

The Baroque



"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. 72

MAY 1963

The first Honorary Citizen of the United States once said -

"Land monopoly is not the only monopoly, but it is by far the greatest of monopolies -- it is a perpetual monopoly, and it is the mother of all other forms of monopoly."

WINSTON CHURCHILL

He also said - "We have an unreformed and vicious land system. Our system of local taxation is vicious and wasteful - a harsh burden on the poor and an impediment to enterprise and progress."

That was forty years ago -- but not too long ago Churchill said he would sing the Land Song again if the people were with him on the issue.

REDUCING AND ELIMINATING TAXES

That is what you can talk about while others are talking about increasing taxes and taxing other things. You can say - the income tax can be reduced and eventually eliminated, as can taxes on your house, your business, your bequests.

All sales, excise and hidden taxes can be scrapped AND A START CAN BE MADE IN NEW JERSEY AT ONCE (no legislation is necessary) BY HAVING LAND ASSESSED AT TRUE VALUE AS PROVIDED BY THE CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE.

T I C (Tax Inquiry Council) a strictly educational endeavor welcomes inquiry from any who are interested.

THINK - TALK - ACT - TAX REDUCTION - TAX ELIMINATION

HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL OF NEW JERSEY
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Romance In the Henry George School

It has happened before, but the Annual Report 1962 of the school contains - (Miami, Florida) "At one of the classes, Miss Moore met John Dyckman, a student, and not long thereafter, they were married."

Of course we cannot guarantee that this sort of thing takes place often, but anyone wishing a copy of the 1962 Annual Report may have one on request.

A Date to Remember

Wednesday May 8th - Annual Banquet
New York Henry George School - Henry Hudson Hotel. Speaker, Dr. Rolland O'Reg Pres. New Zealand League Land Value Taxes

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NEWARK, N.J.
Permit #2136

Henry School of Social Sciences
53 W. 69th St.
New York 21, N. Y.

WHO OWNS THE EARTH?

Preceding the showing of the film "Land and Space to Grow" at the Community Church in New York City, Director Tetley gave a talk in which he contended the natural resources of the earth, including space on its surface, belongs to all living persons.

Mr. Paul Henry Hershey, who was in the audience submitted the following to MANHATTAN EAST, an area publication:

"It is true that Sunday, April 7th was a lovely, albeit cloudy day, a day for outdoor activities, and fresh air. Some of my friends were going on a cook-out on the New Jersey side of the George Washington Bridge. Something to anticipate with delight. Which truly I did. But for me, a small soft voice of duty called. What kind of duty, if that it be, could woo me away from a day of fire, and sun, and air, and a hearthness to water? And Land!! As a member of the Henry George School, the picture and motion picture at the Community Church was the siren call that wooed me from quote "the great outdoors", unquote.

"Doesn't sound like a very good choice, especially in view of the worst winter we've, does it? I chose to go to the picture and see the film - why? Because - I gone to the basin for yachts on the Jersey side of the Hudson it would have been with the permission, tacit it is true, that State, and my friends and I would needed consent for that which is ours usufruct. Roughly translated "the land belongs to the living", and no one of us using the principle of "right is created by might" or prior ownership, or conquest is given the privilege of withholding the use of land from his fellow man. Yet, thus has it been since before we were born, you and I, and so it seems likely to remain.

"Is it important? So there are landlords who bilk, and tenants who grouse at the bliking? Isn't this the way of the world? Who cares? If one of your friends, or you or I, were to go to the downtown part of the city, draw a chalk mark around a square foot of land, and talk or sell or try to communicate with our fellow citizens, the law would descend upon us and we would summarily be removed from that land... upon which in the final analysis all mortals must rest and have their being.

"But I hear you say, in not unkindly tones, 'Aren't you really beating a dead horse?' Suppose, I do agree with you that things are not right in this less than perfect world, a la Voltaire? Frankly I couldn't care less. If you want my frank opinion, you could have gone to the cook-out, further you should have gone to seek the fresh air frolic with your friends. And that bit about the 'small soft voice of duty', what are you, some kind of a left-over recruitment officer from the last world war?"

"Dear reader, I respond, (dipping into the 18th century technique) I am warming up to you. You present me with a challenge, further that last bit about my trying to do some recruiting, had a bit of humor to it, be long before the next issue of postage stamps will carry a picture of a weeping

Guess you found me out. There are some elements of the proselytizer in my makeup. I did spend an hour or two in Central Park in the sun; although it disappeared behind a dark and brooding cloud shortly. Only then, did I go to hear the director of the Henry George School of New Jersey, Mr. John T. Tetley, tell us the story of land, and should anyone be from the field of advertising it was a pitch in low-key, or in Madison Avenue language, a soft-sell.

