

Free State Ireland and Henry George's Philosophy

MR. J. O'D. DERRICK, a resident of Glasgow for twenty-eight years, has written newsy and critical "North and South of the Clyde" articles for *The Irish Weekly*, taking advantage of every opportunity to expound Henry George's views.

The following is culled from the issue of November 19, 1932.

A NEW LEAD IN THE FREE STATE

The ideas of Bishop Nulty, Henry George, Michael Davitt, and John Ferguson, propagated in reference to ground values, are beginning to emerge in the public life of the Irish Free State. A letter last month, sent to the Irish Press, of Dublin from the Henry George angle of thought, was suppressed. A change came by the publication on Monday of last week of a brilliant exposition of Henry George doctrines in a special article by Mr. Robert C. Barton, written in crisp literary style, evidencing full grasp of the philosophy, and of its bearing on social conditions in the Free State. On Wednesday the topic of the breaking up of the grass ranches and of taxation of ground rents figured prominently at the Ard Feis of Fianna Fail, and complaints were made of high rents in cities. What are these problems but ones akin to those in Scotland? For instance, a resolution was submitted from Roscommon, and passed, urging

"That the Government should hasten the division of grass ranches, and give the Minister for Lands sufficient power to ensure that in future the prices paid for these lands will be such that tenants placed on them can afford to pay the rents fixed."

This resolution shows Landlordism in the same way as in Scotland—ransom prices for land. Mr. M. J. Kennedy, T. D., thought the Government would have to adopt a different policy to the landlord's policy carried on by the previous Government. Mr. Kennedy ought to get out advocating the taxation of land values, which would break high prices for the ranches. Mr. Traynor, of Clonsilla, Dublin, revealed that so far as that county was concerned there had been practically no land divided in the past ten years, and that "in his area there were ten or twelve big ranches, consisting of anything from 200 to 500 acres of grass land, and they were going to ask Ard Feis to demand of the Government when they were going to break up these lands."

It is to be hoped the Free State Government will go in for no more land-buying jobs, but immediately go in for Budget imposition of a stiff tax on land values, as that policy will quickly break up all the big grazing ranches and estates, and soon make plenty of land available for all who seek it. Land-buying jobs play the landowners' game, and in most cases the land is owned by Britishers.

The Dail has full power to enact the collection of land values for public purposes.

JOYFUL NEWS FROM THE FREE STATE

Our readers will be delighted with the old ideas now breaking forth into public expression in Ireland. The Harold's Cross Cumann, Dublin, got a resolution adopted at the Feis drawing attention to "high rents charged in towns and cities." The Mallow delegate, however, made a mistake in urging that tenants be "given power to purchase the interests of the ground landlords,"

Not in that direction lies the welfare of the Free State, but in extinguishing the power of the ground owner by collecting values for local and State purposes, and untaxing all improvements.

Several resolutions, it appears, were sent in to the Feis, demanding the taxation of ground values. Mr. Byrne, of North Dublin, has a glimmer of a truth not fully realized in the Free State, when he said: "he thought that there was more money going out of the country in

the way of ground rents than was going out in the way of Land Annuities."

That point ought to be fully looked into, and it will likely be found that the ground of most Irish cities and towns is owned by Britishers, and to Britain the ground rents filter.

In any case the value of Free State land, apart from improvements, belongs to all the people of the Free State. No person should be allowed to pocket any of that value, which, Bishop Nulty declared, seemed destined by God for public purposes.

When a Free State Government has the wisdom to untax all products of Free State industry, as far as possible, and substitute the collection of the economic value of land, it will find there will soon be none of the useful natural resources in that area idle, and that the problem of the jobless man will soon have disappeared.

The Free State Government could easily make a start by the Budget imposition of threepence in the £ tax on the capital value of all land—except ground owned by religious institutions.

The money realized would provide a great fund wherewith to relieve Free State industry, and help in the fight against Britain's Tariff war.

During the past few days there has been a procession of Free State exiles to the Glasgow office of the *Irish Weekly*, drawing attention to Mr. Barton's splendid article and to the expressions of opinion at the Ard Feis of Fianna Fail, and asking for something on the subject in these notes.

The danger of the situation is that the big graziers will begin to croak, all the ground landowning and reactionary interests will begin to squeal and try to get the Government to go in for a policy of buying out the owners of ground rents. To do so would substitute an intolerable burden of interest on the Free State. Don't kick or buy the ground owners out. Tax them out. There is no compensation payable for taxation.

Ground owners have been holding the Free State Government and Dublin Corporation to ransom by high prices for ground. That is unchallengeable.

It is time this legalized system of blackmail foisted on Ireland by England was ended. The Free State Parliament has adequate power to do so. That State is young in the art of governing, but once her sons and daughters see the justice of the new revenue raising system they will act quickly. There are thousands of Irishmen in the Henry George movement all over the world, men like Mr. P. J. O'Regan in New Zealand, Mr. Maguire in Pittsburgh, Charles O'Connor Hennessy, and J. J. Murphy in New York, and many in Liverpool. How they will rejoice at the new development in the Free State. It is a beginning only, those expressions of thought. It will be glorious if Free State Ireland set an example to the world by untaxing her native industrial products and took economic rent instead for public purposes, for Ireland would soon become a beacon light to the world for her solution of revenue raising and social and labor problems, for under that policy everyone in the Free State wanting land would easily obtain it, and involuntary poverty would soon disappear.

