

Barquole



"A throat, mouthpiece, spout." Opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and not necessarily endorsed by the Henry George School.

HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL of NEW JERSEY

No. 58

J A N U A R Y 1 9 6 2

BOOKS THAT CHANGED AMERICA

"No one should pretend to be well informed who is ignorant of Henry George's proposals. Nor can our over-burdened taxpayers afford to neglect the relief he offers. He asks that all earned incomes be entirely freed from taxes, and that all taxes be taken from unearned incomes."

Will Atkinson

Eric F. Goldman

"Every so often it happened. America would be rushing along, staking out farms and throwing up factories, exulting and worrying and denouncing, and suddenly somebody, facing a stack of blank paper, would touch the paper with magic. A book appeared and things were never quite the same."

READ - "PROGRESS AND POVERTY"

"The ownership of land is the great fundamental fact which ultimately determines the social, the political, and consequently the intellectual and moral condition of a people. And it must be so. For land is the habitation of man, the storehouse upon which he must draw for all his needs, the material to which his labor must be applied for the supply of all his desires; for even the products of the sea cannot be taken, the light of the sun enjoyed, or any of the forces of nature utilized, without the use of land or its products. On the land we are born, from it we live, to it we return again - children of the soil as truly as is the blade of grass or the flower of the field."

Henry George

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NEW YEAR

to Y O U

Henry School of Social Science
50 E. 69th St.
New York 21, N. Y.

HOW DIVIDE UP THE ECONOMIC RENT

One of the important questions which will arise if any society collects the full economic rent is to determine how it shall be distributed among the people.

Henry George said in PROGRESS & POVERTY "This revenue... could be applied to the common benefit.... We could establish public baths, museums, libraries, gardens, lecture rooms, music and dancing halls, theatres, universities, technical schools shooting galleries, play grounds, gymnasiums, etc."

Probably, as the result of George's influence, the usual attitude has been that the economic rent should be expended for roads, police protection, costs of collecting the rent as well as the cost of running the government, plus whatever other things the people decided they wanted.

But is this wise? Probably not enough thought has been given to this aspect of the problem. However, it may well be that the way in which the rent is distributed may have a very important effect on whether the efficacious results of the communal collection of rent are achieved or not.

Socialists have made the error of considering primarily what they consider to be a just distribution of the wealth without considering how that distribution will affect production of wealth. Had they done that they might not have come up with such absurd formulae as "to each man according to his need, from each man according to his ability".

Georgists should not fall into a similar error by assuming that the distribution of the rent fund will have no effect on the ends which are desired.

If the funds are dispersed as George stated what would it mean? First, it would mean the creation of a vast bureaucracy to carry out all these functions. Second, it would lead to all kinds of squabbles as to how much should go to one function and how much to another, not to mention the fact that people would be constantly suggesting more and more functions which should be carried on by means of the rent fund. Third it would mean that the distribution of the fund would not be equitable to all for some people would make little or no use of many of the functions, although part of their share of the rent would be applied to them. Fourth, with this fund at the disposal of the various bureaucracies, they would be in a position to give out important contracts, with all the dangers of corruption involved.

The result would appear to be that there would be grave danger that socialism might creep in through the back door. While at first, when such functions as libraries are conducted by means of the rent fund, there would be little harm done. Yet with the proliferation of functions, the danger would increase tremendously. Ultimately, the rent fund would

not be big enough, and the result would be the taxation of wealth.

In other words, the State would become bigger and bigger, and without the people realizing it socialism would become the order of the day. Once that occurs, the loss of freedom will eventuate.

Let us face the facts squarely. Socialism is the ownership, control and operation of land and wealth by the State. Therefore, when the State owns controls and operates the roads, it is socialistic. When it owns, controls and operates schools, it is socialistic.

Since socialism is inimical to the individual, it follows that for the State to undertake any of these functions is detrimental to the individual.

Theoretically, it is assumed the State has at most two functions--one is the collection of economic rent, the other is the protection of life and property. (It may well be that even the police function should be conducted by private organizations, but under present conditions of knowledge as well as the state of the world, this is probably not practical.)

At any rate, it should be obvious that the State should not perform any of these functions which George mentions, as establishing libraries, universities and the like. Since this would be socialism, the functions would not be conducted as efficiently, and in fact, the danger of putting educational institutions under the control of the Government is that these schools and colleges would lose their independence and become mere propaganda organizations praising the State. Even the roads should be operated by private organizations, much as the old turnpikes were.

