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JULIO SENADOR AND THE SPREADING
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TOWARDS THE SINGLE TAX
USING REGENERATIONIST RHETORIC*

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Julio Senador Gómez (1872-1962) was an important member of the Spanish Georgist movement between 1917 and the Civil War and also probably its most influential public spokesman, after becoming a well-known publicist in Spain during the first third of the twentieth century. However, Senador's popularizing of Henry George's ideas was limited and incomplete. Firstly, and like many other Georgists, Senador – who had a little economic education – focused essentially on the practical remedy of a single tax, completely overlooking any analytical foundation to justify it in *Progress and Poverty* nor attempting to provide theoretical debate or development. Secondly, his impassioned Regenerationist rhetoric and excessive style, together with his chaotic way of presenting his arguments, tended to obscure – and even often radically distort – his reformist proposals based on George's theories which, in reality, were quite moderate and far from orthodox socialism. Finally, Senador's Georgist approach did not evolve: he completely ignored the severe criticism of Georgism by Spanish economists and did not pay enough attention to the changes that had taken place in the Spanish economy from the end of the Restoration period until the Second Republic. As a result, his discourse became reiterative. Today, the most valued contributions of Senador's work are precisely those that are not related to his Georgist facet.

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1. INTRODUCTION

JULIO SENADOR GÓMEZ (1872-1962) was a prominent figure in Spanish intellectual circles and reformist theory during the first third of the 20th century. A Public Notary by trade, as was his admired Joaquín Costa, Julio Senador dedicated his work to economic issues, based on his Regenerationist¹ conviction that the basic solution to Spain's economic problems could be found in the ideas of Henry George. He was, in fact, one of the main representatives of the long-awaited and important Georgist movement in Spain up until the Civil War, together with Antonio Albendín and Baldomero Argente, and undoubtedly its most influential spokesman due to the considerable popularity he gained as a publicist.

Senador has been the subject of very little literature, although what does exist is of very high quality. Three works are particularly outstanding: the magnificent intellectual biography by Antonio Fernández Sancha (2001a) which deals mainly with Senador during the Restoration period, the accurate observations made by Fabián Estapé (1989) on the work of the Castilian author, and the interesting preliminary studies by Palomares and Orduña (1992) and Robledo (1999) on anthologies of texts and articles.² Nevertheless, there are certain features of Senador that deserve further attention. This paper specifically focuses on evaluating his work in popularizing the economic theories of Henry George which, as we endeavour to demonstrate, was deficient and limited. In fact, the most appreciated aspects of Senador's work are now precisely not those related to his Georgist facet.

¹ According to Jover Zamora, «the term *Regeneracionismo* [The Regenerationist Movement] was a social reality [...] that affected a substantial part of Spanish public life at the end of the 19th Century. Social reality: a middle class attitude which did not agree with the political system and customs of the Restoration period. An ideological movement, with a reformist approach, predominantly positivist – although not exempt from substantial contributions by Krause, historians and traditionalists, all closely related to the above-mentioned social reality and impregnated, as was such reality itself, with a heavy dose of utopia. [...] [And] a common trait: the belief that 'the system didn't work' [...], which would become an outcry as of 1998» (J. M. JOVER ZAMORA, «La época de la Restauración. Panorama político-social», in M. TUÑÓN DE LARA (dir.), *Historia de España*, vol. VI, Barcelona, Labor, 1981, 388-389; quoted by FERNÁNDEZ CLEMENTE 2001, 559).

² Other papers on Senador that focus on very specific aspects of his work are: ESCOLANO 1990, which deals with the problem of education in relation with the author; CORONAS 1996, which explores his ideas related to forests; GÓMEZ CARBONERO 1998, which analyzes the stance of Senador in the face of agrarian reform carried out in the Second Republic; FERNÁNDEZ SANCHÁ 2001b, which studies the important presence of environmental concerns in the work of Senador, who was thus ahead of his time; and BLAS 2002, a study on the stance of Senador in the face of the emerging nationalist and regionalist movements in the first third of the 20th century. To these papers we would have to also add the respective preliminary studies of Jiménez Lozano and Amando de Miguel on SENADOR 1978 and 1989.

Firstly, there are certain differences between the original message in *Progress and Poverty* and the Georgist ideas divulged by Julio Senador. Due to his limited and self taught economic education, he practically reduced George's message to the all curing single tax, whilst completely overlooking its theoretical justification, much to the discomfort of the American author. In fact, setting aside the often misinterpreted single tax proposal and the ethical and fiscal arguments, in *Progress and Poverty* there was a serious attempt to describe how the economy functions by means of a modification of the Ricardian model. If Senador had possessed the capacity to analyze the model further, he would perhaps have contemplated the single tax proposal from a more accurate perspective, as there were substantial theoretical weaknesses in George's work. However, as did the majority of Georgists, he unquestionably assumed that the single tax was a scientific and undisputable truth. Furthermore, many interesting aspects of George's liberal economic message were relegated by the Spanish writer's use of it as a mere tax proposition.

Secondly, the Regenerationist rhetoric in Julio Senador's work often dominates its content. In other words, rhetoric was no longer a valuable tool used to express ideas, but rather converted into a means to its own end. Even supposedly empirical figures, of which Senador was extremely fond, were often exaggerated or implausible and also converted into a rhetoric weapon. His style, based on open criticism of the issues affecting Spain, is often imposing and impetuous, and although it undoubtedly enabled him to capture the attention of his public, it frequently transmitted a radical message that was out of context with the true content of his moderate reformist proposals. Furthermore, Senador was neither systematic nor orderly in expressing his ideas and mixed all types of arguments together. The combination of the above undoubtedly complicated the structure of his discourse but, above all, tended to hide and even distort the Georgist theory that the Castilian writer endeavoured to divulge.

Finally, Julio Senador was anchored to the same initial Georgist ideas for his entire life and unable to evolve or even slightly modify even minor points. Although Spanish society had gradually changed during his active intellectual era, lasting from the end of the Restoration period to the II Republic, he continued to portray a negative image that was maintained in almost identical fashion by diagnosing problems and proposing solutions, without even considering the criticism that Georgism had received in our country. Perhaps this is therefore the reason why his popularity during the Restoration and Dictatorship as a publicist and public figure gradually diluted.

2. JULIO SENADOR AND THE SPANISH GEORGISM PANORAMA

Progress and Poverty (1879) was quickly translated in Spanish in 1893 and shortly later, before the end of the 19th century, authors such as Piernas Hurtado or Costa had already made reference to the ideas of Henry George. Nevertheless, it would not be until some time later in 1911, when such ideas were to consolidate into a Spanish Georgism movement led by engineer Antonio Albendín, promoter of the *Liga Española para el Impuesto Único* (Spanish League for a Single Tax) created the same year with its Manifesto. He was also director of *El Impuesto Único*, a monthly magazine published between 1911 and 1923. It was during this time that the Georgist movement consolidated in Spain, especially amongst agricultural engineers, lawyers and small businessmen, featuring names such as Baldomero Argente,¹ Manuel Marraco,² Blas Infante³ or José Cascón and Pascual Carrión.⁴ In May of 1913, the first Hispano American Georgist Congress was held in Ronda. This occurred, strangely enough, just when orthodox Georgism was beginning to lose ground on the international scene, especially after 1915.⁵

The first era of Spanish Georgism was therefore very active and lasted until 1924, when George's ideas entered the Academy of Moral and Political Science upon Argente's appointment as a new member. In addition, Georgist ideas also joined forces with other thriving regional claims. However, the Primo de Rivera dictatorship resulted in a substantial setback to Georgist activity. It was only after 1930 until the Civil War would it be re-activated with the re-organization of the League,

¹ Translator of all George's work into Spanish. minister of the Monarchy in 1917 and member of Parliament (from 1910 to 1924) and the National Assembly (during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship).