"The call to a dyslogy about our land value taxation, was the call to duty that I had to give preference to; it was the call of Moses to re-instate the Year of Jubilee (every 50 years the land was returned), the muted whisperings of George deceased these 66 years; and the soft voice within myself that says, "If the best was not handed down to me, by my fathers' fathers, is it not for me to try to bequeath a little better to the next generations?"

"Mental Health in the Metropolis (the Midtown Manhattan Study) is the study of MANHATTAN EAST. Why was this area chosen? Because, here is opulence, beyond belief, and economic want beyond belief. Benjamin Franklin said "Where freedom is, there I want to be!" Thomas Paine, replied, "Here tyranny is, here I want to be." And much as I admire the practical wisdom of a Franklin, I guess that temperamentally in this issue I am closer to Paine. And this is the problem, "Why midst all the true and fine Progress, particularly in the Manhattan East section of this large city, does poverty quietly stay close at hand? Why with an expanding economy are there 5 million unemployed? Perhaps when I left that sunny day, it was because I felt for and understood the darkness, the very real economic umbra under which those 5 million of our fellow Americans live. And it is just possible that I walked into the sunshine of hope, peeping through the dark clouds of fiscal distress, when I chose to hear about Henry George and his ideas of why poverty must co-exist with progress. I invite you to learn about the clouds that darken our brightest economic day, and blight our chances to progress. Attend the Henry George School.

SENSE AND NONSENSE

A foreign service academy is being contemplated somewhat similar to West Point and Annapolis. One cynic stated that the degrees to be granted will be: bachelor of spending; master of gracious living; and philosopher of philanthropy.

Did you know that dollar bills are lasting longer these days? It's because (1) wider use of credit cards, (2) increasing use of checks, and (3) stronger paper.

Herbert Hoover, while president, inaugurated a precedent. He gave his salary back to the government. Now, we are all doing it.

The way taxes keep going up, it won't be long before the next issue of postage stamps will carry a picture of a weeping

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON GEORGISM

John Stuart Mill in his essay "On Liberty" stressed the valuable service performed by those who oppose issues. In order to arrive at a sound understanding, one has to examine and re-examine both sides. Those who raise objections force the individual to re-study the issue and by so doing he reinforces his own knowledge and understanding. Mill said if objections did not exist, each of us would have to raise the objections from time to time ourselves as we must be constantly analyzing our views. Thus, those who oppose our viewpoint do half our jobs for us and we should be grateful to them.

This was brought to mind when a valued friend of the School raised some very acute points. Below, some are paraphrased and an attempt has been made to answer.

1. Justice demands that large developments to land which utilize extensively services of government should pay more for those services than vacant land which uses none of the service.

Certainly people should pay for benefits received. However, the benefits of organized society are largely reflected in the value of the land. People often assume that improvements give the land value. Actually, it is the other way around. The value of the land determines what improvements should be made. Desert land is not valuable, therefore skyscrapers are not built there. City land is tremendously valuable which is why skyscrapers are erected there. Any high development will be constructed because the land is valuable. This means many of the amenities of society are there. If the developer unwisely builds his development on cheap land, which means in an area where there are relatively few of the benefits of society, he will find he has made a serious blunder. If the developer pays the full economic rent of the land, that is all one can expect him to pay.

It must be emphasized that ethically land belongs to all the people. It is not ethically private property. Inasmuch as it is impossible for two things to occupy the same place at the same time, the people allocate the land among themselves, and they wish to do it in accordance with the tenets of justice. The people permit a person to have full, undisturbed possession of a piece of land on condition that he pay for this opportunity to use that particular site. If the individual does not make use of it, and thereby does not take advantage of the services present there, that is his prerogative. However, he cannot expect to be relieved of the payment required of him for the opportunity afforded. If he purchases a seat to a balgame which he does not use, and by holding the ticket prevents anyone else from using, he is still obligated to pay for the seat, and cannot expect a refund.

What vacant land can cause is the creation of services which would not be required if the land were not held out of use. In New York City because so much land is kept vacant by speculators, people have been forced to locate at the edge of

the city on cheap land. This land was cheap because there were few people and few services. Through political pressure, the people then had the city build roads to this land. Thus, as this writer knows only too well from experience, in the Bronx, miles of streets and subways were built which went past hundreds of vacant lots, all of which were being held for absurd prices. This meant that the city not only built what would have been unnecessary roads and subways, but the people were forced to spend many hours of unnecessary travel and inconvenience. Had the proper rent been levied on the vacant land, this would not have happened.

