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Tolstoy's Georgist Spiritual Political Economy (1897–1910): *Anarchism and Land Reform*

By KENNETH C. WENZER*

ABSTRACT. Following Lev Nikolaevich Tolstoy's spiritual crisis in the late 1870s many had come to regard him as a "crackpot anarchist" espousing odd ideas such as vegetarianism, nonresistance, and a doctrine of love. The death of his friend Henry George in 1897 spurred him on to renewed endeavors. Tolstoy became the world's most noteworthy exponent of the American's ideology, which integrated his previously diffuse commitments. Armed with his universal moral and religious beliefs harmoniously and gently forged with Georgist philosophy, he became the conscience of the world. It was a monumental effort to ground justice in a rational economics and spread enlightenment for the benefit of suffering people.¹

I

IN 1884 TOLSTOY WAS INSTRUMENTAL IN ESTABLISHING a publishing house, *Posrednik* (Intermediary). Its goal was to spread to all corners of the Russian Empire wholesome literature, including folk tales and legends for moral upliftment, social betterment, and the sharing of love. Tolstoy wrote many of them, which sold for about a penny a piece.² Despite harassment by the censors, twenty million copies were distributed in the first nine years.³ The establishment in Britain of the Free Age Press in 1898 by Tolstoy's friend and collaborator Vladimir Chertkov was part of this campaign.

This propaganda of the heart was an important component of Tolstoy's spiritual conversion. The role of the artist took on a mission in service to humanity. He rejected art for art's sake: works of creativity had to have a morally uplifting purpose.⁴ Accepted canons were challenged. Literature and art were a medium for truth, for opposition to violence, for the encouragement of self-perfection, and for improvement of life. Folk literature took on a spiritual meaning and elevated to the universal; Tolstoy dismissed

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sophisticated works. His rejection of his past writings as well as the productions of other great writers and his renunciation of copyright laws to his works after 1881 were congruent with his new beliefs. In *What Is Art?* (which he struggled on for a decade and a half), he tells us that the artist's duty is to "infect" feelings of love for God and humanity, and emotions of joy and pity, which are common to all. Literature must be written in the clearest way possible to unite all people.⁵

In an unpublished conclusion to *What Is Art?* Tolstoy writes that not only art but science must be subsumed to this higher calling. In Tolstoy's thinking, science (*nauka*) is the study of everything. The concept "science" has a broader meaning in Europe and in Russia than in English usage. It refers to any field of knowledge of empirical inquiry or rational intuition, which can include history and philosophy. Tolstoy finds the work of scientists laudable when they sweep the heavens with telescopes or seek the mysteries of nature in the microscope. But he condemns them for being tools of the privileged classes, for perpetuating evil, and for ignoring important social issues such as warfare and prostitution.

The great teachers, such as Socrates and Confucius, are irrelevant to their ideals of modernity, power, and money. The goal of science, according to Tolstoy, should be to expose people to the laws of life, which will "infect" them with goodness. These precepts must be transferred from the consciousness to feeling, for science is also art.⁶ Tolstoy declares that real science should concern itself with the advance of society and not with the defense of the existing order; it should make as an object of study the land question and should expose the immorality of private property in land.

Such a scientific work has been around for a while. [Although it has been challenged by all orthodox science which defends the existing order] for more than thirty years Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. . . has been deemed unscientific and orthodox political economy indicates that his thinking in this work is wrong and that private property in land is legitimate and rational.⁷

George's works are therefore to be considered a perfect blend of art and science.

The literary giant was also the consummate rebel and iconoclast. His running broadside against the injustices of society inside Russia and beyond reached their climax in *Resurrection* (1899), his third major novel. He battled not for the conquest of power but for man's soul and a perfected world. Salvos blasted the sources of oppression—the church, the government, the

prison and exile system, the military, prominent individuals (such as Konstatine P. Pobedonostsev the Over-Procurator of the Most Holy Synod, who was portrayed as Toporov) and the upper classes with their exploitation of the poor.⁸ But much of the ammunition of this gunnery master fell upon private landowning for its injustice, cruelty, and new form of effective enslavement.

The idea for the novel *Resurrection* first came to him from a friend in 1887.⁹ Prince Nekhlyudov (as Tolstoy) reappears as the repentant noble who eschews his peers for the salvation of people. In a diary entry from 1895, Tolstoy, wrestling with a fever, notes: “[I] didn’t write during the day, and then wrote in the evening again, and quite a lot, so that more than half has been sketched out. It’s turning out in a strange way: Nekhlyudov must be a follower of Henry George and [I] must bring this in”¹⁰ Anguished in conscience:

Everything seemed so clear to . . . [Nekhlyudov] now, that he could not stop wondering how it was that everybody did not see it . . . there was the great mortality among the children, the over-working of the women, and the under-feeding, especially of the aged. And so gradually had the people come to this condition that they did not realize the full horror of it, and . . . we therefore considered their condition natural and proper. Now it seemed as clear as daylight that the chief cause of the people’s deep poverty was one that they themselves knew . . . [—] that the land which alone could feed them had been taken from them by the landlords

Some means must be found to remedy the evil “And I will find them,”

Henry George’s fundamental position recurred vividly to him . . . “the earth cannot be anyone’s property; it cannot be bought or sold any more than water, air, or sunshine. All have an equal right to the advantages it gives to men.”¹¹

Inescapably a member of the countrified patrician class, Tolstoy preached to his peasants about morality, and of course, Georgist philosophy. Such episodes appear in his latest work. Nekhlyudov, who desires to relinquish his estates, speaks with his peasants “and began to explain Henry George’s single-tax system”:

“The earth is no man’s; it is God’s,” he began. . . .

“The land is common to all. All have the same right to it. But there is good land and bad land, and everyone would like to take the good land. What is one to do in order to get it justly divided? “As it would be difficult to say who should pay to whom, and as money is needed for communal use, it should be arranged that he who uses the good land should pay the [assessed] value of that land to the commune. . . . Then everyone would share equally [One should pay] more for the good land, less for the bad land. If you do not wish to use land, don’t pay anything”

"That's correct," said the oven-builder, raising his eyebrows. "He who has good land must pay more."

"Well, he had a head, that George!" said the imposing patriarch with the curly hair.¹²

Tolstoy used the Russia of his time as a universal model of a virtuous society: the age-old local communal arrangement is to be retained in an administrative and judicial capacity without any national government (though without periodic repartition that had made for impoverishment and inefficiency with the system of small and sometimes difficult-to-reach scattered strips of land based on the natural inequalities of soil productivity). Ownership of the land will be in common, individuals having only the right of usage. Schemes based on pure sharing are impractical, since two people could never contribute the same and not effort but laziness would be rewarded in an unbalanced community. George's system fits in neatly for it provides the balance between man and society on the one hand, and between God and man on the other. The Georgist commune was to eventually develop into what Tolstoy envisioned as a mirror image of heaven on an earth with man and all creatures living in concord but in a future even without the cherished single tax.

Land itself, in its bounty and purity, is to be the nurturing ground for the growth of man as man, and man as a child of beneficent God. A life of communal harmony founded on the soil will promote morality, perfection, and salvation: freedom from all depravity and oppression. But though the land and the commune will foster personal virtue, that virtue is the primary force: from it the outer communal institutions will discover and sustain their pattern. Nekhyudov's search for forgiveness and perfection in universal absolutes thus carries a special meaning for us, for it gives an idea of Tolstoy's struggles with himself and suggests a means of liberation for ourselves in service to others.