² Aragon businessman that would become minister of tax in the II Republic.

³ Public Notary and influential leader of the Andalusian Regional Movement.

⁴ Outstanding engineers and agriculturalists. Pascual Carrión was a University Professor of Economic and Social Policy and Taxation at the *Escuela Especial de Ingenieros Agrónomos* in Madrid.

⁵ The literature on Georgism in Spain has not experienced much development in the last few years, and as a result recent titles are scarce. The general studies on Spanish Georgism are Martín Uriz (1980; 1985, xliii-xcv) and Martín Rodríguez (1998, 2001). There is also an entry on the influence of George in the *Diccionario de pensamiento económico español* by PERDICES and REEDER 2003, and likewise, marginal references are made to George's influence in RAMOS 2001. On the influence of Georgism in specific Spanish regions, see FERNÁNDEZ CLEMENTE 1978 for the case of Aragon, and ARCAS CUBERO 1980 for the case of Andalusia. On the influence of George on Joaquín Costa, central figure of *Regeneracionismo*, see MARTÍN URIZ 1994, and on his great initial influence on the economist Germán Bernácer, see ALMENAR 1981, 2001. With respect to the primary theorist of Spanish Georgism, Baldomero Argente, see ARCAS CUBERO 1989. With respect to the Georgist attempts to influence fiscal and agrarian policy in practical terms see GARCÍA MARTÍN and FERNÁNDEZ MURO 1971, CABRERA *et alii* 1989, GARCÍA SANZ and SANZ FERNÁNDEZ 1996, and MERCHÁN 1998.

now presided by Senador, and the publication of a new magazine called *Reforma Social* from 1934 to 1936. Georgism – defending a very specific idea of economic and social order – should be situated among the debates concerning the most adequate economic and social order for Spain which took place during the years preceding the 11 Republic, as Brenan (1969 [1943], part 1) indicates. In any case, and according to the principles laid down by George himself, Spanish Georgists had no intention of creating a specific political party to defend their ideas, although they did try to influence the different reform proposals in Spain relating to taxation and agricultural issues, with very little success.¹ Moreover, George's followers could take different approaches as a starting point, as is the case of Senador, whose starting point was *Regeneracionismo*² (linked to an organicist view of society). It is therefore difficult to come to any clear-cut conclusion in relation to Georgist ideology.

The Georgism panorama in Spain, result of an important line of thinking during the first third of the 20th century, saw the appearance of Julio Senador Gómez quite late in 1917. Nevertheless, and as pointed out above, from that moment on he became one of its main bastions in Spain and probably its most influential defender. In fact, during the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, when Georgism was struggling, Senador maintained the movement alive with his tireless publishing work, as it was in the twenties when he was one of the best known intellectuals as a result of his intense publishing work – and still with a certain continuity during the Republic – therefore becoming one of the most successful writers of the era.³ He published no less than seven hundred articles up to 1935.⁴ Senador regularly wrote for important and widely read newspapers such as *El Socialista*, *El Liberal*, *España*, *La Libertad*, *El Cortador*, *Informaciones* or the *Heraldo de Madrid*,⁵ in which he basically repeated and commented on what appeared in his books, over and over again.⁶ He also wrote profusely for provincial rotary press.

Nevertheless, Julio Senador was totally unknown until the publication in 1915 of *Castilla en escombros*, the book gaining him certain public notoriety in Spain. Born in 1872 in a small village in Valladolid and the eldest son of wealthy farmers, a disablement caused by polio when he was young and later a backbone scoliosis was to mark the rest of his life:

¹ On the attempts by Spanish Georgists to influence economic policy and their insignificant achievements in this field, see MARTÍN RODRÍGUEZ 2001, 542-552. ² See p. 60, fn. 1.

³ As pointed out by ROBLEDO 1999, 28, Senador's popularity at the end of the Dictatorship was shown in a survey carried out by the *Informaciones* daily newspaper in 1930 in which he was considered a good candidate for minister of tax or future member of the government, together with names like Azaña, Unamuno or Álvaro de Albornoz.

⁴ ESTAPÉ 1989, 78. FERNÁNDEZ SANCHA 2001a has effectively identified over five hundred.

⁵ On Senador's publications as a journalist, see FERNÁNDEZ SANCHA 2001a, 350-359.

⁶ A broad and varied anthology of these press articles appears in SENADOR 1992.

he rejected the idea of dedicating himself to farming activities and managing the family properties and decided to study. After finishing Law in Valladolid without any real vocation and not exactly with fond memories, he finally sat for an official Public Notary examination, also for pure convenience. From 1908 until he retired, Senador travelled to a large number of inland Spanish villages, especially Castile, acquiring first hand knowledge of the problems and inequalities in the farming sector. However, his most productive intellectual years were those in which he worked as a Notary in Fromista from 1914 to 1922.¹

Seriously concerned with the 1898 colonial disaster and the agricultural crisis at the end of the 19th century, and a great admirer of Regenerationists such as Costa, Mallada or Macías Picavea, Senador became a staunch critic of Spain's problems at the end of the Restoration period, particularly focusing his attention on Castile and adopting a belated Regenerationist tone. This was to result in the above-mentioned *Castilla en escombros* (1915), a book in which his devotion to Georgism was still not apparent,² surfacing in all his later work: the pamphlets entitled *La tierra libre* (1918) and *El impuesto y los pobres* (1931), his prologue of Moreno Molina's book *Ante la avalancha* (1919) and his books *La canción del Duero* (1919), *La ciudad castellana* (1919), *Los derechos del hombre y los del hambre* (1928), and *Al servicio de la plebe* (1930).

3. THE INCOMPLETE POPULARIZATION OF *PROGRESS AND POVERTY*: PANACEA OF THE SINGLE TAX DESPITE ANY THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Through his books and articles, Senador intended to reach the general public and appeal to its conscience by criticizing what was wrong with the Spanish economy and society. His work essentially maintains the same diagnosis, causes and proposed remedies. As summarized by Fernández Sancha (2001a, 277-333), Senador identified Castile – which to a certain extent represented inland Spain – as a degraded territory lacking natural resources and victim of social injustice and a serious migration problem. He also denounced economic stagnancy and the lack of industrial development and capital, as well as the fact that agriculture was overly focused on cereal crops and suffered from a very poor transport system. According to Senador, the main reason for the situation was the lack of available land and the preposterous tax system which was worsened by three other issues: protectionism, deforestation and

¹ On the life of Senador, see HUARTE 1962; ESTAPÉ 1989, 15-20; and particularly FERNÁNDEZ SANCHA 2001a, 19-146, 335-348.

