

Land Value Tax For Freedom

By Lancaster M. Greene

Doris E. Hulse, in the October HENRY GEORGE NEWS, believes in land value taxation, but is annoyed to hear Georgists advocate it as a cure for all our ills, including war.

When Henry George was asked whether he advocated land value taxation as a panacea he replied that it is not, but that freedom is a panacea—and that to have freedom we must have land value taxation.

Some historians point out that a number of wars in Europe ended in 1849-50 when gold was discovered in California. They believe it was the increase in monetary supply that started wages in Europe up. As a student of fundamental economics I am convinced that the wage rise which ended the European wars in 1849-50 was caused by the news that in California people could get land enough to make a living. If they found gold that was the frosting on the cake.

We had our own U. S. unrest in 1847 to 1849-50, and it might have brought on our Civil War then if wages had not improved through the news that one could choose to stay or grab a piece of land free in California and make a living. This took the pressure off the claims of slave owners that Northern wages were so low they cut the value of slaves. It also lessened the claims of Northern workers that Southern slaves were unfair competition in the wage market. This relative peacefulness came to an end when the land in California had been taken up and we slid into the depression of 1857. Slave owners then boiled at cheap Northern free la-

bor, and Northern labor frothed at its low wages as caused by slave labor.

Few people came from Europe to California, but the knowledge they could affect the wage market without their having to come. It was much as when we were able to stay in our apartment at the old rental plus decoration, if the landlord knew we could get a similar apartment at that rental across the street.

If we solve the problem of poverty in this country it would electrify the world, and all governments would find the demand for similar legislation irresistible. We would thus make the greatest possible contribution to peace.
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