Readers around the world waited anxiously for the publication of this work.¹³ Russian censorship, although cutting *Resurrection* to pieces, could not stop smuggled copies from returning, let alone the numerous foreign translations (which were tailored according to national prejudices). Earlier Pobedonostev had written to Tsar Alexander III that

It is impossible to conceal from oneself that in the last few years the intellectual stimulation under the influence of the works of Count Tolstoy has greatly strengthened and threatens to spread strange, perverted notions about faith, the Church, government, [and] society. The direction is entirely negative, alien, not only to the Church, but to the national spirit. A kind of insanity has taken possession of people's minds.¹⁴

Imperial authorities were shocked, and Tolstoy increasingly became a symbol of resistance, virtually a second tsar. *Resurrection* was a major factor in Tolstoy's excommunication two years later. Georgists around the world were ecstatic with Tolstoy's condemnation of economic and social injustice, considering it a renewed clarion call for their ideas and the author himself their greatest living exponent. Adulatory commentary appeared in their papers. One reviewer exclaimed that it

will leave imperishable impressions. For it is a powerful, vivid, and inspiring book. . . . It is . . . especially gratifying to single taxers to know that in this book their fundamental reform is given a prominent place, and that the great work *Progress and Poverty*, which Henry George gave to the world, forms one of the means instrumental in that moral and spiritual awakening, which comes to Tolstoy's hero, and which is pictured with magnificent uplifting power.¹⁵

II

TOLSTOY'S PROTESTS AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT contributed to his growing popularity, and demonstrations took place in his name. Meanwhile, the first years of the new century brought an economic depression to Russia. Strikes broke out in the bustling cities and the provinces were punctuated with riots. Tsarist repression did not help matters, nor did its foreign policy of incursions in the Far East. Pogroms continued to plague the Jewish villages in the Pale of Settlement to the moral indignation of the world. Anarchist groups, the newly formed agrarian socialist Social Revolutionaries, and Marxist organizations of differing shades were becoming more aggressive. Assassination of reactionary government officials spread fear into the ministries and even the imperial family. Middle class liberals were growing angry. Soviet historians would have characterized this situation as "an intensification of the class struggle."

Tolstoy himself feared a revolution that would engulf his homeland. To address the crisis he wrote numerous letters, essays, and pamphlets. *The Slavery of Our Times* depicts the onerous conditions men have to endure to eke out a living both in the cities and in the fields and the system of organized violence which perpetuates this new form of enslavement.¹⁶ The indifference of society toward the suffering of the laborer comes also under Tolstoy's condemnation, along with socialism and its prognostication of proletarianization, piecemeal reforms, legislation, unions, all governments

including democracies, false amenities that entice the worker, taxation, peasant suffering due to land hunger, and political economy for justifying poverty in service to the capitalists. The root of the evil is separation from the land. The people must reclaim a simpler life in the village. Refusal to participate in the government, the military and any form of violence, to pay taxes, to take advantage of another's toil: these negations are essential to a more moral life. Aylmer Maude writes that the "main intention and drift of the work is to show that progress in human well-being can only be achieved by relying more and more on reason and conscience and less and less on man-made laws; that we must be ready to sacrifice the material progress . . . rather than acquiesce in such injustice and inequality . . . and that we must more and more free ourselves from the taint of murder that clings to all robes of state."¹⁷

The search for an absolute truth amidst the clashing practical exigencies and moral demands of daily existence can make for any number of inner conflicts. Such was the case with Tolstoy along with other Russian radicals. An example of this occurred in *The Slavery of Our Times* that had first appeared fourteen years earlier in *What Then Must We Do?* Here he comes out against George's economics. In many earlier letters, and in *Resurrection*, Tolstoy extolled the single tax as the only viable solution for it was to be the transitional means and the initial jumping off point for his anarchism.

To complicate matters, all his works subsequent to *The Slavery of Our Times* return to his endorsement of George. A few explanations are in order. Either singly or in any combination they might answer this conundrum. Tolstoy was the consummate genius with a matching ego. To be a follower of anyone other than God the Father was unthinkable. It could also be that an element of New World dynamism in George's individualism, who would glorify men working in technical or scientific enterprises, went against Tolstoy's idealization of simple peasants, pursuing age after age their sacred tending of soil and crops in a communal setting. More likely, during the writing of *The Slavery of Our Times*, Tolstoy's absolute rejection of any state and revolt against any authority, even a benign one with no police or administrative functions, turned him for the moment against George's future. Whatever the reasons, Tolstoy the absolutist was temporarily unable to accommodate himself to George's schemes of social bet-

terment. Pavel Axelrod records Tolstoy's conversation with one interlocutor.

For a true Christian neither Henry George exists nor anything. All his efforts are directed only towards what is in his power, that is towards himself, and at the same time there lives in him an unshakable conviction that there is no more worthwhile activity for the world than this work on himself. Henry George is a concession, a weakness. Not to kill people is good; not to kill people or animals or parasites is better. . . . Similarly: some say that for the good of the people a gallows has to be put in every town; others say, "No, socialist planning is better"; and we say that Henry George is still better. But, I repeat, this is weakness. . . .¹⁸

Tolstoy was the ultimate hard liner. But though he considered George's single tax a weakness, he could not come up with a better idea, for it was absolute in its simplicity and universal in application, one he could not shake off for mechanistic economic ideals. What Tolstoy could not see at this time was that George's system looked not to a lesser but to a differing life of virtue and that the worker would commit himself to the reshaping of Nature for the betterment of society. George's restless industrial project required a more sophisticated administration than Tolstoy wanted.

III

WHERE IS THE WAY OUT (1900) reverts to George's economics, praising the single tax as the only just and sensible solution to land monopolization and unjust taxation.¹⁹ A return to the land would rescue workers from the artificial habits developed in the cities and from taxes that necessitate slave bondage in the factories: Tolstoy's horror of proletarianization and its inherent revolutionary outcome was complete. Any form of government and military is condemned. The army is the defender of the state and the agent of sin. Refusal to serve in the military is urged, for then the state would collapse.

That same first year of the century *Need It Be So?* appeared.²⁰ The gross iniquities of class differences sanctioned by tradition are exposed. Tolstoy questions the right of the rich to live in idle luxury while the poor starve and work themselves to death. Tolstoy argues, as always, that man's hardships arise from the possession of the land. He indicts also the control of factories and the products of labor as well as the collection of taxes whether in an autocracy or a democracy. Laws, he contends, only safeguard stolen property. Tolstoy again calls for an end to all violence, which protects the

rich and perpetuates injustice. The military and its system of propaganda, which bestializes the poor conscript, is then condemned in the most vehement terms. Tolstoy attacks an object of his continuing censure: the false Christianity perpetuated through the centuries by church and state, which sanction the promulgation of hatred, enslavement, and murder.

The article *The Only Means*, published the next year, lays at the feet of the working people, both in the factories and in the fields, all their sufferings and their exploitation by the state, capitalists, and landowners.²¹ To be free of these age-old burdens, they need only have faith in God (and obey the golden rule of doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us) and not in the secular, scientific, and religious authorities (who support injustice, poverty, and violence). Mutuality will corrode man-made institutions and superstitions, establish a harmonious world, and bring universal salvation.

Russia in 1902 was still suffering the effects of economic depression and the previous year's poor harvest. The proletariat in the cities were out on the picket line in greater force and more often, and peasant revolts, having increased in number and in violence, would continue for the next couple of years. Burnings of estates, murders of landlords, and seizure of properties was concentrated in the provinces of Poltava and Kharkov in 1902. Repression, the time-honored tsarist cure, aggravated popular anger. The military was called in to support the police and retaliation was quite brutal. Radicals responded by assassinating government officials.

Tolstoy sensed the coming of revolution. So fearful was he of increased bloodshed that he even wrote letters to Grand Duke Nikolai Mikhailovich and his cousin Tsar Nicholas II.²² Here was a quirk in the Russian radical tradition: falling back on an autocrat to effect egalitarian change, much as Alexander Herzen²³ had done two generations earlier in imploring Alexander II to democratize society by sovereign will. It was now "public enemy number one," Russia's unofficial tsar who begged the autocrat and his cousin to end repression and all the abuses, and by fiat to justly distribute the land by implementing the Georgist economic system throughout Russia—foster content, secure peace, defuse revolution, and not only preserve the monarchy but offer it as a beacon of righteousness for the world. The tsar did not respond, but the Grand Duke, replied in telling fashion that

. . . Every peasant is devoted to his little domain, . . . [your proposal] would encounter the most violent opposition from the peasants. Furthermore, to realize this

grandiose idea we should need a formidable emperor like Peter the Great, as well as collaborators of a very different type from those who surround Nicholas II.