² Only certain isolated statements reveal his admiration for George, for example when SENADOR 1978 [1915], 88 claims that: «to enable political equality without first achieving economic equality is, according to Henry George, like assuming that a pyramid can stand on its end».

the inheritance of past problems, particularly the disentailment of the 19th century, the deficient railway tariff system and a society reluctant to innovate, which was governed without any interest whatsoever in scientific progress.¹ Finally, he detested revolutionary means or remedies such as agricultural reform or hydrological policy: the key was the Georgist theory single tax, that would later be complemented by other means: an ambitious forestry policy, free trade, agricultural diversity, a new railway policy and a new and more de-centralized State organization of its territory.²

It can be observed that George's ideas are present in the initially identified cause – that of a lack of free land – as well as in the basic remedy suggested – the single tax and call for more free trade. However, it is not even a slightly structured model in which the diagnosis, causes and solutions are inter-related, but rather a series of haphazard ideas scattered throughout Senador's main publications, presented in a non-systematic way and repeated time and time again. The very *naïve* approach itself of professing an essential cause and universal remedy, without analyzing the consequences or intermediary inter-relations is undoubtedly linked to 17th century Spanish *arbitrismo*, as highlighted by Jiménez Lozano (1978, ix), who describes Senador as «a bitter *arbitrista*». Nevertheless, as we conclude, it is only when we leave his Georgist facet aside that the true value of Senador's work is appreciated beyond mere *arbitrismo*.

¹ In addition to his accusation of the lack of available land, criticism of protectionism, evidencing of rural Spanish poverty, serious deforestation problems and refusal to accept the relegating of science and technology in Spanish society are authentic constants in Senador's work from beginning to end. A similar situation occurred with the heavy burden from past mistakes – such as the disentailment affecting municipal property, although perhaps to a lesser extent: see, for example, SENADOR 1978 [1915], 23-26; IDEM 1978 [1928], 273-275; or IDEM 1992, 217-225, in the articles «El hachazo en la raíz» (19.9.1925), «Liberalismo y jacobismo» (7.1.1926) and «Esclavitud proletaria» (17.8.1927).

² The section of Senador's work in which he explicitly presents his complementary remedies is the last chapter of *La canción del Duero*, where he talks of an extensive forestry policy (SENADOR 1919, 284), the nationalization of railways (IDEM 1919, 290) and free trade, a land registry and farming loans. Likewise, Senador's chapters XIX to XXIV (1978 [1928]) are dedicated to possible reforms. Nevertheless, even in his early work he mentions many of his complementary remedies that would later be repeated, dedicating three complete chapters to forestry policy (IDEM 1978 [1915], 129-199) and highlighting the need for free trade of Castilian cereals and the problem of credit in relation to the land registry (IDEM 1978 [1915], 53-83, 203-226). These measures of public policy – including free trade – must be understood in the context of the relative economic backwardness that Spain lived in at the beginning of the 20th century, which was particularly patent in the farming sector – see CARRERAS and TAFUNELL 2004, 185-221 –. After the agriculture crisis at the end of the 19th century, the country was dominated by a powerful protectionism, and the *regeneracionistas* like Costa, Mallada or Senador himself, as a way out of the backwardness, called for the construction of infrastructures and for the mobilization of the country's natural resources through public institutions (construction of dams and promotion of irrigation, reforestation and forest management, railroad rationalization, incentives for development of farming activities, etc.). Regarding the issue of State de-centralization, it is important to note that Senador was distrustful of nationalism and regionalism and therefore never defended Castilian regional politics. Neither was he a centralist. See BLAS 2002.

Senador is also amongst the large number of Georgists that reduced Henry George's message essentially to a panacea of the single tax and its assumed advantages: the elimination of disincentives to work and investment caused by taxes on profits, simplification and a reduction in the cost of the tax system, elimination of poverty and unemployment, returning the community what lawfully belongs to it and the correcting of the cyclic fluctuations derived from land speculation. Senador's work does not include a single explicit or complete explanation of the simple theoretical model of distribution put forth by George's fiscal policy in *Progress and Poverty*. This implies, of course, that he did not try to do a comprehensive analysis of the economic foundations of Georgism or a theoretical re-elaboration similar to that of Bernácer in *Sociedad y Felicidad* (1916).¹ In fact, he did not even do a basic description of the theoretical principles underlying George's propositions, similar to that of Baldomero Argente.

The reducing of the Henry George economic and social theory in *Progress and Poverty*, whose ultimate foundation according to the American author was freedom, to a mere fiscal policy measure, was never to George's liking.² Although he was self-taught, Henry George was above all – according to Schumpeter (1967 [1954], 865) – an «economist» who seriously endeavoured to carry out a systematic study of the overall economy (Collier 1979, 65). His work was based on the Ricardian model, dispossessed of some of its essential elements such as the Malthusian population principle and the Law of Diminishing Returns or the Wage-fund Theory. The resulting analytical structure was evidently quite weak given that, according to Petrella (1988), George's review of the classic research program was a hasty attempt to demonstrate that the cause of all evil (poverty, economic depression, etc.) was private property of land and that the ideas of equity, efficiency and social welfare could be inter-related through a single tax. He therefore intended to prove that neither was population growth the cause of misery nor technological change the solution. However, despite his analytical weaknesses, the truth is that George made a real effort to develop a broad theoretical mechanism in which certain authors claim to have found novel intuitions.³ He was also concerned with specific details, such as

¹ For a comprehensive analysis of the neo-Georgist book by Germán Bernácer, see ALME-NAR 1989, 2001.

² See ANA MARTÍN URIZ 1985, xxxiii and following pages. As stressed by BLAUG 2000, 270-271, George only begins to deal with the single tax in section VIII of *Progress and Poverty*. This means that he was mainly interested in *theoretically* demonstrating how progress and poverty went hand in hand in capitalist societies, rather than developing a specific remedy.

³ SCHUMPETER 1994 [1954], 1025, for example, considers that George's opposition to the wage-fund theory prepared the way for the marginal productivity theory of distribution and, in fact, J. B. Clark himself quoted George as an inspiration. YEAGER 1984 claims that George –

the ethical justification of private ownership and the advantages of this form of appropriation – except when relating to land – as a guarantee of individual freedom, incentive to production and pre-requisite for wide scale trade. Therefore, the open confrontation of George's work with professional economists was unfair, according to Schumpeter (1994 [1954], 865). Blaug (1977, 88) believes that the reason his work was greatly misunderstood was partly due to the deficient way in which it was presented.

In short, despite George's attempts to go beyond a mere tax measure, the Georgism professed by Senador was simply focused on summarizing and repeating in one way or another, without any analysis whatsoever, what he considered to be the main practical economic propositions of the Spanish Georgist movement that had been established at the Ronda Congress:¹ above all, the replacing of excessive taxes on consumption and inefficient levies on production with a single tax solely on land; and secondly, the strengthening of local councils and local tax authorities, the nationalization or municipalisation of natural monopolies, and the staunch defence of free trade and condemning of tariff protection.

