

**T**HE MORE favourable political climate in Spain has made possible the publication of this book (in Spanish), which in a concise form presents the historical facts that created and maintain the economic slavery in Andalusia and also the struggle for liberation.

Santos Lopez recalls the situation at the beginning of the 19th century when the liberal ideas of the French revolution spread through Spain and caused a decline of the feudal system which would soon disappear altogether, giving way to new methods of production.

The land, which up to that time was largely administered by the nobility or by co-operative bodies like hospitals, the church, municipalities, etc., in a very short time became private property, being sold at public auction at very low prices. This put an end to serfdom but introduced the economic slavery that still remains.

The nobles and rich merchants who in acquiring what was previously communal property, thereby became also owners of the non-proprietors. Both capital and labour fell under their power of monopoly: the capitalist had to pay a maximum price for the use of a locality or for access to raw materials, and the labourer had to accept a minimum wage, just enough to remain alive.

The value of land increased with the increase in productivity brought about by technology, or as a result of public investment, or because of an increase in demand due to the increase in population. That is, land increased in value without any effort from its proprietors.

When the effects of this modern slavery began to show, people reacted in various ways, with uprisings, protests, strikes. This was the situation in 1913 when the first international conference of land tax supporters took place in Ronda. By then Henry George's ideas were already pointing at land monopoly, created by the law, as the source from which emanated the Andalusian evils: poverty, fear of temporary or permanent unemployment, emigration.

But to be able to do away with the evils, it was necessary to extirpate their cause. The Physiocratic postulates of the Ronda conference became known and accepted by political leaders like Blas Infante, thus adding a new dimension to their movement for Andalusian autonomy, the Georgeist solution to their land problem.

# Andalusia: Physiocracy & the fight for autonomy

*La Tierra: Physiocracy & Autonomy in Andalusia*, by J. M. Santos, M. R. Lagos and E. L. Ortega, Jerez: Centro de Estudios Historico Jerezanos, 1980.

## BY GERMAN LEMA

The history presented by Santos Lopez is the history of social transformation in Spain: the conversion of serfs with limited rights into dispossessed labourers. And that is the present situation under both dictatorship and democracy.

**M**ANUEL Ruiz Lagos, a keen researcher who continues to present the Spanish speaking world with evidence, facts and figures that could very well have disappeared during the forty years' duration of the latest Spanish dark age.

He analyses the Physiocratic activity in Andalusia. The manifesto, 'Land and Liberty' (1911), opened the door to the international conference at Ronda (1913), followed by the manifesto of Blas Infante (1916), the Ronda Assembly (1916) and the Cordoba Assembly (1919). The formation of the Juntas Liberalistas, a political body, gave backing to the Georgeist ideology that shaped the project for agrarian reform during the short-lived Second Republic.

Ruiz Lagos points out this peculiarity of the Andalusian movement in contrast to the Catalanian autonomy movement backed by protectionist interests and with the merely political autonomy movement of the Basque country. Free trade and land reform still inspire the Andalusian leaders of today.

When reading the step-by-step programme drafted by Blas Infante for the legal removal of land monopoly,

which would enable the Andalusian people to obtain their economic freedom, one does not need to look further for the reasons for his political murder in 1936.

**L**EMOS ORTEGA, author of *Certas a la Cuiciencia de los Intelectuales* and thousands of letters and newspaper articles, secretary of Junta Georgista in Seville before the civil war, and collaborator in the Georgeist magazine 'La Reforma Social' 1934-1936, refers to the various modifications to the proposed agrarian reform by elements who were ignorant of its base. Some demanded the immediate implementation of this reform throughout the country (not just in the areas most affected by unemployment as suggested by the reformers), and some, willing to compromise, wanted to allow landowners to keep some of their privileges.

All that these debates did was to delay the final results, which practically came to nought. No political party was prepared to push the legislation through (perhaps a lesson for the Anglo-Saxon world), while the enemies of the reform - church, nobility and landowners - joined forces to present a united front to a divided government.

*La Tierra* includes appendices giving details of the Physiocratic manifesto of 1911, Blas Infante's proposals to the international conference in Ronda (1913) and to the Andalusians of the Cordoba Assembly (1919), and of the agrarian reform project for the solution of the problem of latifundi (1931).

All three documents were destroyed by fire, but repression has not been able to weaken the resolution of those who stood and stand by the Andalusian ideals: Physiocracy & autonomy.



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