. . . your idea is as far-reaching and sympathetic as it is impractical. Clearly, we are living in a terrible period that demands immediate practical reforms. . . . We are vexed with the question of public instruction and the teaching personnel, with the labor problem, the incompetent bureaucracy, the general passion for profit, excessive militarism, depraved morals, and so on, and in the face of all these you propose raising the agrarian question again. You run the danger of being the only soldier on the field, because even those who share your ideas will hesitate when it becomes necessary to pass from theory into practice. Our society seems to me so thoroughly rotten that convalescence is only possible by a united and gradual effort on the part of the different government departments.

. . . In the course of the nineteenth century life and the exigencies of life marched forward, but our institutions scarcely budged. Only when all of them have been reformed shall we be able to think of the complicated question you raise, and then perhaps men will be found who are capable of realizing this magnificent idea.²⁴

No longer hopeful of improvement from above but undaunted, Tolstoy kept writing and writing, warning of impending cataclysm. In the fall of 1902 *To the Working People* was published.²⁵ In this article Tolstoy insists that violence in the city or in the countryside never solves but magnifies suffering and injustice. He takes aim at socialism as ungodly, dependent on the state, and perverse in relying on the proletariat in a predominately agricultural country. Only access to the land will liberate the people from every form of slavery, including bondage to the machine and the temptations of luxuries. Landowners must turn over their holdings to the people as a common possession and only to those who till the soil. Immoral private ownership of land forms the keystone of all governments and perpetuates injustice and starvation. Men must not join the military, farm or rent the holdings of putative owners, or become landowners. When enough people adopt such measures, the state will recognize the sinfulness of landownership and decree it illegal or it will melt away on its own. And the most practical and just solution is George's single tax, for it comports with the ways of a godly life and can be universally applied.

Tolstoy concerned himself in the 1880s with the unfinished play *The Light That Shines Through the Darkness* and worked on it periodically, the last time in late 1902.²⁶ In this poignant autobiography, Tolstoy depicts himself as Saryntsov, conscience-grieved at landownership that brings suffering to the peasants, but at odds with his wife who insists that the property is needed for the welfare of the family. Saryntsov eventually deeds over

the estate to his wife, a compromise that torments him. Tolstoy's self-depiction could be unmerciful: he must have suffered grievously articulating thoughtful rebuttals to his own views. The glaring differences between the rich and the poor, the church which sanctions robbery of all kinds, and other social ills also came under fire. An unused act praises George's single tax as the viable answer to Russia's problems.

IV

MAN TOOK TO FLIGHT AT KITTY HAWK on the shores of the Atlantic as did the Russian Imperial Eagle in the Far East. The poor peasant was forced into a war far from the village that was his only life. He didn't know why he was there. Neither, for that matter, did the court or the general staff. The leaders had no battle strategy, but the army fought doggedly through one defeat after another. The fall of the naval base at Port Arthur in late 1904 was followed six months later by the destruction at Tsushima of the tired Baltic Fleet, which had circumnavigated the globe. A day of national celebration for an upstart power became a source of pride and an inducement to Pearl Harbor.

The war that broke out in 1904 from a meddling Russia too weak to fend for herself in Europe was muddled by the tsar. With ancient precedents, a quick defeat of the pagans would heighten prestige and direct the people's minds toward glory and away from the unresolved domestic problems of starvation, onerous labor conditions, poverty, political repression, mental oppression, and land hunger. The bungling of the war brought on increased burdens at home, but it could not deter social and economic development and progressive thought. Peasant riots and strikes continued, and on January 9, 1905 revolution began.²⁷

On that Bloody Sunday, peaceful petitioners carrying icons and seeking help from the tsar were shot in the streets of St. Petersburg. For a year and a half strikes and peasant revolts increased in waves of massive rebellion. Many cities completely shut down. Sailors mutined, while professionals of all kinds and even civil servants protested. Soviets appeared for the first time seizing authority in the name of the people. In many instances they existed side-by-side with tsarist political organs. Twelve years later the Bolsheviks would pervert these organs of democracy for propaganda purposes, a mockery of Russian spontaneity. The granting of the October Man-

ifesto and the convening of the First Parliament in April 1906 (prorogued very quickly), could not tame the fury.

Tolstoy's fears had become a monstrous reality. People were suffering even more, and blood was pouring in the streets. The seventy-six year old man was churning out more works than ever, begging people to transform their inner selves and to work in harmony with one another. One month after Bloody Sunday, Tolstoy, reflecting not only his contempt for liberal reform but his occasional hope for a "Tsar-Savior," wrote:

The crime committed in St. Petersburg is agonizing. It is truly hideous that the government ordered the murder of people, with the soldiers shooting their brethren, and [also] the unholy agitators who for their own nefarious ends led the simple people to their death. . . . The people are not revolutionary at heart. The townfolk seek only peace to work under honest conditions—the country people desire only the use of the land. The creed of Thoreau and Henry George is ingrained in every Russian heart. But the Russian people have no desire for representative government—none. On the contrary, they wish for the continuance of the autocratic monarchy, which is their best safeguard against the nobility and the landed aristocracy.²⁸ In fact, the tsar is the master of every inch of the soil, and he could and should give it to the toilers. The people know the tsar, and they believe he will do it. . . . Consciously or unconsciously, the people know that the right way for them [is] by spiritual enlightenment. . . .²⁹

Tolstoy scorned liberal improvements, constitutional rights, and consultative or legislative assemblies because they retarded spiritual growth, fostered war, conflicted with the real interests of the people, and were a sham. His rejection of them and his good will toward the tsar were paradoxically consonant with his rejection of all legal authority. Liberal government would perpetuate evil; the tsar, expressing the will of the people, could act at once, above and outside government like a regent of God. Progress could never be measured in democratic terms.

Tolstoy's animosity toward liberalism alienated many of his supporters. But in *Regarding the Social Movement*, he expressed these misgivings, along with his lament, that even in the midst of suffering, people fail to draw together.³⁰

As early as April, Tolstoy wrote in his diary: "I very much want to write an exposition of my beliefs as well as something about Henry George, whom I read [Sergei D.] in Nikolaev's edition and again I become elated. There have been moments recently when I've had a clear understanding

of life such as I've never had before. It's as if a complex equation had been reduced to the most simple expression and solution."³¹

Soon after came *The Great Iniquity*. Fearful of the land hunger and its ensuing violence compelled him to write this direct Georgist appeal. Land is the basis of all social questions, thus everyone must be given equal rights to its use. Any other way, whether socialistic or capitalistic, would be sinful and slavery, injustice, and warfare would remain. Man must also continue to develop a deep spiritual relationship with God so that he can work in harmony on the soil. Reflecting the Slavophile [romantic nationalist] sensibility that had traveled far beyond the reactionary right, Tolstoy declares that the Russian people must plant the seeds of Georgism, setting an example for the rest of the world.³² The essay first appeared in the *London Times* on August 1 and was hailed by single taxers around the world. J. H. Dillard wrote:

Of all living men, he whose words command most attention is Leo Tolstoy; of all publications, that which reaches the widest circle of readers is the *London Times*. That these two great forces should be combined to aid in spreading before the world the doctrine for which Henry George fought and died—and in so few years after his death—that this should come to pass, is more than George himself, with all his faith, hope and optimism, could fairly dream of.