In order to understand Senador's particular view of Georgism, several considerations are necessary. Firstly, Senador was never really interested in simply spreading the ideas of George – a job carried out by other illustrious Georgists such as Baldomero Argente – but rather to employ Georgist 'recipes' to solve the serious problems that he identified in Spain. In this sense, he firmly believed that the economy was much more important than political issues or cultural values in finding possible solutions to the problems.

Secondly, Senador was not an economist and his economic education was purely self-taught, insufficient and non-systematic, therefore seriously limiting his capacity to criticize and analyze. Although he quotes many economists in his work – Mill, Jevons, List, Tugan-Baranowski, Flórez Estrada, von Thünen, Gossen, Wagner, etc. –, according to Fernández Sancha (2001a, 164) it was unlikely that he read all of them directly: the quotes were simple references taken from other general

especially in *The Science of Political Economy* (1897) – sketched some of the most characteristic features of what has today become the modern Austrian School. SAMUELS 1983, 65 considers that George anticipated the current interest in the importance of institutional foundations as a conditioning factor of good economies. DWYER 1982 indicates that George clearly suggested the importance of externalities and expectations (when dealing with depression caused by land speculation). And SANDILANDS 1986, 4 highlights the fact that by arousing the interest of authors like Kenneth Boulding, William Vickrey or George Stigler, George's work appears to indicate that it was much more than simple obsession with one sole idea. On all the above, see also RAMOS 2001, 224-226.

¹ FUENTES QUINTANA 1989, 116-118.

publications.¹ The authors that do appear to have inspired him, apart from Henry George and the Spanish Regenerationists, were the Italian Achille Loria (1857-1943) – well known in Spain at the time – and Austrian Franz Oppenheimer (1864-1943) that, in one way or another, also attributed the problems associated with capitalism to the ownership of land.² He was also interested in other writers on agricultural theory, such as Laveleye and his ideas on capitalist development at the expense of communal institutions. However, in any case and as pointed out by Fernández Sancha (2001a, 168-183), it appears that Senador had a much broader education in geography and even politics rather than economic theory – despite his enormous intellectual curiosity and domain of a large number of topics. It was here that he also contrasted with another important Spanish defender of Georgism, Baldomero Argente, whose knowledge of economics was outstanding.³

Thirdly, although George was the main intellectual source of Senador's thinking, there are doubts as to whether or not he was familiar with all of the American writer's work, despite quoting him and even literally. In fact, it should be noted – as pointed out by Martín Rodríguez (2001, 527-578) – that the basics of Spanish Georgism, «were substantially taken from the propaganda brochures distributed in England and the United States and, to a lesser extent, from George's books». According to the writer, this is the reason behind the importance of Georgist congress manifestos, the declarations of principles by the *Liga Española para el Impuesto Único*, Georgist brochures and essays by Baldomero Argente (the main Spanish Georgism ideologist and translator of all the American economist's work which Senador favourably quotes, together with other Georgist colleagues). All of these texts quote and paraphrase large sections of George's work.

¹ For example, in the final conclusion of *Los derechos del hombre y los del hambre*, SENADOR 1978 [1928], 389 quotes the ideas of numerous economists, explicitly acknowledging that he did so in accordance with the treatise by FRANCISCO BERNIS entitled *Economía Política Nacional*, inserted in the Encyclopaedia *El comerciante moderno*. Another general publication undoubtedly used by Senador was the popular *Histoire des doctrines économiques* by CH. GIDE and CH. RIST, the first French edition being published in 1909.

² ROBLEDO 1999, 23 believes that Loria was one of Senador's basic influences. Loria maintained that no economic reform in the direction of democracy could be successful, lest the preliminary abolition of the present land ownership be established. Loria did not mean a return back to the ancient free land system, which would be impossible, but rather the creation of a new, cooperative land ownership. Another writer he quotes as having influenced Senador was G. Salvioli, who proposed correcting social inequality based on the Civil Code.

³ According to MARTÍN RODRÍGUEZ 2001, 537, fn. by exposing the controversy in 1918 between Olariaga and Argente, in the library donated by the latter to the Real Academia de Ciencias Morales there were many important books on economics written before that year by authors like Ricardo, James Mill, Say, Flórez Estrada, Marx, Weber, Blanqui or Rogers, in addition to those of Spanish essayists such as Olózaga or Ochoa. In the controversy with Olariaga, Argente also quotes economists such as J. S. Mill, Fawcett or Walker.

4. EXCESSIVE REGENERATIONIST RHETORIC AS A LIMITING FACTOR IN EXPLAINING REFORMIST IDEAS

What most attracted the general public in the case of Henry George (1985 [1879]) was probably his excessive rhetoric and overflowing passion in putting forth his ideas, factors that nevertheless gained him little respect from professional economists. George even mixed certain religious beliefs with his economic propositions (for example, in the book *x* and conclusions in *Progress and Poverty*). In fact, according to Martín Uriz (1985, CI), the linking of his first book with certain religious metaphysics and philosophical ideology was a decisive factor in the impact it produced in Spain at the beginning of the century.

With regards to Senador – as opposed to George and other Spanish Georgists –¹ the religious factor is not present, however his rhetoric – apt use of the written word to persuade, attract attention and even move his readers – also became a decisive and characteristic part of his heated speeches. It was often more relevant than the content itself, and undoubtedly enabled him to express himself in an easy to understand and attractive way for many readers in Spain during the first third of the 20th century, even though today it appears to be somewhat artificial and out of date. The rhetoric is based on typically Regenerationist topics, such as the concern about the disastrous situation in Castile, criticism of the oligarchy and local tyrant system, evidencing of the serious lack of Spanish natural resources and deforestation of the country and the so-called social issue.² It is also overwhelming rhetoric which often reaches an argumentative tone based on a particular style of written expression and even on the sensationalist use of figures.³

¹ As pointed out by VICTORIANO MARTÍN 2003, 265, Spanish Georgism in general is characterized by deep religious convictions. Thus, the Manifesto of the of the *Liga Española para el Impuesto Único* contains a text extracted from GEORGE's book *La condición del trabajo* – his words appear on the harmonizing of the Catholic and Georgist theories –.

² Nevertheless, Senador's 'regeneration' ideas are different in many ways from those of Costa: for example, Senador criticized the priority granted by Costa to the hydraulic policy and his insisting on condemning local tyrants, instead of fighting the system that supported them (ROBLEDO 1993, 106-107). Furthermore, given his Georgist convictions, Senador strayed from the ideas shared by other Regenerationists, such as those on protectionism and the reserving of the internal market, defended by authors like Pedregal and Cañedo, Isern, Macías Picavea, Sanz Escartín, Maeztu or Ganivet, as a result of the impoverished agricultural market's inability to become a sufficient source of demand for manufacturing (FRAILE 2001, 1000; FERNÁNDEZ CLEMENTE 2001, 562-564).

