

This Is Our Job

By John C. Lincoln

Most of us will agree that education is such training as will enable the mind to perceive the actual relations behind or below what is apparent. A good many of our educational institutions do not act on this definition because they graduate their students on the record of examinations which are largely memory tests.

We will all agree that the encyclopedia contains more knowledge than any one person ever had, but no one would say that the encyclopedia was educated. To illustrate, it requires no education to say that the world is flat because all we have to do is look at it and it looks flat, but when we see that the top sails of a ship are seen before the hull, which is very much larger, we begin to have some question as to whether the world is actually flat. Further education convinces us that the world is round.

It requires no education to say that the sun revolves around the earth because all we have to do is look at it and we see that the sun rises in the East and sets in the West, but when we study further we find out that what is apparently true is not actually true and that astronomical facts can only be explained on the assumption that the earth revolves around the sun.

It requires no education to say that an employer lessens his capital when he pays wages because every Saturday night the wages are paid in money and the capital that the employer had in the shape of money before Saturday has been paid out to the employees. It requires some education to see that what actually happened is that the employer has not decreased his capital but has simply changed its form and that actually wages are paid from the products of labor.

It requires no education to say that there are apparently too many people on earth and that numbers

can only be held down by war, starvation, disease, in accordance with the Malthusian doctrine. It requires some education to see that what is apparently true is not true at all and that on the contrary given conditions in which individuals can have access to land, that 1000 people working together can produce a good deal more than 1000 times what a single individual can produce and that, therefore, under proper conditions the more people there are the more wealth each one should have.

It requires no education to assume that there is no difference in property in a building and property in the ground on which the building rests. The law declares that both are private property and one is just as much private property as the other.

It is the job of the Henry George School of Social Science to make clear to people in general that the law in this respect is quite blind and mistaken. A little education will show that the building is natural property and that private property in the site on which a building rests is unnatural property created by a special legal privilege. It is apparent that when the building was erected that it was produced by labor and capital and wealth appeared which did not exist before. When we examine the title to the ground on which the building rests we see that it is not natural property in the same sense that the building is because the ground has always existed, and is part of the gift of the Creator to mankind in general. Value of the land is created because the presence and activity of the community has produced ground rent which capitalized is its selling value. What one actually sells when he sells a piece of ground is the privilege of collecting community created ground rent—in other words, he sells something which does not belong to him. Most

of us are quite convinced that a hundred years ago the law was quite mistaken when it regarded a black slave and a bale of cotton both as private property. It took the education of the Civil War to convince the people in this country that there was a fundamental difference between private property in slaves and private property in bales of cotton.

It is our job to try and make the public see that unemployment and poverty spring directly from the fact that we do not recognize the fundamental difference between natural property which is wealth and unnatural property which enables the holder of the deed to collect part of the community created ground rent. It all comes back to obeying the fundamental Command: "Thou shalt not steal."

At the present time the government takes by taxation from private individuals individually created wealth to which it has no moral right. We can all see that fining people heavily for doing things which create wealth, which our present taxation laws do, greatly decreases employment and increases poverty. The ethical thing to do is to recognize that the community has no right to individually created wealth because it has an ample fund to take care of its requirements in community created ground rent. At the present time we allow individuals to collect this community created ground rent which is, from an ethical standpoint, stealing from the community. We will never be rid of our unemployment problem until we get a clearer idea of the difference between natural and unnatural property and change our laws to get rid of unnatural property.

The object of the Henry George School of Social Science is to educate the public on the natural laws governing the distribution of wealth and once these relations are generally perceived, a change in our man made law to correspond to natural law will quickly follow.