The extraordinary letter on the land question, entitled "A Great Iniquity," which Count Tolstoy published in the *Times* of August 1st, will, more than any event since Henry George's death, draw the attention of thinking men, the world over, to the supreme importance of the land question.³³

"Tolstoy on Land Ownership," published in Philadelphia's *Evening Bulletin* in 1905, is a translation, in part, of a short essay "The Project of Henry George" and is a succinct synopsis of Tolstoy's interpretation of Georgism.³⁴ The fruits of our labor belong to us and should not be taxed, but no one can own land. Ground rent, Tolstoy insists, of each plot according to its value is the best way to put it to common use, thus eliminating government and other vices and the increasing production of wealth. The single tax—the most sane, practical, and universally valid method—would most assuredly create conditions for the improvement of mankind.

An unpublished variation of *The Three Lies* condemns taxation, the military, and most of all the denial to the people of access to the soil.³⁵ All three sins create all the physical and spiritual evil in the world. The only escape for us is to submit to God and not to other people, whether rulers or revolutionaries. Tolstoy advises rejecting man-made laws, paying taxes,

or joining the military. By such means, along with the adoption of the single tax, the world can be remade.

Another pamphlet, *The End of the Age*, predicts that the false Christianity that has reigned for so long will be replaced by a genuine Christianity ushering in a period of justice and equality.³⁶ This phenomenon has manifested itself most poignantly in Russia. The Japanese victory in 1905 is an object lesson in the sham of official, militaristic Christianity. What is needed is liberation from coercion, the total abstinence from violence, and a rational cooperation based on love. The people of Russia have preserved the spirit closest to this pure religion. Along with the war, the deprivation of land has brought Russia to her present crisis. Land slavery is the cruelest form of oppression, for it is the most impersonal form of subjugation—the slave of all, rather than of one. The denial of land forces a man to struggle with other men. Private property is therefore a deceit as is any government, be it democratic, autocratic, or socialist. All are based on violence. Men must live according to the dictates of higher laws. The true meaning of the revolution engulfing Russia and then eventually mankind will be the elimination of man-made power and the establishment of a simple communal and godly agricultural life bereft of any authority and the madness of technology. Because of the great suffering of her people, Russia will be the standard bearer of a real revolution of the spirit.

An Appeal to Russians: to the Government, the Revolutionists, and the People, issued in 1906, was an attempt by Tolstoy to speak directly to all the contending parties in the revolution.³⁷ The old sage begged government officials to confess their sins and wipe out the injustice of private property in land. Thereupon the peasants will again be supporters of the state and all opposition will vanish. Tolstoy told the revolutionaries that they represent only themselves, not the people, to whom their ideas are alien. The *Appeal* repeated Tolstoy's usual call for a communal life in the country with common property in land. A letter in March extends to all property Tolstoy's injunction against ownership, which contradicts both George's convictions that what we earn by the sweat of our brow is rightfully ours and Tolstoy remarks elsewhere:

My relationship not only to the land but to any private property is that no Christian should consider anything his. No force, therefore, should be used to defend his property, even when it is the product of his labor: more especially, he should not defend his land by arms, since everyone has identical rights [to it]. Twenty-five years ago, I

came to the conclusion regarding this relationship between force and any kind of property.³⁸

In the 1906 *Preface to the Russian Edition of Henry George's "Social Problems"* translated by his friend Sergei D. Nikolaev, Tolstoy regrets the neglect of George's political economy.³⁹ The time has arrived for the adoption of the single tax, he says, for Russia's present turmoil primarily stems from outmoded property relationships and the denial to the people use of the land. George's ideas are in accord with the mind and spirit of the Russian peasants. "People talk and argue about Henry George's system," notes a diary entry for April. "It isn't the system which is valuable (although I neither know nor can imagine a better one), but what is valuable is that the system establishes a relationship to the land which is universal and identical for all people. Let them find a better one."⁴⁰

The *Meaning of the Russian Revolution* was Tolstoy's largest endeavor to describe the essence and plight of his country in time of internal disorder.⁴¹ Although autocracy is a rotten edifice, he also feared that Russia would import alien ideas. Democratic governments, he says, are an illusion, offering a façade of freedom while fostering immorality, corruption, and injustice; perpetuate private property and land slavery; and wage war. Because Western governments are based in industrialism they have to seek other markets, which has led to colonialism and enslavement of other peoples. Again, Tolstoy calls on the people to return to the land and lead a simple life conducting themselves humbly by nonresistance to evil.

In a rare departure, Tolstoy says that we must retain whatever genuine goods modern technology has to offer and reject the luxuries of the rich and the weapons of the powerful. Do not submit to the laws of man or forms of power, or pay taxes, or abet the military, or take advantage of another's work. Deliverance from injustice and human laws entails the acceptance of a divine law. Because the Russian people are more Eastern in outlook, have retained a purer spirituality and have an innate reverence for the brotherhood of all men, they must and will make the wise choice.

Biographers report that Tolstoy was, of course, agitated by all the violence and suffering during the revolution. Henry George's single tax was a topic he never tired of. He considered it the only bridge to a better and more just life and that Russia was now in a position to proclaim to the world the need for universal land reform.⁴²

Nicholas II as a statesman and ruler was surrounded by a court of gal-

looned jokers and a paper-shuffling bureaucracy primarily composed of treys and deuces. P. A. Stolypin was the last ace up the Romanov sleeve. Declaring martial law in most of the European provinces, he ruthlessly put down uprisings with executions and transportation. The "Stolypin neck tie" and "Stolypin car" entered popular vocabulary.⁴³ The new prime minister knew that the land problem was the key to pacification and a stable country. To address this issue he created the beginning of a new phase in Russian history. No longer holding faith in the repartitional commune as an economic, social, and political entity, he established the groundwork for the consolidation of land strips into unitary holdings. Private property in land was to be the central factor of his planning. The Law of November 7, 1906, contemplated the peasants having his own stake in the country. But not all peasants were sufficiently aggressive to get land, nor was there enough to go around. So landlessness with a displaced peasantry would continue.

By 1915 only ten percent of the peasants with holdings had taken advantage of the law, and the scattered strip system still predominated. Most attempts at the creation of individual holdings were vigorously opposed by members of a commune. The peasant population was still growing, subsisting on smaller plots and suffering high direct taxes and many indirect taxes along with increasing prices, primarily on necessities.⁴⁴

The cities were burgeoning with the excess village populations. From twelve millions (12.8%) the urban areas in European Russia witnessed an increase in 1897 to nineteen and half (14.8%) in 1914. The ranks of the proletariat in that same period had swelled to four and a quarter millions from one and a half.⁴⁵ Especially after their participation in the Revolution of 1905, they were subject to restrictive laws. The workers became more and more receptive to radical ideas but still maintained strong connections with the countryside.

The economic status of the nobility was still declining. Between 1897 and 1905 members of the old school lost twenty-one million *desiatinas*, and ten million more slipped away over the next ten years. A third of the remaining land was heavily mortgaged and arrears continuously mounted.⁴⁶

Russia in the years before World War I, to be sure, was relatively prosperous and, on the surface, stable. The industrial base expanded, and despite the persistence of archaic agricultural methods and tools there were

a number of good harvest years. The government's budget was balanced but Russia became the world's greatest debtor nation. Her world position was primarily as an exporter of agricultural products and an importer of industrial commodities.

Stolypin easily brushed aside the Dumas, the first two dismissed quickly, the third being more pliable. So did Tolstoy, in his dismissal of the importation of Western ways. Many of his followers were disenchanted with his recalcitrance and failure to compromise. He lost many of them and his popularity took a beating. Still gravely concerned about the land question and the future of his Russia, on a number of occasions he conversed with members of the Duma to bring up the single tax for consideration as a basis for renewing the tired country, but to no avail.⁴⁷ In an interview in June 1907 with an American correspondent, Stephen Bonsal, Tolstoy expresses his chagrin with the new flirtation with democracy in its refusal to adopt Georgist land reform.⁴⁸ Friends and acquaintances reported quite frequently his endless talk about the land problem, Stolypin's land law, and the single tax.⁴⁹ His wife was to claim that her husband talked about George incessantly.