³ As an illustration of what Senador's passionate form of expression was, a few very representative paragraphs taken from the introduction of *Castilla en escombros* will serve as examples. On the one hand, Senador alludes in this tragic mode by referring to the national disaster: «Before your eyes will march those forests destroyed by the axe, those vineyards murdered by the vine louse, these villages in ruins, these semibarbaric methods of cultivation, this lack of communication, this illiteracy, this ferocity, this hunger, that are the shame of Spain and affronts to

With respect to the use of figures, Amando de Miguel (1989, 9-10) states that the numbers Senador offers in abundance on different types of issues are very often exaggerated or unlikely and used as just another rhetoric weapon. It is true that Senador often literally quotes specific sources (Geographic Institute, prestigious writers, etc.), however on other occasions, the figures are not accompanied by any references whatsoever. This is when statistics become distorted, for example, those highlighted by de Miguel in relation to child mortality or population density.

According to Fernández Sancha (2001a, 131-133), Senador's style is disproportionate and the antipodes of well-balanced and weighted discourse, combining desperate, tragic and alarmist techniques with others featuring euphoria and lengthy chains of positive effects based on one single event. Furthermore, his moments of greatest exaltation are when his words are filled with «pompous vocabulary [...], verbs in the imperative, exclamations and invocations; when he most enjoys himself with puns and his words revert to the typical binomial of 'workers and fools' [...] [or] 'heinous politicians and heroic experts'» (Fernández Sancha 2001a, 133). In addition, we must include a certain disorder in expressing his ideas, with frequent additions and digressions that interrupt his line of thought, without finishing it, together with a substantial dispersion of the topics addressed.¹

All these features of his style – particularly prevalent in the books written during the Restoration era, such as *La ciudad castellana*, which increasingly faded into articles and books published in the '20s and '30s – did not help to transmit the moderate Georgist reforms which Senador had, in fact, defended. In other words, the form was not suited to the content and on occasions, tended to deform it with radical twists.

On one hand, Senador – a firm believer in market economics, the basic virtues of private property and the harmony between workers' interests and capital – was simply proposing the implementation of

the civilization of our century [...] The nation that was capable of conquering with the spearhead an empire twenty two times larger than Rome in the time of Trajan, today, unhinged and defeated, rots under the sun like an unburied corpse» (SENADOR 1978 [1915], 6-7). On the other hand, he denounces in the same way the degradation of the country's politicians and intellectuals: «Come, you politicasters of a rotten regime who, without even knowing anything about how statistics are done, yet you argue about irrigation or tariffs [...]; and you, patriarchs of empty sensationalist journalism [...] who, without more intellectual baggage than your second-rate *henrygeorgism*, you take part in farming congresses in order to [...] present your support for any despicable little political boss; and you, the representatives of the *idle and entertaining literature* that, without having any idea of where the Guadarrama ends, pretend to admire this land as if it were a breeding ground for heroes and a nursery for saints» (SENADOR 1978 [1915], 6).

¹ To a certain extent, Senador's methods were likened to what Blaug (1980, 148) called «telling stories», which consisted in joining specific facts, low level generalizations, high level theories and opinions in a more or less coherent narration stuck together by an implicit series of beliefs and attitudes that the author shared with his readers. The result can be extremely persuasive but *a posteriori* is not easy to understand why.

George's single tax, together with a number of complementary measures such as the liberalization of trade and an active forestry policy. In addition, he was in favour of reducing the excessive importance of ideology in Spanish public life, granting more relevance to the technical experts so they could guide the society from science. He even openly declared his dislike of the «anti-capitalist dogmatism of socialists obsessed by Marx's *Das Kapital*»,¹ or his firm belief in the uselessness of a workers' revolution and rejection of the «battle of the classes».²

On the other hand, however, his vivid expression often resulted in blatant statements that made him look like a radical socialist and thus confused his readers. For example, in *La ciudad castellana* (1919) there is an obvious threat made to the Land Lords³ and a call for the extermination of land ownership,⁴ whereas in *Los derechos del hombre y los del hambre* (1928) and other articles written in the '20s, there is a sudden outcry for the «dispossessed», who live in misery despite being those that work the hardest.⁵

¹ SENADOR 1989 [1919], 102.

² IDEM 1919, 287.

³ «You, the owners [of the land], think about it carefully [...] There is, in effect, and you know it, an atmosphere of inextinguishable hatred [...] in which this overwhelming revolution is breeding and you can feel it behind you; you observe with horror that this revolution is coming when you desperately call for the *protection of property* [...] Reflect on it, because if you stubbornly insist on blocking people's claims, you will eventually be swept away without mercy [...] The time has come, landowners, for you to openly decide whether you are for or against the people. If you are against them, continue with your habits, demands for more unfair laws, more bayonets, open more jails, but be prepared for the consequences because the truth is on its way and will not be halted. However, if you realize that the codes in which you trust have become insufficient and you have begun to see the instability of all systems based on violence and endeavour to observe real life serenely; observe the anger that frantically threatens; observe the sordid black misery that rises up or is crushed; observe the chaos that will give rise to demagoguery and you will finally understand that a peaceful and harmonious regime based on the explicit acknowledgement of everyone's right to be happy is preferable, even from a selfish perspective, to others in which even our daily bread has to be defended with guns» (IDEM 1989 [1918], 47-49).

⁴ «To say so, once and for all, it is necessary to exterminate land ownership» (IDEM 1989 [1918], 42).

⁵ «The dispossessed are greater in number [...], the suffering masses that give rise to migration and those that die silently so as not to disturb the peace of the fortunate [...] We must consider providing them with food that is free of taxes and a portion of land to work because [...] no substantial problem can be suitably solved without legally solving the vital issue of land ownership» (IDEM 1978 [1928], 396).

«Which means that [...] the souls of these masses in perpetual rebelliousness [...] is the constant raping of thousands of women forced into prostitution by imposed unemployment; the systematic murder of thousands of defenceless children who are denied even the most pitiful invitation to the banquet of life by a vile social regime; the unceasing expulsion of thousands of migrants that escape this inferno whilst they spit on the land in which they were born; exhaustion, slavery and rounding up of millions of strong and capable men without hope of manumission, who must waste their lives in hard labor to protect the privileges of the idle [...] The moment of vengeance is near when the series of farces created under the protection of the law are to be evicted [...] to correct human relations in accordance with Nature's plan [...] The uniting of the parias would surely be enough now to radically exterminate the large beasts that devastate production» (IDEM 1992, 252-254; «Esperanza», 10.II.1923).

As a result of these radical forms of expression, added to the mere objective difficulty of distinguishing between the effects of nationalizing land and the total confiscation of its pure income, it is not difficult to understand why Georgism was considered to be socialism and in the '50s certain well informed writers even placed it alongside names like Besteiro o de los Ríos.¹ Senador also helped to confuse in other ways common to Spanish Georgists, as highlighted by Martín Rodríguez (2001, 526-527). Firstly, in the search for precedents to support the idea of a single tax on pure income, he did not take any care whatsoever in distinguishing his proposals from those of writers such as Francisco Centani or Ensenada, amongst others, which were clearly different to the ones he was defending.² Secondly, as a result of his particular concern for Castilian agricultural issues, Senador as a figure, and all Georgism in general, was associated to agricultural thought in Spain and the single tax was seen only as a remedy to the agricultural problem, when it was actually intended to be much more than that: the basis of a new social organization that would enable further economic progress. In fact, certain interesting ideas put forth by Henry George, such as the possibility of correcting market flaws by public intervention without interfering in its efficiency and the arguments in favour of free trade,³ were poorly developed and emphasized by Spanish Georgists, being eclipsed by others which were focused on the use of farming land.⁴

Senador's political perspective was also blurred to a certain extent by his passionate form of expression. On occasions, he appeared to support Costa's idea of the «Iron Surgeon»,⁵ resulting in him being considered by Tierno Galván (1961, 119) to be a pre-fascist writer. This term, however, is not appropriate, as the Primo de Rivera dictatorship of the '20s was not to Senador's liking and he openly criticized fascism.⁶ He was also clearly in favour of a participatory system and, on several occasions, even proposed the creation of a Workers' Republican Party to destroy the old 'pacific change' policy and initiate a system of real remedies based on expert knowledge.⁷ In reality, as pointed out by Fernández Sancha (2001a, 251), the isolated references made by Senador to the

¹ See MARTÍN RODRÍGUEZ 2001, 525-526.

