

Single-Tax, Tariffs and Monopoly

By HENRY GEORGE

As for those of our friends who think we ought to leave protection undisturbed until we have succeeded in taking land values for public benefit, and those who express the same underlying thought by asking why free land will not lead to free trade much more naturally than free trade will lead to free land, it seems to me that they can hardly fully realize the great object which is to be attained by the single tax, nor yet the practical means by which the adoption of this single tax is to be secured. Like those who oppose us, or fail to go with us from sheer inability to see how the taxation of land values can abolish poverty, their mental gaze seems to be concentrated on what we propose to do, ignoring what we propose to do away with. The great benefit of the appropriation of land values (i.e. economic rent) to public use would not be in the revenue that it would give, so much as in the abolition of restrictions upon the free play of productive forces it would involve or permit. It is not by the mere levying of a tax that we propose to abolish poverty; it is by "securing the blessings of liberty."

The abolition of all taxes that restrain production or hamper exchange, the doing away with all monopolies and special privileges that enable one citizen to levy toll upon the industries of other citizens, is an integral part of our program. To merely take land values in taxation for public purposes would not of itself suffice. If the proceeds were spent in maintaining useless parasites or standing armies, labor might still be oppressed and harried by taxes and special privileges. We might still have poverty, and people might still beg for alms or die of starvation. What we are really aiming at is . . . "the freedom of the individual to use his labor and capital in any way that may seem proper to him and will not interfere with the equal rights of others," and "to leave to the producer the full fruits of his exertion." To do this it is necessary to abolish land monopoly. And it is also necessary to abolish tariffs.—*The Standard*, January 21, 1888.

RICH and POOR --- By Count Leo Tolstoi

"I belong," says Count Tolstoi, "to that class of people who by divers tricks take from the toiling masses the necessities of life, . . . and I imagine that I pity the people and wish to assist them. I sit on a man's neck and weigh him down, and I demand that he shall carry me; and without descending from his shoulders I assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him and that I desire to ameliorate his condition by all possible means, *only not by getting off of him.*"

This is the fatal defect of all of the schemes for alleviating poverty and improving the condition of the working masses by benevolence, with which people who will not listen to the simple remedy of stopping robbery and restoring natural rights so frequently amuse themselves. They are devices to help the down-trodden man without getting off of him.—H. G. in *The Standard*.

AWAKENING of LABOR

During his campaign for mayor of New York City in 1886 Henry George gave the following fabled conversation between a mule and its owner, to illustrate his contention that Labor was awakening to its rights and responsibilities. The mule complained of hard work and scanty food. "Dear me," expostulated the owner; "you fare as well as your father did, and he never complained." The mule replied: "No doubt, sir; but you must not forget that my father was an ass."

"Shall the ploughs forever plough the backs of a class condemned to toil? Shall the millstone of greed forever grind the faces of the poor?"—H. G. in a speech in California.

LAWS of NATURE

Laws of nature . . . are the names which we give to the invariable uniformities of coexistence and sequence which we find in external things, and which we call *laws* of nature because our reason apprehends in them the evidence of an originating will, preceding and superior to human will.—Henry George in *The Science of Political Economy*, Book 4, Chapter 2.

Read the *Condition of Labor* and other books by Mr. George for the solution of the Labor problem. Books may be obtained from the Schalkenbach Foundation, 11 Park Place, New York City.