Tolstoy was also shocked over the brutalities perpetuated by the government in quelling disturbances. A letter to Stolypin in July 1907 begs the prime minister not to implement private property in land, and instead to apply the single tax throughout Russia for the land hunger was the main cause of the revolution.⁵⁰ Stolypin responded only after a second letter. "You consider evil what I consider good for Russia," he writes.

It seems to me that the lack of "property" among the peasants creates all our unbalance—nature implanted certain inborn instincts in man . . . and one of the most powerful . . . is the sense of property. One cannot love what belongs to another as one does one's own, and it is impossible to tend, to improve land, which is only temporarily in one's possession, as [anyone] would one's own. The artificial emasculation of our peasantry in this regard, the destruction of his innate sense of property, leads to much that is bad and, above all, to poverty—[which] is worse than slavery. . . . It is ridiculous to talk to these people about freedom or about freedoms. First raise the level of his well-being to at least that smallest degree where a minimal prosperity makes a man free. . . . And that can be accomplished only by the free application of labor to the land . . . under the existence of the right of ownership in the land—I do not reject the teachings of George, and I think that the single tax will in time help in the struggle against very large ownership of property, but now I do not see any purpose here in Russia of driving off the land the more developed class of landholders,⁵¹

A letter a couple of years later expresses Tolstoy's continued dissatisfaction with Stolypin's land reform.

The dissolution of the commune and the strengthening of individual personal property plots is a very disgusting and criminal activity perpetuated by the government. I foresee three consequences of such an action: it will increase the number of homeless paupers, who will become money slaves to the rich; it will give the rich landowners the opportunity to look bravely into the eyes of the not-so-rich peasant owners and say "I have . . . three thousand desiatinas, and you have five and ten—you are the same kind of landowner as I am," and it will violate the high moral conviction of the Russian people. [Only] the product of labor can be property: not the land, which is "God's land."⁵²

Every now and then Tolstoy still had hesitations about the single tax but he was an inveterate questioner and reexaminer of everything.⁵³ In any event, he dismissed his temporary misgivings. People who held conversations with him report his continuing love of George, and his notations still refer to the American as "a great man" and takes delight when people fight for the cause of the single tax.⁵⁴ Correspondence abounds concerning Tolstoy's concern for the plight of his country and the relationship to the land question. The aging novelist emphatically states that: "The land is God's. It should not and cannot belong to anyone. All people have an equal right to it and the only concern is how to distribute it. . . . Genuine property is determined only by labor and people must work in harmony on the land."⁵⁵ Naturally, he also mailed Georgist literature to his correspondent. Elsewhere, he writes:

The Russian people have always understood their relation to the earth, in spite of all the attempts the state forces to introduce among them a false understanding of landownership. According to the people's understanding, which is sensible, the land cannot be an object of ownership and all people should have an equal right to its use. So that this right will be the same for everyone, it is necessary that those who use the land should pay an equal amount of rent to the community at large.⁵⁶ This money should replace all those direct and indirect taxes which are now collected from everyone. I estimate that in Russia, if the lands were taxed even much lower than their values, the land tax would still be greater than all the [present] taxes put together. Thus, it would be in accordance with the ways of the farming people, [if they] were to pay a low rent for the land they used. Those who don't use it would also benefit from the lowering of the cost of consumer goods, which would come about from [the absence of] indirect taxes.⁵⁷

IV

AUGUST 28, 1908, WAS TO BE THE eightieth birthday of Tolstoy. Letters poured in from around the world. Single tax newspapers called for demonstrations in honor of George's most noted exponent. A characteristic statement declared that he was "The great Russian whose slightest word is more potent than the thunder of the Czar's Cossacks . . . the most eminent of those who stand for the truth as it is in Henry George."⁵⁸

The Australian single taxers, not to be outdone, sent a birthday greeting to Tolstoy declaring their reverence and love. His stature towers over all kings and leaders for he is the greatest living moral force and champion of the oppressed whose memory will always endure. "When we learned," the missive continues, "that you also had embraced the economic teaching of our dear, departed master, Henry George, our hearts gained new courage in the advocacy of the ideals for which we strive; new confidence in the coming of the Kingdom of Righteousness. . . ."⁵⁹ Tolstoy's response emotionally reaffirms his belief in the single tax and the evils of private property, and predicts its imminent realization. He claims that he had not done enough for the mutual cause that binds Georgists all over the world.⁶⁰

William Jennings Bryan, who considered himself a disciple, visited Tolstoy in late 1903. For Bryan, Tolstoy broke his daily routine. When "the Great Commoner" ran for the presidency a third time Tolstoy wrote to a Philadelphian:

In response to your letter of August 24 [1908], I can express very frankly the wish for Bryan's successful candidature for the United States presidency. From my point of view, since I do not recognize any kind of government, [for all are] based on force, I cannot justify the presidential function in a republic, but in as much as this capacity still exists, I am assuredly desirous that it should be fulfilled by people who are worthy of trust.

I speak of Mr. Bryan with great respect and feeling. I know that the principles on which he bases his [platform] are congruent with mine, in regard to our [mutual] sympathy for the workers, antimilitarism, and the recognition of the evils engendered by capitalism. . . .

I hope, that Mr. Bryan will be an advocate of land reform in the spirit of Henry George and his single tax system, the realization [of which I consider at present to be totally essential], a system which every leading reformer should keep foremost in mind.⁶¹

Quite a bit of praise for a politician from the world's leading anarchist!

The *Circle of Reading*, reworked after an absence of a few years, also

appeared during this time. It was a compendium of quotations depicting various spiritual themes to be discussed for any given day for a year. Citations from the father of the single tax number an impressive thirty.⁶² Tolstoy was still writing under the influence of his revered American philosopher George as well of his beloved Jewish teacher Jesus. A portrait of Henry George hung in a prominent place on a wall.⁶³

Correspondence and journal entries from Tolstoy's later years attest to his commitment to George along with his disgust at Stolypin's privatization of land. Anyone interested in the land question was sure to receive a parcel of Georgist literature. One letter of 1909, for instance, exclaims to an American who sent Tolstoy a copy of a book he wrote: "I am very much astonished to find that an American, discussing the land question, does not make any allusions to Henry George and his great theory, which alone completely solves the land question."⁶⁴ A lengthier epistle, to a group of English single taxers, allies Georgist economics with the highest dictates of religious consciousness.

In Russia, where people have never recognized landed property, this infamous action [Stolypin's law of Nov. 9th] is particularly loathsome on the part of a stupid and coarse government which is endeavoring not only to retain the slaves in their servitude, but also by depraving the people. . . . [I]f it had put into practice Henry George's principle that land cannot become exclusive property—a principle always recognized by the great mass of the Russian peasantry—[it] would alone, more effectually than all the acts of state violence and cruelty, have pacified the people, and rendered impossible the revolution. The Russian government, however, has had recourse to a contrary measure by encouraging in every way the transference of the land from communal ownership to private individual ownership. . . .

Therefore the activity of the Single Tax League organized in England is especially gladdening.

Henry George is especially to be appreciated by those who profess Christianity in its true sense, for not only the foundations of his teaching, but also his methods are truly Christian. As Jesus in his utterance, "Ye have heard that it was said: Thou shalt not kill, but I say unto you, Resist not evil," has pointed out that the commandment, "*Thou shalt not kill*," never, absolutely in no case, can be broken, that neither may the pretext of retribution or of defense serve as a reason for the violation of this commandment; exactly so does Henry George point out that the commandment, "*Thou shalt not steal*," can and should in no case be violated. . . . [His] teaching [has rejected anyone who denies] the equal rights of all to the land . . . [and the fruits of] those who labor. . . .

In this lies the essence of George's philosophy. . . [I]t is so clear and indisputable that it cannot but be recognized by mankind.