Well, how should the rent be distributed? This writer believes it should be distributed on a per capita basis. Whatever the rent fund is on say the first of January should be divided up equally among all those alive on that day--men, women and children. This would be absolutely equitable as then the people could do with the money as they chose. They could use it to become members of private libraries, to pay for their schooling at private schools. They could use it to pay the annual fee to use particular private roads in their neighborhood if the businesses operating them set up such an arrangement. They could squander it if they wished.

There would be certain mechanical problems of determining just who is entitled in a particular area, but no greater than the problems in determining who is eligible to vote. If a man died his estate would get it that year. The rent belonging to immature children would go to their parents.

But no powerful State would arise from it for there would be no bureaucracy to do for the people things which they could

do "ter themselves. I nly bureaucrats-
c. lld be the one col. ing and dis-
pensing the rent fund. If this was done
on the local level, just above the fam-
ily, it could be controlled as it would
be under the eyes of the people them-
selves.

In the last analysis, the solution of
this problem must answer two questions.
Is it wise? Is it just? It seems to
the writer that it is wise for it makes
the collection and disbursement of the
rent fund as simple as possible and with
the creations of the smallest amount of
government to administer it. That it is
just, is obvious for each person is en-
titled to his share equal to every one
else's. By each one receiving the same
amount, there is no question that some
one is getting more than another; such
as would arise if the rent fund is used
to produce particular things, as theatres.

It must always be remembered that man
seeks to satisfy his desires with the
least effort. Therefore, we must be care-
ful that any machinery set up to collect
and disperse the rent fund must be such
that it eliminates to the greatest de-
gree possible, the opportunity of some
men utilizing it to serve their own ends.
Distributing the rent fund via special
functions makes it too easy for the Gov-
ernment to grow, makes it too easy for
ambitious men to use it to gain power
over their fellow men.

Oscar B. Johannsen

SENSE AND NONSENSE

The Boss

Who is the Boss?
Is he the man who founded this
business?
The president?, the officers?
The heads of the departments?

No, none of these!

I am the reason for this business
I am the reason for its existence
I am its guiding genius.
I am a jealous boss. I must be
served before I give my blessings.
I am the end-all and be-all of
everything connected with this
business.

I am the corny, yone of its pro-
gress.

I am the Customer!

(Author unknown)

A lot of wives go to work so they can af-
ford to buy the kind of clothes they have
to wear to the office.

In a letter of May 23, 1857, to H. S.
Randall, Esq., the historian, Lord Mac-
aulay doubted liberty would endure in Am-
erica. Where will be, I fear, spoliation.
The spoliation will increase the distress.

The distress will produce fresh spolia-
tion. There is nothing to stop you. Your
Constitution is all sail and no anchor.

As I said before, when a society has en-
tered on this downward progress, either
civilization or liberty must perish. Et-
ther some Caesar or Napoleon will seize
the reins of government with a strong
hand; or your republic will be fearfully
plundered and laid waste by barbarians
in the twentieth Century as the Roman
Empire was in the fifth; -- with this
difference, that the Huns and Vandals
who ravaged the Roman Empire came from
without, and that your Huns and Vandals
will have been engendered within your
own country by your own institutions."

All one needs do is to look around and
see how our governmental and welfare and
other institutions are plundering the
people to realize that Lord Macaulay was
only too correct as a prophet.

"Confidential and only sworn Census em-
ployes will have access to it." This is
imprinted on Census report forms which
corporations file with the Census Bureau
detailing their production and sales
figures. The Bureau wants reliable sta-
tistics for the whole economy and to in-
sure it, Congress passed the necessary
legislation but protected business from
fishing expeditions by other bureaus as
the Federal Trade Commission and the
Justice Department.

However, the Supreme Court decided that
while these snoopers could not get the
original reports from the Census Bureau
they were entitled to carbon copies which
the companies retained.

Its reasoning was the usual torturous
one it indulges in whenever it wants to
do anything it wants to do.

All of which proves that the Government's
word is not to be taken at face value.
A sad fact but obviously a true one.

Come to think of it, this Supreme Court
will probably find everything it wants
to, to be constitutional except one
thing, and that is the Constitution
itself. Don't be surprised to hear it
declared unconstitutional one of these
days.