² See, for example SENADOR 1978 [1928], 296, or IDEM 1992, 151, who quotes the mentioned authors as direct precedents, also quoted in the same respect by other colleagues from the Spanish Georgist movement. The Italian Centani (1620-1684) proposed a single contribution on agricultural yield, an obvious precedent to the *impôt unique* of the physiocrats. And the Marques de la Ensenada (1702-1781) promoted his famous land registry in order to establish a single tax in Castille, a direct tax which was proportionate to individual wealth (PERDICES and REEDER 2003, 143; 424).

³ See SANDILANDS 1986 and RAFALCO 1988 respectively.

⁴ MARTÍN MARTÍN 2003, 264.

⁵ For example, SENADOR 1919, 194.

⁶ On the first issue, see ESTAPÉ 1989, 19, and on the Castilian writer's criticism of fascism, see for example SENADOR 1978 [1928], 335, 343.

⁷ For example, SENADOR 1918, 68.

«harmonizing of Spain» were above all the result of his particular irate and desperate way of expressing himself, rather than a meditated approach to the issue. In any event, Senador's political perspective was nevertheless peculiar because, given the importance he associated to economic factors, he believed that political systems had to ultimately depend on production means and even regional issues were based on economic reasons. He therefore considered that there could not be real political change without a change in the land ownership system, and that democracy – where applicable – would be purely formal. This idea, together with a certain level of contempt for the conventional political class – who Senador considered to be an impersonation of the true experts who should be governing, in many ways help to explain his rejection of the parliamentary system employed.¹

5. LACK OF EVOLUTION OF SENADOR'S GEORGIST THEORIES

Senador's basic ideas were 'definitively' set forth in his early work, which appeared at the end of the Restoration period. Subsequently, in later books there was no appreciable evolution or significant change, perhaps because Senador at the time was quite old when he joined Spanish intellectual circles, approaching the age of sixty, and had lost direct contact with the reality that had inspired his work on Castile. Therefore, in *Los derechos del hombre y los del hambre* (1928) and *Al servicio de la plebe* (1930), or in the brochure *El impuesto y los pobres* (1931) – which, in fact are compilations or extracts from articles published during the dictatorship – we see the same basic Georgist ideas tinged with early Senador Regenerationist theories, and only minor modifications that often result in emphasis on certain issues instead of real content.² Furthermore, although his scope of reference would now often extend to Continental Europe, his fundamental basis was still the situation in Spain.

In all of the works of Senador the basic problem underlying the backwardness in Spain is at bottom land ownership, and the solution for the ills of the national economy must necessarily go through – as a primary and essential measure – the adoption of a Georgist single tax. Thus, for example, in *La ciudad castellana* (1919) Senador identifies private land ownership as the principal cause of the stagnant condition of the Spanish economy:

¹ Despite this rejection, PALOMARES and ORDUÑA 1992, 20-27 also clearly place Senador at the forefront of Authoritarianism and highlight his criticism of specific activities carried out by the Primo de Rivera dictatorship.

² Senador's last book, written after the Civil War, is an unedited and incomplete work, the last edition being published in 1956. It is entitled *El hueso roído*, and does not incorporate any changes whatsoever to his approach. For a summary of its content, refer to ESTAPÉ 1989, 66-77.

Civilization advances in those nations that are inclined to destroy the monopoly on land and consider it as an instrument of production: and it is slowed down, or in fact stops, in those places where the laws are inclined to protect the monopoly on land and to consider it as an instrument of rent. For this reason throughout history every great advance in civilization has always come from some great increase in production; which, in turn, came from some law favorable to the liberation of land [...] Let us now then see why there is no progress in Spain.

(Senador 1989 [1919], 52-53)

The book concludes, affirming that there is no conflict between the interests of work and those of capital and that the real «social enemy» is the landowner who rents land, who lives at the expense of society.¹ Finally, he advocates for the solution of the Georgist single tax that will confiscate pure rent of land, for until this tax reform comes into effect everything will be useless and there will be no true political liberty, something that Senador also emphasizes in other works of the period such as *Castilla en escombros* (1915) or *La Tierra Libre* (1918).² The single tax will make it possible to free work and capital from charges –thus promoting production– and to eliminate the tariffs on manufactured articles:

The only thing that must be done in order for the profit [of capital] to be legitimate is to eliminate the tariff privileges it enjoys, but at the same time to relieve it of any type of taxes so that it can freely dedicate itself to promoting production; or in other words, to create more demand for work so that salaries rise [...]. What is necessary [...] is to change the tax system [...]. In order to cover the national budget all tax on work and capital must be completely eliminated, establishing it *solely* on the rent [of the land] until this rent is destroyed, with the objective of the land's having no value whatsoever unless it is for those who work it in some way; and the rational and fair basis for this confiscation of rent lies in that both the worker as well as the capitalist make their earnings from the product by means of work carried out [...] But the land renter earns money exclusively by not [...] having worked and, further, by preventing others from working.

(Senador 1989 [1919], 102-103)

Nearly ten years later, in *Los derechos del hombre y los del hambre* (1928), the proposal is essentially the same. The great underlying problem continues to be private ownership of land, which creates certain 'unearned' returns for landowners that the Spanish tax system practically does not tax, whereas the burden of taxes falls on the yields of capital and work:

¹ «Capital [...] is the son of work, [whereas] ownership of the land is the daughter of privilege [...] All tyranny always comes from those who control the land» (SENADOR 1989 [1919], 91). «The enemy of the worker is not the capitalist, the owner of money, due to the fact that each coin of that money represents a certificate of work; rather the enemy is the land renter, the owner of lands, since it is he who confiscates the only indispensable instrument for work that cannot be substituted with another; and he is, furthermore, the one who feeds on the sweat of the workers [...], due to the fact that directly or indirectly, any increase in wealth produced by the nation's work must end up in his chest of drawers» (p. 102).

² See IDEM 1978 [1915], 88, and 1918, 20.

The tax system established here [in Spain] is based solely on the cruel persecution of work, on the harassment of capital and in the never-ending increase in the cost of living. The person who owns land and does not cultivate it will pay nothing or almost nothing, due to the fact that the tax is paid on the product and not on value. If capital or work is dedicated to this land, when it is not punished like a criminal it will be treated like a suspect. The only healthy business is to invest money in the purchase of lands, in sitting back and relaxing and in pocketing later the increase of the value of the land created by the efforts of the community, and which should belong to the State as representative of the community.