2. The people are asking constantly for increased services. How can the economic rent pay for all these services?

The economic rent cannot pay for all the services people might demand. Economic rent does not exist to pay for any services whatever! Obviously, if the people wanted such services, as food, clothing, shelter, entertainment as well as the usual services furnished by government as roads and protection, economic rent could not pay for them. But neither could any system of taxation pay for them, which is why precisely in nations where the people expect those things, the economy breaks down.

It is unfortunate that George suggested using the economic rent to pay for the so-called services of government, as it led to the belief that economic rent arose to pay for those services. This was merely a fanciful belief. Actually, while the value of land is a measure of the services, education and the state of the society existing in an area, it does not follow that the economic rent is the means to pay for such amenities.

Economic rent might more accurately be described as the price of opportunity. It is the price a man pays for the opportunity to use a certain portion of the earth. The land with the greatest rent represents the greatest opportunity. Thus, those with the greatest abilities tend to rent the more valuable land as they are the only ones who can easily earn the rent. Those with lesser abilities rent land with lesser opportunities. The top-notch salesman winds up selling on Broadway and 42nd Street. The mediocre salesman sells up in the Bronx.

The so-called services of government should be paid for by the people just as they pay for food, clothing and shelter, that is, these services actually should be rendered by private enterprise. Education, water, garbage disposal, roads, all should be and can be furnished by private enterprise. Government's actual raison d'être is the collection of economic rent. In addition, under the present state of society, most Georgists feel that protection of life and property is the government's function. Other than that, all other functions belong in the field of private enterprise. Thus, the economic rent should be divided among the people on a per capita basis. Then, each person can supply as much of his share of the rent as he wishes for the services he

3. Somehow or other, in spite of all efforts to obtain the full economic rent, speculators may obtain a share of it.

It is certainly true that no matter how carefully administered, since humans cannot do anything perfectly, it may well be that speculators may obtain some of the rent. That is no argument for not collecting it, however. It merely means that the people must be alert to the possibility and correct any loopholes discovered. It is precisely the fact that if the full economic rent is not collected, abuses as subleasing of land will occur. This warns society to take the necessary corrective action. When the human body is not functioning properly, pain occurs which warns us to take remedial action. Similarly, when any land speculation is apparent, it is a warning to society to take corrective action.

4. Land is not the only form of property subject to unearned increment. Speculation in stocks is an outstanding example for the increase in stock prices is not brought about by anything the speculator does.

If it were true that buying stock at one price and selling it at a higher price, in and of itself, constituted unearned increment, then the purchase and sale at a higher price of any article would constitute unearned increment. Every merchant buys goods to sell at a higher price; but few feel that he is getting any unearned increment.

Unearned increment really has nothing to do with labor or the lack of labor. The fact that a man labors diligently, under the most onerous conditions, drilling a hole in a safe so he can purloin its contents does not mean he is entitled to this wealth. Neither is wealth unearned if a person lends his car at a fee to someone else. The fact that no labor is performed does not make it unearned. Strictly speaking, unearned increment is wealth which does not rightfully belong to the person getting it. The wealth a slave-owner takes from his slave is unearned because he is not morally entitled to it. The wealth a thief gets is unearned because ethically he is not entitled to it. Since land belongs to all of us, the economic rent belongs to all of us.

It may be that the reader may have other thoughts on these interesting questions. If so, it is hoped the reader will take pen in hand and let us all have the opportunity to consider them.

Oscar B. Johansen
19th Annual Conference
Henry George School
University of Toronto, Canada
July 3 - 7 1963

Plan your vacation to take it in.

SALT OF THE EARTH

The reason some people have a secret sorrow is that other people won't listen to them.

The speaker who was being continually pestered by a heckler finally put a stop to him when he said, "I suppose when you were vaccinated there was nothing handy except a phonograph needle."

Daffynitions:

Orator: A man who says he did not expect to be called on and then refuses to be called off.

Moonlighter: A man who holds day and night jobs so he can drive from one to the other in a better car.

Lease: A written contract in which the big type giveth and the little type taketh away.

Hard Work: An accumulation of things you didn't do when you should have.

Pessimist: Someone who likes to listen to the patter of little defeat.

Genealogist: A person who traces your family history as far as your money will go.

Courtship: Period during which a girl decides whether or not she can do any better.

Hen: The only animal that can lay around and make money.

Home Rule: Where dad is the chief executive and mother is the speaker of the house.

Economy: The large-size in soap flakes - and the small size in autos.

Lighthearted Lexicon

Female mind: A scheme engine.

Finance: The art of passing money from one hand to another until it finally disappears.

Freesia: What very cold weather will do.

Free Speech: The right to talk back to radio and TV.

Gardening: Man's effort to improve his lot.

Gherkin: A pretty pickle.

Gossip: A person to whom no news is bad news.

Guillotine: The only real sure cure for dandruff.

Guzzle: To gargle with spirits.