God help you. On your side are justice, reason, and love. On your side is God, and therefore you cannot but be successful. . . .⁶⁵

In June Henry George, Jr. set sail for the Old World to meet his father's greatest disciple. Tolstoy was overjoyed. While on a train headed west across Russia, the American was surprised to learn that the news had flashed through every car and everyone started to treat him with deference.⁶⁶ Tolstoy's telegram to Henry's request for a visit read: "I will be very glad to see you, I am waiting."⁶⁷ So glad was Tolstoy at this prospect, that very day he penned an article "Concerning the Arrival of Henry George's Son" which appeared in Russian newspapers.⁶⁸ On June 5 the younger George did spend a memorable day at Yasnaya Polyana. George's recounting of this visit and the tearful parting was described by him in an article "Tolstoy in the Twilight" which appeared in the American press.⁶⁹

Despite the setback a few years earlier in her effort to establish a modified form of the single tax on her estate, Tolstoy's daughter Tatiana continued to study Georgist political economy. She read all of George's books and wished to write an exposition in a language accessible to as many people as possible. After finishing the first section in November 1909, she wanted her father to give a reading but, seeking impartiality, signed it under the pseudonym of Peter A. Polilov. Tolstoy was so taken with it that he wrote a long response.⁷⁰ Tolstoy was quite surprised to learn that his daughter had written such a thoughtful presentation.⁷¹

From the fall of 1909 to July 1910, Tolstoy worked on a series of vignettes depicting the harsh realities of peasant life in his homeland. *Three Days in the Country* tells of Russians tramping across the vast country begging for handouts, people suffering in wretched huts, and tax extortion by the authorities.⁷² Offering a glimpse of the real Imperial Russia—tens of millions of humans ruled by the superficial pomp and circumstances of the Romanovs—Tolstoy tells of poverty elsewhere around the globe. A diary entry for October 22, 1909, notes a wonderful dream in which Tolstoy engages in an impassioned conversation with Henry George.⁷³ The appropriately entitled *A Dream* was included as the final section of *Three Days in the Country*.⁷⁴

A short essay (translated in English under the title "Tolstoy's Last Message") apparently written circa 1910 recaps his position relating to Henry

George's philosophy. Beginning on a sad note, "I now write because I am standing at the brink of the grave and cannot keep silent," he ends with words of victory.

As I pointed out in my introductory note to the Russian version of *Social Problems*, Henry George's great idea, outlined so clearly and so thoroughly more than thirty years ago, remains to this day entirely unknown to the great majority. . . . [It] would change the entire life of nations in favor of the oppressed voiceless majority. . . . [It] is so undeniably convincing, and above all so simple, that it is impossible not to understand it. It is therefore impossible not to make an effort to introduce it into practice. So the only means [usable] against this idea are to pervert it and to pass it in silence. . . . so that it has become difficult to induce people to attentively read his works and to think about it.

To my regret I have done too little for the cause which unites us. . . . [and] should I yet be afforded power for work, I will endeavor to express the teaching of Henry George as clearly, as briefly, and as accessibly as possible to the great mass of workers.

. . . The supposed rights in landed property are the foundation not only of economic misery but also of political disorder, and, above all, of the moral depravation of people.

The wealthy ruling classes . . . are endeavoring with all their might to postpone its solution as long as possible.

But the time comes for everything. As it came for the abolition of man's property in man, so it has now arrived for the abolition of the supposed right of property in land, which involves the appropriation of other people's labor. The time for this is now so near at hand that nothing can halt the abolition of this dreadful means of oppressing the people.

Yet with a little effort this great emancipation shall be accomplished for the nations.⁷⁵

Tolstoy never saw the liberation of the world to which he had devoted his life, and he was spared the sight of Russia under the Bolsheviks. While fleeing by train from home he preached love, nonresistance, and of course Georgist philosophy to his fellow passengers, but never completed the journey. Taking sick, he died at a lonely train station on November 20, 1910. Georgists around the world mourned the death of their greatest advocate. A statement by English single taxers extolled Tolstoy as "the staunch, courageous and eloquent apostle of righteousness and justice, of peace on earth and good-will to all men."⁷⁶ A resolution passed in New York at the Fels Commission Conference declares that

Whereas, the news having arrived of the death of Count Leo Tolstoy, we, the Single Taxers of America, desire to tender our sympathies to Countess Tolstoy; and

Whereas, this foremost man of the world, whose teachings have made him famous

in all lands, has repeatedly announced his belief in the doctrines of Henry George for which we stand, and which we are engaged in popularizing in the United States; therefore be it

Resolved, that we deeply deplore the passing of the Russian Prophet, but our abiding hope is that the endorsement by this man on whose soul rested so much of

“The burden and the mystery
Of all this unintelligible world,”

of those doctrines to which we are pledged, and his statement that he regarded Henry George as the greatest of Americans, may be the means of drawing world-wide attention to the plan of industrial salvation to which he lent the weight of his splendid name.⁷⁷

Henry George, Jr., present at this meeting, seconded the resolution. In his own commentary on the death of Tolstoy he could draw on his meeting with the novelist-student of his father:

The last words this great man addressed to me in parting at the time of my visit to him at Yasnaya Polyana were in relation to my father. He said we should never meet again in this life; that soon he would meet my father and he asked what message he should bear to my father. I gave him the message. I believe he is now with my father, and giving him that message, and glad tidings of the movement that both of them worked for in this world. . . . Within the last few hours the greatest spirit of the world has passed. . . . his death is a new inspiration. For now all the contradictory things, the things not understandable, will fall away, and the majesty of this prophet of brotherhood and justice in our modern world will shine out. Great is Tolstoy; greater the truths he taught; and greater still will both become as the centuries roll on.⁷⁸

VI

TOLSTOY HAD VALIANTLY AND SINGLE-HANDEDLY endeavored to stop the flow of events that he saw would lead to destruction in his Russia. He rejected a reality that never measured up to his dreams of people sowing and harvesting crops, happy children playing in village streets, life attuned to the endless change of seasons—a world without gloom, without war, and without suffering. It was so definable and so simple as to be the most complex thing to achieve. Georgist philosophy had transformed into a coherent system Tolstoy's earlier amorphous economic thinking. So caught up with Georgist thought, Tolstoy even modified his strictures against the state as a viable means of effecting change. His philosophy contained the simple formula: God, Land, and Man. The basis for a harmonious society is the relationship among these three components. God created the land and

mankind. It is therefore the duty of all people to live a simple natural life peacefully tilling the soil far away from the corrupting influence of cities so concluded Tolstoy, ignoring that George celebrated the working of land and its resources into all the ingenious devices of a technically advanced society, the imprinting upon nature of human mind and energy at its most purposeful. It is also incumbent upon everyone, so Tolstoy stated in full accord with George, to develop a personal relationship with God. What holds together this union between God and Man is love: for Tolstoy, the last major exponent of the single tax, it was the ultimate principle inherent in George's philosophy. Much of Tolstoy's works and correspondence bespeak his love for George, as man, as altruist, and above all as a spiritual economic teacher. For a man of his temperament to call himself a student of anyone other than of divine precept is quite astonishing.

Endnotes

1. Dr. Thomas West of The Catholic University of America must be thanked for his friendship and editorial expertise. The moral support of Dr. Steven Cord of the Henry George Foundation of America was also invaluable. Timely grants from the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation and the Henry George School enabled the writing of this article. The spelling of names traditionally accepted in English have been retained, such as Tolstoy, rather than Tolstoi. Otherwise, I have used transliteration based on the Library of Congress system without the ligatures. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

2. Ernest J. Simmons, *Introduction to Tolstoy's Writings* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1968), 139–142.

3. V. L. L'vov-Rogachevskii, *Ot usad'by k izbe: Lev Tolstoy* [From the manor to the hut Lev Tolstoy] (Moscow: Federatsiia, 1928), 223.

4. Tolstoy, *Chto takoe iskusstvo?* [What is art?] (1897) argues that art must be accessible to everyone and must have a higher moral purpose. See *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* [Complete works], vol. 30 (Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1928–1964), 27–203 (Hereinafter, Tolstoy's complete works will be cited as *PSS*).