(Senador 1978 [1928], 367-368)

Therefore, in the conclusion of the book, Senador insists that as long as the problem of land is not solved by fiscal routes it will make no sense to speak of political liberty. Likewise, as long as a Georgist tax reform is not carried out, political or redistribution reforms, infrastructure and railroad construction programs, or the anxiously desired advance towards free trade will be of no good to society, for in the end with measures of this type, which will contribute to a rise in the value of land, the only ones to benefit will be the landowners:

Here [in Spain] the dispossessed represent the greatest number, they are those who work the most, they are those who obtain the least [...]. Before giving them the right to vote free from the coercion of power, we have to think about putting a loaf of bread free from taxes within their reach and a piece of land to earn it on if we do not want Spain to eternally be the advance of the desert [...] No substantial problem will ever be satisfactorily solved if the problem of land is not resolved beforehand, with justice.

(Senador 1978 [1928], 396)

Prior to tariff reform, it is necessary to carry out tax reform, for the first effect of all progress, even of a social nature, is to increase the value of the land, and only when the *unearned* increases were to fill the chests of the Treasury for the maintenance of public burdens, the benefits of free trade would extend to the entire community and would not benefit only the landowners.

(Senador 1978 [1928], 366)

Finally, the single tax appears anew as a panacea, the great solution that must precede any other action:

The tax [on the rent of the land], without compulsory purchase or violence, makes the land pass from the hands of the rich to the hands of the poor, for in not jeopardizing the value of production but eliminating, completely, that of speculation, the keeping of lands uncultivated or poorly worked ceases to be a business, and an enormous and permanent land offer is promoted.

(Senador 1978 [1928], 395)

[...] [In addition,] usable land will soon reach its maximum yields, due to the fact that for the owner producer there would always be a means of gradually paying less, which would mean to gradually produce more, as each increase in product would be exempt from tax.

(Senador 1978 [1928], 390)

This same basic proposal is repeated even more emphatically in the last work published by Senador – the information pamphlet *El impuesto y los pobres* (1931), whose title is in itself very explicit in terms of its Georgist content –, and can also be found in various journalistic collaborations from the 1930s.¹

Despite the serious criticism that George's ideas had received in Spain by a series of economists – such as Vicente Gay, Melchor Salvá, Manuel Reventós and especially Luis Olariaga –² Senador's faith in Georgism as a universal remedy was kept unperturbed, and the causes considered to be the origin of Spain's problems would practically remain unaltered.³ For example, Senador's overall perspective of the country's economic situation, seen from his tragic Regenerationist position, was still as negative and pessimistic as it had been during the Restoration period, in spite of the fact that real changes had occurred. In fact, modern day historians coincide on considering the first third of the 20th century as a dynamic period of growth in the Spanish economy.⁴ Furthermore, it was also an important era for the development of culture, science and even agriculture – an issue to which Senador dedicated so many pages. According to Ricardo Robledo (1999, 18), recent historical research into agriculture «shows progress – only limited by geographical conditions,

¹ See, for example, the articles «Abejas y zánganos» (21.6.1930), «La nueva Reconquista» (6.9.1933) or «Reconstrucción de España. La escoria de los siglos» (17.12.1932) (SENADOR 1992, 268-270; 283-285; 94-96).

² For the criticism of Georgism by professional economists, see MARTÍN RODRÍGUEZ 2001, 531-542. OLARIAGA 1992, 268-272, in particular, considered the theoretical ideas of Henry George to be over-simplistic. For example, in his theory on distribution, wages and interest were a mere residue after deducting tax, as the George model dispensed with the basic elements of the Ricardian scheme that was used as a reference, such as the principle of population and wages fund. In addition, Olariaga refers to more technical aspects by highlighting, amongst others, the difficulty in calculating pure land rent, the unfair and insufficient nature of income derived from a single tax or the impossibility of confiscating income from landowners resulting in higher wages.

³ Senador was very probably aware of the criticism of Georgism by several Spanish economists. It can be deduced from his quotes that he was not entirely unaware of their work. Apart from Francisco Bernis – referred to above – in several of his articles written in the '20s, Senador also quoted a study by Flores de Lemus for *The Times* (for example, in «La actualidad de España y el régimen del porvenir», an article published in *El Programa* on 10.11.1923 and referred to by SENADOR 1992, 6). Similarly, in his last and unedited work, he quoted the figures used in a speech by Vicente Gay to the Sociedad Económica Matritense on 27th April 1927 (ESTAPÉ 1989, 67-68). Strangely enough, however, Flores de Lemus and Gay were amongst the most despised economists by Georgists, as highlighted by Martín Rodríguez (2001, 540, fn.): the former for supporting the Public Tax Authorities for many years and completely ignoring the single tax and the latter for his direct criticism of George's ideas. Besides, with respect to Baldomero Argente, the main representative of Georgism in Spain, Senador was undoubtedly aware of his dispute with Olariaga regarding the severe criticism the latter had made of Henry George's ideas.

⁴ For example, CARRERAS and TAFUNELL 2004, 223, in their recent manual on contemporary Spanish economic history, define the period of 1914-1936 as the «silver age of the Spanish economy».

soil and business initiative – in reducing first ploughing, introduction of inorganic fertilizers and specialization», thus improving agricultural productivity.¹

The lack of evolution of Senador's essential ideas is probably the reason for his loss of popularity and ability to influence public opinion during the Republican era, although there were surely other reasons that were perhaps more important in this respect. For instance, the fact that Senador – to his regret – would have been appointed to the National Assembly (1927) during the Dictatorship, thus linking him to a certain extent to the old regime, or that Senador himself – after having criticized parliamentary democracy in the '20s – was so unenthusiastic about the proclamation of the II Republic and quite critical of it from the beginning. As mentioned above, Senador always believed there could never be a real transformation without changing the economic foundations: all systems of political freedom and civil participation were purely formal without real content. In other words, simple political changes did not produce results: what was important was economics.

Amongst the changes observed in Senador's later work, particular mention should be made of two essays on economic matters. Firstly and from a Georgist perspective, his enormous interest in the urban land issue, which had already appeared in his articles during the '20s.² Senador, who had originally been basically concerned with topics related to rural issues, was now worried about the problem of a lack of housing in large cities, precisely in an era when the level of urbanization was increasing little by little in Spain. This lack of housing contrasted with the abundance of land available for construction awaiting capital gains, resulting in increasing rent prices: the substantial demand for permanent housing was contrasted with limited supply, which was much lower, and many workers were unable to obtain suitable housing. Senador's solution, in line with George's approach, was to implement the single tax on urban land value that would be significantly and continuously increased. Builders would therefore be exempt from all the taxes they currently had to pay and such taxes would be levied on the

¹ On Spanish agriculture in the first third of the 20th century, see for example, JIMÉNEZ BLANCO 1985. Even in the 19th century, Castilian agriculture was far from being static: market-oriented with increasingly more production as of the second third of the century that enabled it to feed a growing population and even export (GARRABOU y SANZ 1985). Some writers at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries maintained a positive vision of agricultural growth at the time, as demonstrated by RIVERO 2003.