A Plattsburg, N.Y. welfare client com-
plained to the Welfare Dept. that her
check was so late that her husband ac-
tually had to go to work. It is to be
hoped that the Welfare Dept. will become
a bit more efficient so that her husband
can go back to his perpetual vacation.

Maybe it is because of such people as the
above that the average American is a guy
wearing last year's suit, driving this
year's car and living on next year's sal-
ary.

IF NOT NOW - WHEN? IF NOT YOU - WHO?

BORN: Peter George Johannsen, Oct. 11th, 1912, to Mr. & Mrs. Oscar Johannsen.
Third faculty member in one family?

"Very frequently you will be asked, "If the reform you propose is as simple to understand and will do as much as you claim, then why was it not put over long ago?" A glance at our history may help to answer this question. Even when a truth needs only to overcome old prejudices, its progress is slow. Not only prejudices, however, but the greatest vested interest of all time prevents the rapid progress we should like to see - a vested interest comprising not only the great land holders, but even the ones who hold only a pocket handkerchief sized plot, of little or no value. For until he learns better, each one of these will believe that the program we propose will work hardship and injustice.

"So do not become impatient. Do not believe that because our progress may at times seem slow, it is any the less inevitable. PROGRESS & POVERTY was published in 1879, and sixty-three years is a very short period in the life of any truth. Then too, we can, if we will, learn from past mistakes.

"We Americans are very apt to think there ought to be a law to remedy anything of which we do not approve, without always stopping to consider whether or not this would be the best way to meet the problem facing us. And so the original Georgists, being American and human, put the subject into politics. It seemed to them that if men who supported even some small measure of their philosophy were elected to office, those men could work to secure the adoption of the small part in which they believed, and in this way, step by step, eventually the whole program could be put into effect.

"Many really able men were elected or appointed to high office; among them Tom I. Johnson, Jerry Simpson, Judge Maguire, Henry George, Jr., Louis F. Post, Newton Baker. Those in administrative office found their hands tied by the laws already on the statute books. Those in legislative office were smothered by the very number of their opponents, and often, to get even a hearing, were compelled to compromise. Finding, too, that without a great body of public opinion behind them, it was often impossible to get even that, many Georgists worked hard for the Initiative and Referendum in various states so that the people might themselves vote on and adopt the measures which the legislators would not consider.

"We have learned by costly experience we must offer a measure which puts our enemies on the defensive.... Advocates of a reform worth living for must not occupy the position of explainers and defenders.... Explainers and defenders are always the losers.

Early Spring - Sign in window of Ice Cream Shop - "Closed for the Winter - See you in the Spring - Re-opening Feb. 22nd."

"We shall never begin to get anywhere worth while until we tell the people we want and all we want...."

"From political campaigns some slight gains were made, but they were not commensurate with the time, energy and money expended. The time for political action is not yet ripe. Many of us have come to realize that whether a law is good or bad, it cannot long survive unless it has public opinion behind it, and a lasting public opinion can be secured only by understanding."

(Condensed from remarks by Dr. E. E. Bowen
Address to Faculty)

Twenty years later -

Political action for Land Value Taxation in the U.S.A. is being promoted from the east to the west coast. Leading magazines and newspapers are stressing the idea of lowering or eliminating taxes on improvements - to tax land higher to bring it into use and reduce speculation -- perhaps now is the time and to us in the educational sector it is highly desirable we quicken our efforts directed toward informing public opinion.

SALT OF THE EARTH

Wife: In most marriage ceremonies they drop the word obey now.
Hubby: Yes, too bad. It used to lend a little humor to the occasion.

It's better to give than to receive -- and it's deductible.

This year not only are people doing their Christmas shopping earlier, but they're paying later.

Definition of a Communist: A person who has nothing but wants to share it with the world.

Status Symbol: Anything you can't afford -- but did.

Most men are willing to concede that women are their superiors if that would discourage them from assuming to be men's equals.

Trying to sell a housewife a home freezer, a salesman pointed out - "You save enough on your food bills to pay for it." "Yes, I know", said the woman, "But you see, we're paying for our car on the carfare we save. We're paying for our washing machine on the laundry bills we save, and we're paying for the house on the rent we're saving. We just can't afford to save any more right now."

A young couple walked into a car dealer's showroom and were shocked at the price of a compact car. "But that's almost the cost of a big car", said the husband. "Well," said the salesman, "if you want economy, you have to pay for it."