5. Aylmer Maude, *Tolstoy and His Problems* (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co., 1911), 37–82 and Ernest J. Simmons, *Leo Tolstoy: The Years of Maturity, 1880–1910*, vol. 2 (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), 237–243.

6. Tolstoy, *Chto takoe iskusstvo?* [What is art?], *PSS*, 30: 416–426.

7. *Ibid.*, *PSS*, 30: 422.

8. Pobedonostsev was tutor to Tsar Alexander III and the Over-Procurator General of the Most Holy Synod from 1880 to 1905. It was established in 1721 by Peter I to replace the Patriarchate. It was the highest governing body overseeing the Russian Orthodox Church, which in effect, became part of the state bureaucracy. Its existence ended in 1917.

9. N. K. Gudzi, *Lev Tolstoi* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennoi literaturi, 1960), 148–150. For

a more detailed account of *Resurrection*, see Simmons, *Writings*, 187–211; Maude, *Tolstoy and His Problems*, 83–97; and Gordon Spence, *Tolstoy the Ascetic* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1968), 128–144.

10. Diary Entry, May 26, *PSS*, 53: 33.

11. Tolstoy, *Resurrection*, trans. Louise Maude (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1903), 248–249. See *Voskreseniia* [Resurrection], *PSS*, 32: 217–218.

12. *Ibid.*, 262–263. See *Voskreseniia* [Resurrection], *PSS*, 32: 230–231. In one of the first variations of *Resurrection* Nekhlyudov marries Maslova and settles in Siberia. He also sends a petition to the tsar for establishing his domain on the basis of Georgist economics. Tolstoy anticipated his own action two years later.

13. Simmons, *Writings*, 190.

14. As quoted in Ernest J. Simmons, *Tolstoy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973), 204. No source given.

15. Review, “The Novel of the Decade—‘Resurrection,’” *National Single Taxer* [New York], May 1900, 18. Advertisements for this novel in Georgist papers by the publisher Dodd, Mead & Co. exclaimed that “this great book appeals very strongly to all admirers of Henry George, and his Single Tax Theories—as Tolstoy is an ardent follower of the great Single Taxer” (*Ibid.*, 27).

16. Tolstoy, *Rabstvo nashego vremeni* [The slavery of our times], *PSS*, 34: 144–199.

17. Maude, *Tolstoy and His Problems*, 105–106.

18. Spence, *Tolstoy the Ascetic*, 121 (Conversation with Nazhivin, quoted by Pavel Axelrod in *Tolstoy's Inner Tragedy*, vii). Maude on pages 203 to 204 in his *Tolstoy and His Problems*, writes:

“To free the land is the next great question [after slavery]. Henry George has directed attention to it; [not only has he] expressed himself with clearness [sic], individuality, and persuasive force, but his practical scheme for dealing with the problem in a political society such as now exists, appears to Tolstoy to be workable and the best that has been proposed.

“We come upon what, at first sight, looks like a strange contradiction. Tolstoy disapproves of the use of violence between man and man. Not even an emperor, or a government elected by a majority, has a right to execute anybody or to imprison anybody. He is a peaceful anarchist. Yet he is delighted with Henry George, whose system presupposes the existence of a government enforcing the decisions of a majority on a possibly reluctant minority—and he would be glad to see the single-tax introduced in Russia. . . .

“But the contradiction admits of explanation. It is as though a man in Quebec made up his mind to go as quickly as possible to Vancouver’s Island and live there in the country. He meets another man who knows how best and most cheaply to get to Montreal. The first man joins the second man, and having convinced himself that Montreal is the next point he must make on his way to Vancouver’s Island, he feels a keen interest in his companion’s preparations for the journey and heartily admires his skill in packing and arranging; though all the time his own aspirations are set on a country home on the Pacific coast, and he cares little for cities or railways.

"The great majority of people still believe in governments and legality—then let them, at least, see that they get good laws [says Tolstoy who could, at times, accept this plane of consciousness].

19. Tolstoy, *Gde vyod?* [Where is the way out], *PSS*, 34: 206–215.

20. Tolstoy, *Neuzbeli eto tak nado?* [Need it be so?], *PSS*, 34: 216–238.

21. Early in 1901, to one of his correspondents, this time a Canadian, Tolstoy declares, "I was very glad to know that you are a warm partisan of Henry George. I am quite sure that in the long run he will conquer, and I will try to help in this as much as I can" (Tolstoy to John Baker, Jan. 10, 1901, *The Public* [Chicago], May 4, 1901). Henry George School of Social Sciences (Hereinafter cited as HGS).

22. Tolstoy to Grand Duke Nikolai Mikhailovich, April 5, 1902, *PSS*, 73: 228–230 and April 25–May 1, 1902, in David Redfeare, *Tolstoy: Principles for a New World Order* (London: Shephard-Walwyn, 1992), 178–181. See *PSS*, 73: 236–240.

23. Alexander I. Herzen (1812–1870) was a major contributor to Russian radical thought. His writings were standard fare for the agrarian socialist *Narodniki* (Populists). Establishing a free Russian press outside the Empire, he was the first journalist to denounce persistently the cruelty of the Russian autocracy.

24. Grand Duke Nikolai Mikhailovich to Tolstoy, April 15, 1902, *Land & Liberty* [London] June 1928, 120–121, HGS.

25. Tolstoy, *K rabochemy narody* [To the working people], *PSS*, 35: 121–156.

26. See Simmons, *Tolstoy's Writings*, 180–183 for more details.

27. For more on the Revolution of 1905, see Sidney Harcave, *First Blood: The Russian Revolution of 1905* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1964) and Walter Sablinsky, *The Road to Bloody Sunday: Father Gapon and the St. Petersburg Massacre of 1905* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).

28. Here Tolstoy is looking to a strong monarch to be a protector of the people.

29. Tolstoy, *The Public*, Feb. 11, 1905, 711, HGS.

30. Tolstoy, *Ob obschestvennom dvizhenii v Rossii* [Regarding the social movement in Russia], *PSS*, 36: 156–165.

31. Tolstoy, Apr. 16, 1905, *PSS*, 55: 134. Nikolaev (1861–1920) was the foremost Russian translator of Henry George.

32. Tolstoy, *Velikii grekh* [The great iniquity], *PSS*, 36: 206–230.

33. *The Public*, Aug. 19, 1905, 307, HGS. Another reviewer, H. W. Thomas, a month later, again in *The Public* for Sept. 16th on page 382 writes: "The whole question of the land, of labor and capital, is at bottom a question of justice, of what is fair and right; and the appeal must be not alone to legal forms, but to the great law and life of love, of brotherhood. Tolstoy tells us that it was owing to the deep sense of the wrong and shame of holding their less favored brothers in servitude, that the serfs of Russia were set free; and [in] his great religious faith in man and God he believes the owners of the vast land estates will come to see the wrong, the *sin* of denying the rights of the suffering poor to use the earth that is the gift of God to all his children. This excommunicated, but Divinely ordained teacher of righteousness, may be mystical or extreme in some things; but in his self-forgetting and consecrated life he stands at the eternal centers of the true and the

good, of the soul and God, from which alone can come the power to lift our world into the moral grandness of the life of Christ in the life of man."

34. Tolstoy, "Tolstoy on Land Ownership," (1905), *The Public*, Aug. 12, 1905, 298–299, HGS. (Reprinted from the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*). See *PSS*, 35: 154–157.

35. Tolstoy, *Tri nepravdi* [The three lies], *PSS*, 36: 402–406. A second rough draft was used.

36. Tolstoy, *Konets veka* [The end of the age], *PSS*, 36: 231–277.

37. Tolstoy, *Obrashchenie k rysskomu liudiam. K pravitel'stvy, revoliutsioneram i narody* [An Appeal to Russians: to the government, the revolutionists, and the people], *PSS*, 36: 304–314.

38. Tolstoy to Afanasii S. Marov, March 22, 1906, *PSS*, 76: 126–127.

39. Tolstoy, *Predislovie k rysskomu perevodu knigi Genri Dzhordzha "Obschestvennye zadachi"* [Preface to Russian edition of Henry George's "Social problems"], *PSS*, 36: 300–303.

