more to be said if Jones's attitude represents that of most of his fellow workers. With price rises reaching 26% annually, the middle class will be wiped out within a few years. The result will be that Britain will probably wind up with the typical man on the white horse. While he may not be called a dictator that is what he will be.

It is sad to see this happen for Britain has given to mankind some of the greatest literature of all time, as in the work of Shakespeare. It has had some of the world's greatest scientists, businessmen and philosophers. It still has a great productive machine, albeit outmoded. It still has a skilled working population. But what it needs is a change of philosophy. The people must throw off the incompetents ruling them, change their system of land tenure and make the necessary sacrifices of energy to produce. They can do it if they will. But they haven't much time for more and more of the people who are the natural leaders are leaving Great Britain, so those who are left are the typical pie-in-the-sky left-wing socialists or communists, who simply do not understand the necessity of freedom, particularly economic freedom, for the advancement of the nation.

Americans should watch Great Britain with great interest for we, too, are following in its path with the same kind of absurd socialistic programs. We are merely twenty or thirty years behind Great Britain. If GB does go down, let us hope it wakes US up.

The price of gold is on the rise again. It is around \$147 an ounce up from last summer when it hit a floor of \$103. Since then it has risen almost 40%. Why? Because more people are becoming aware that all the countries of the world are printing more

and more paper money, so the best hedge is to put whatever excess paper money people have in something substantial as gold. Don't be surprised if gold hits \$200 within a year. This could happen if the nations continue to print more money. Certainly, those buying gold believe such to be the likely case, and they certainly have all the logic on their side. And when gold's price keeps on rising, don't be surprised if the Government makes it illegal to own gold again.

SALT OF THE EARTH

Buying what you do not need is an easy road to needing what you cannot buy.

An Eskimo woman is old at forty. An American woman is not old at forty. In fact, she's not even forty.

A wizard is the person who can keep up with the neighbors and the installations too.

The timid girl who before marriage is so shy about accepting even a box of candy will grab a man's pay envelop after marriage before he gets in the front door.

A politician will tell you, you can't fool all the people all the time, but then, it isn't necessary. A majority will do.

A sharp tongue and a dull mind are usually found in the same head.

Many an argument is sound--merely sound.

If you build a big business these days, you're a sinister influence; if you don't, you're a stupid failure.

Trimming expenses is a government's last resort when the taxpayers can stand no more trimming.

Now that women as well as men wear pants, some people can't tell when a couple walks down the street which one is the man and which the woman. But that's easy. The one who is listening is the man.

A nickel may not be as good as a dollar, but it goes to church more often.

Rip Van Winkle slept for twenty years. But then that was before the invention of the radio.

It is known as the sea of matrimony because husbands have such a hard job keeping their heads above water.

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TO KEEP THE RECORD STRAIGHT

There was no issue of THE GARGOYLE for the month of February 1977.