² A large number of articles written by SENADOR 1992, 289-360 and compiled by Palomares and Orduña refer to issues such as urban economics, housing and rent. They were written in the '20s and '30s. Senador also openly refers to the issue in *Al servicio de la plebe* (SENADOR 1930, 164). In *Los derechos del hombre y los del hambre*, SENADOR 1978 [1928], 303 emphasizes the essentially urban nature of industrial civilization and the increasing trend towards urban agglomeration.

owners of land, thus giving them an incentive to make them available for construction.

Furthermore, Senador was highly critical of modern industrial civilization dominated by large corporations that controlled everything, including political power and public opinion.¹ Companies divided into shares diluted the ownership of capital into small shareholdings that were only interested in earning dividends, and management was left to a chosen few that freely administered substantial resources converted into financial oligarchies. In addition, there was an obvious trend towards large cartels and trusts that worsened the situation even further. In this monopolistic financial capitalism, where formal democracy was a cover for authentic plutocracies, production was insufficient to cover social needs and only intended to make money. The industrial civilization derived from the extension of automatism was also essentially urban by nature: populations increased in large cities, hostile and alienating places where basic human values were perverted.²

Finally, mention should be made to Senador's attitude towards the Republican agricultural program of 1932. It was logical for someone who had dedicated so many pages to denouncing the problems with Spanish agriculture to be interested in such a project. However, from a strict Georgist perspective, Senador's opinion – published in several press articles³ – could not have been more negative: it was useless changing land ownership structure without modifying the tax system. According to Senador, even if land were expropriated and granted to new owners, it would again shortly belong to very few and the same situation would occur. The fact that property was in fact private was the real problem and a mere re-distribution was not the solution.⁴ In this sense, as pointed out by Robledo (1999, 23), it is important to highlight that Senador disagreed with the basic agricultural reform because he did not believe in redistributive programs, constantly claiming that simple political measures were unable to really change things.

¹ SENADOR 1978 [1928], 315-333.

² In his criticism of automatism and large cities, Senador recalls the position held by Spanish Catholic corporativism according to the Church's Social Doctrine (PERDICES and REEDER 2003, 150-151). Furthermore, in his criticism of financial oligarchies in large public limited companies, Senador's words are often reminiscent of Veblen's vision of the «industry captains» or certain Hilferding ideas on financial capital.

³ Including those by SENADOR 1992, 275-288, particularly highlighting «The New Reconquest. Likely Deception» and «About the Agricultural Reform», both of 1933. In the anthology written by R. Robledo (SENADOR 1999, 194-199) there is also a «Prologue» by SENADOR in the book by D. HIDALGO *La reforma agraria* published in 1931, in which he predicts the failure of the agricultural reform as it would generate dangerous situations and greater problems than those it intended to solve.

⁴ On Senador's critical position of the agricultural reform, GÓMEZ CARBONERO 1998. In whatever case, FERNÁNDEZ SANCHA 2001a, 389 believes that Senador did not comprehensively deal with the Republican reform.

6. CONCLUSION: SENADOR - MUCH MORE THAN GEORGISM

If Henry George today has a place in the history of economic theory, it is not because of his analytical contributions, but rather his extraordinary ability to attract the attention of a wide range of people to a simple message – with the exception of professional economists – built on an anachronistic and somewhat forced re-formulating of classical economic ideas. Spain is a good example of that ability, as it was one of the countries in Europe in which the Georgist movement, although quite belatedly, became most established with Julio Senador Gómez as one of its staunchest defenders and possibly its most outstanding propagandist up to the Civil War. In fact, Senador was one of the main Spanish publicists in the first third of the 20th century and a well known intellectual in Reformist ideology.

However, his work in spreading the ideas of George, as we have intended to outline in this brief analysis, was not exactly well-conceived. Firstly, Senador focused exclusively on repeating the single tax solution over and over again, without referring or even being slightly interested in basic theory, as was done to a certain extent by other Spanish followers of George such as Argente and even Albendín. Be it because of his poor economic education or his priorities in dealing with the problems faced by Spain with his single tax solution – and not purely spreading the message of George –, the truth is that Senador completely ignored the model that George had intended to construct in *Progress and Poverty* and took very little notice of the most interesting areas of his liberal economic thinking. It could even be ventured that Senador became more aware of George's ideas by having read the Georgist propaganda publications throughout Spain rather than by having read the American economist's books.

In addition, Senador's over-passionate Regenerationist rhetoric and radical bias distorted his reformist ideas of a more moderate Georgist nature. Furthermore, as well as being associated to socialism, often the result of his style of expression – an association that added to the difficulty the general public encountered in distinguishing between total confiscation of income and the nationalization of land –, Senador also took part in two other misunderstandings that were shared by the entire Georgist movement in Spain: the tendency to identify Georgism exclusively as a solution for the agriculture issue, and the associating of the single tax idea with others put forth by previous Spanish writers that, in fact, had other intentions.

Finally, Senador did not alter or even slightly change his utopian Georgist theories – full of Regenerationist principles – during his entire

intellectual career, although did change the emphasis on certain secondary issues, such as the urban housing problem or his criticism of modern industrial civilization. In other words, both the basic diagnosis of Spanish social and economic problems, as well as the universal remedy to such problems, always hinged on the lack of available land and the single tax – respectively. These ‘fixed’ ideas that presided over an extremely negative vision of the country’s economy and were opposed to a reality which, in fact, had improved in many ways, undoubtedly represented one of the reasons – although not the only or most important ones – behind Senador’s lack of ability to influence public opinion during the Republic.

In any case, a modern day evaluation of the work of Julio Senador Gómez should go beyond his Georgist facet. In other words, it is only when we leave aside this facet and his forthright sermons – according to Fernández Sancha (2001a, 394) – that the most valuable features of his work appear. It is then we discover, as Estapé (1989, 80) points out, that Senador was much more than the «bitter *arbitrista*» described by Jiménez Lozano and was also far from being just another simple member of the «*tertulia de botica*» according to Tierno Galván, or a member of the «group of illustrious notaries» that spent their spare time delving into all types of topics and issues – referred to by Azaña –. Robledo (1999, 20, 36-37) believes that Senador offers interesting considerations and all kinds of valuable information on the social and economic environment of his time, and his references to social conflictivity, new political alternatives and detailed analysis of the local tyrant effect on economic variables are of particular interest. Senador also constitutes a valuable guide to understanding the situation of rural workers in the first third of the 20th century in cereal producing Castile of Valladolid and Palencia¹ and the social contradictions surrounding the Castilian model of agricultural growth. In addition, his considerations on the human-natural environment relationship contain extremely modern warnings of the undesired and often irreversible effects of disrupting natural balances, whilst invoking the right of future generations to enjoy a healthy environment (Fernández Sancha 2001b).

¹ This zone was characterized by the predominance of small exploitations of the family type combined with leasing as the dominant system of tenure. The harshness of the lease agreements, together with dispersion and unequal distribution of land and absenteeism, is one of the institutional factors that would explain the slowness of agrarian change in Castile. On the situation of the rural workers in these Castilian regions in the first third of the 20th century, see CARMONA and SIMPSON 2003, 117-145.

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