40. Tolstoy, Apr. 2, 1906, *PSS*, 55: 216–217.

41. Tolstoy, *O znachenii rysskoi revoliutsii* [The meaning of the Russian revolution], *PSS*, 36: 315–362.

42. F. E. Postypaev in *L. N. Tolstoi v vospominaniakh sovremennikov*. [L. N. Tolstoy in the remembrances of his contemporaries], eds. S. N. Golubova, et al., vol. 1 (Moscow: Khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1960), 281–282 and A. B. Gol'denveizer, *Vblizi Tolstogo* [Close to Tolstoy] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1959), 184.

43. He was assassinated in 1911 by a Socialist Revolutionary terrorist who was also a police agent.

44. Geroid T. Robinson, *Rural Russia Under the Old Regime: A History of the Landlord-Peasant World and a Prologue to the Peasant Revolution of 1917* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 208–242.

45. Paul Dukes, *A History of Russia: Medieval, Modern, and Contemporary* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1974), 190.

46. Robinson, *Rural Russia*, 261. A desiatina is equivalent to 2.7 acres.

47. A diary entry reports: "[I] talked with Maklakov about raising the question of the single tax in the Duma. . . . He is completely deaf to all questions [which are] really necessary for the people." Aug. 28, 1909, *PSS*, 57: 126–127. See also *PSS*, 78: 90.

48. Stephen Bonsal, "Tolstoy Prophesies the 'Fall of America,'" *New York Times*, July 7, 1907. This article was not found in *PSS*. See D. P. Makovitskii, *Iasnopolianskie zapiski* [Yasnaia Poliana notes], vol. 3 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo "Nauka," 1979), 255; N. N. Gusev, *Dva goda s L. N. Tolstym* [Two years with L. N. Tolstoy] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1973), 147; V. A. Molochnikov, *Tolstoi i o Tolstom* [Tolstoy and about Tolstoy] (Moscow: Izdanie Tolstovskogo muzeia, 1927), 127; D. Anuchin, "Neskol'ko chasov v Iasnoi Poliane" [Some time at Yasnaia Poliana], in *Interviu i besedy s L'vom Tolstym* [Interviews and conversations with Lev Tolstoy], ed. B. Lakshin (Moscow: Sovremennik, 1987), 331; and Gol'denveizer, *Vblizi Tolstogo* [Close to Tolstoy], 298–299, 302, 309, and 311.

49. See Gusev, *Dva goda* [Two years], 167–169, 204–205, 212, and 223.

50. Tolstoy to Peter A. Stolypin, July 26, 1907, *PSS*, 77: 164–168.
51. Alexandra Tolstoy, *Tolstoy: A Life of My Father*, trans. E. Hapgood (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953), 456.
52. Tolstoy to F. F. Bolabol'chenkov, Apr. 3, 1910, *PSS*, 81: 201. Numerous other letters express the same concern. Tolstoy declares, for instance, that “[T]he goal of the government in the Law of November 9th is tantamount to the destruction of the just and wise perception of the Russian people that the land cannot be the object of private property. . . . Perhaps the goal is to introduce a powerful and terrifying discord among the peasants by the government in order to weaken them” (Tolstoy to N. Pestriakov, July 1, 1910, *PSS*, 82: 66–67).
53. Gusev, *Dva goda* [Two years], 167–171. Tolstoy was even dismayed to find out that George was for the restriction of Chinese immigration (See V. F. Bulgakov, *L. N. Tolstoi v poslednii god ego zbizn*, [L. N. Tolstoy in the last year of his life] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennoi literaturny, 1960), 322.
54. Tolstoy, *PSS*, 56: 253. See also N. Shubakov, *Y L. N. Tolstogo* [At L. N. Tolstoy's] in *Interviu i besedy* [Interviews and talks], ed. B. Lakshin, 339.
55. Tolstoy to Rgotinov, Aug. 29, 1908, *PSS*, 78: 215.
56. Tolstoy slipped a little here. According to his and George's thinking people would pay a percentage ranging up to the full tax based on the assessed value of the land, which is determined by locality, quality, and amount of land.
57. Tolstoy to A. Shil'tsov, May 30, 1908, *PSS*, 78: 147–148.
58. “For a General Tolstoy Demonstration,” *Single Tax Review* [New York] (Mar.–Apr. 1908), 33–34, HGS.
59. “A Birthday Address to Count Leo Tolstoy,” *Progress* [Melbourne], July 1908, 3–4, HGS.
60. Tolstoy to the Federation of Single Tax Leagues of Australia, Sept. 2, 1908, *Progress*, Dec. 1, 1908, HGS. See *PSS*, 78: 221–222.
61. Tolstoy to Raierosny Dzheningisy [to Ryerson Jennings], Sept. 28, 1908, *PSS*, 78: 231. See Kenneth C. Wenzler, “Tolstoy and Bryan,” *Nebraska History* 77, 3 and 4 (Fall/Winter, 1996), 140–148.
62. *Zakon nasiltia i zakon liubvi* [The law of force and the law of love], *PSS*, 37: 149–221 (Tolstoy quotes George one time in this treatise of 1908 on nonviolence) and *Krug chteniia*, [Circle of reading], *PSS*, 41: 11–606 and 42: 7–553. See also B. Kurbskii (G. S. Petrov), *Y L. N. Tolstogo* [At L. N. Tolstoy's], in *Interviu i besedy* [Interviews and talks], ed. B. Lakshin, 292.
63. Molochnikov, *Tolstoi i o Tolstom*, [Tolstoy and about Tolstoy], 71.
64. Tolstoy to S. A. Fishburn, May 5, 1909, *PSS*, 79: 183. Written in English.
65. Tolstoy to the English Henry George League, Feb. 27–Mar. 31, 1909, *PSS*, 79: 135–137. Written in English.
66. Henry George, Jr., “A Visit to Tolstoy,” *The Public*, Nov. 26, 1909, 1145, HGS. A reprint from *The New York World* (Nov. 14, 1909).
67. Tolstoy to Henry George, Jr., June 2, 1909, *PSS*, 79: 214.
68. “Tolstoy's Latest Word on George,” *The Public*, July 23, 1909, 714, HGS. The entire

text of this letter is to be found in *PSS*, 38: 70–71. The Russian title is: *Po povodu pryezda syna Genri Dzburgorzhza* [On the arrival of Henry George's son]. See also Gusev, *Dva goda* [Two years], 262–263 and 265.

69. Henry George, Jr., "Tolstoy in the Twilight," *Land Values* [London], March 1910, 208 and 210, HGS.

70. Tolstoy to P. A. Polilov (T. L. Sukhotina), Nov. 6–7, 1909, trans. Aylmer Maude, *Land & Liberty*, July–Aug. 1926, 161–162, HGS. See *PSS*, 80: 177–179.

71. See Tatiana L. Tolstoy [Sukhotina-Tolstaia], *Tolstoy Remembered*, trans. Coltman Derek (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1977), 268–271 and *Ibid.*, *Vospominaniia* [Remembrances] (Moscow: Khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1976), 360–366.

72. Tolstoy, *Tri dnia v derevne* [Three days in the village], *PSS*, 38: 5–30.

73. Tolstoy, Oct. 21, 1909, *PSS*, 57: 155–156.

74. Tolstoy, *Son* [A dream], *PSS*, 38: 364–369.

75. Tolstoy, "Tolstoy's Last Message," trans. Joseph Edwards, *The Commonweal* [London], Mar. 31, 1928, 8, HGS. Original in English and not found in *PSS*. It has been slightly edited for smoother reading.

76. "Leo Tolstoy," *Land Values*, Dec. 1910, 139, HGS.

77. "Tolstoy Resolutions in New York," *The Public*, Dec. 2, 1910, 1144, HGS.

78. *Ibid.*, 1144–1145.

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