Those Free State exiles sought impressions. They are fully supplied. A few men of Mr. Robert Barton's type are needed in the Free State. An organization ought to be formed in Dublin devoting itself solely to advocating the new revenue raising system. A Michael Davitt is needed to lead the crusade. There is an old Irish priest in the Free State, Father Thomas Dawson, O. M. I., a personal friend of the late Henry George and of his family, whose heart will be gladdened at the new trend of thought in Erin.

A PERSONAL NOTE

Mr. Barton resides in County Wicklow. He was educated at Rugby and Oxford. He successfully contested West Wicklow as a Sinn Féiner in 1918. He was arrested in February, 1919, and escaped from Mountjoy Gaol in March of that year to be rearrested in 1920. He was court-martialed and sentenced to ten years penal servitude which was reduced to three years. He served seventeen months and was released in June of 1921.

He was one of the Envoys Plenipotentiaries with Messrs. Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, Edmond J. Duggan and George Gavan Duffy in October, 1921, that signed the Treaty of Peace with the British Government in London out of which has sprung the modern Irish Free State.

After signing the Treaty Mr. Barton returned to his agricultural pursuits in County Wicklow, where he has a large farm.

He is highly cultured, well read, a man of strong convictions and ready to face any odds in their defence. His emergence again into public life and now as a protagonist of the philosophy of Henry George has attracted wide-spread attention.

Mexico

AN important item of news is that the "Union de Veteranos de la Revolucion" has just been formed here by prominent Mexican intellectuals, including editors, authors, lawyers, engineers, doctors and generals. They plan a nation-wide propaganda along strictly liberal lines. Their political proposals include proportional representation and their economic programme advocates Georgism pure and simple. It is proposed to follow the idea of the Commonwealth Land Party of England for attaining the latter system. i. e., economic rent will be socialized and taxation abolished, but an important modification will be that the change will be spread over four years, or one presidential term, instead of being done at once by parliamentary decree.

This is the first time in twenty-two years of this long, tiresome and destructive revolution that Georgism has been demanded by any political party here, and denotes that Mexican leaders have at last found out what is the matter with civilization and how to prescribe a remedy. Apparently the economic disasters produced by the unfair syndicalism of Article 123 and the agrarian communism of Article 27 of the Constitution of 1917 have led the way to these new and more radical but more rational proposals.

R. B. BRINSMADE.

San Luis Potosi, Mexico.

Bulgaria

WE are happy to record that a Bulgarian translation of "Progress and Poverty" has probably by this time appeared. Mr. Madsen, of *Land and Liberty*, of London, informs us that such a translation is due in January of this year. The translation has been made after the Russian version by S. D. Nicolaev, checked against the French translation as well as the English version.

Mr. B. Guduleff, of Sofia, is one of the active Henry George men in Bulgaria. He tells us that this translation is being done by Yordan Kovatcheff, who has already translated "Social Problems and the Land Question."

The following list of books have already been published in the Bulgarian language. In addition to those named: "The Labor Question," "The Crime of Poverty," and "Thy Kingdom Come," have appeared. Bulgaria also

has a book entitled "Henry George, His Life and Ideas," with a supplement, this being an article by Mr. Nicolaev on the teachings of Henry George, also a book entitled "Land Value," translated from the French. And in addition to this literature our comrades in Bulgaria publish a paper *Svoboda*, (Freedom.)

Denmark

FOUR seats in the Danish Folksting or parliament were won at the election on November 16 by the Single Tax party in a straight out, independent contest. A Copenhagen dispatch to the *Baltimore Sun*, of November 18, gives complete results: Labor party 62, Liberals 38, Conservatives 27, Independent Liberals 14, Single Tax party 4, Communists 2, No party having a clear majority it is possible that the Single Tax party will have a part in the coalition necessary to form a government. The Labor party is in power at present, has been most friendly to the taxation of land values and free trade, though it does not advocate anything like a thorough Single Tax programme, and looks on the result as a victory. Its popular vote increased considerably, which is an unusual thing for a party holding power during a depression. Probably there are many thorough Single Taxers in its ranks.

Spain

MR. JOHN C. ROSE, of Pittsburgh, Pa., has received the following letter from President Zamora, of the Spanish Republic. The letter is in his own handwriting.

Dear Sir:—Thank you very much for sending me a copy of the great work of Henry George, "Progress and Poverty." At (to) the science of this great work we had already devoted the greatest part of the discussion in the Academy de Ciencias Morales y Politicas (in one year). As you take great interest in this problem I send you the text of the last Spanish Law, which, as you see, extends only to agricultural lands."

ELBERT HUBBARD, in "Little Journeys to Great Reformers": "All for which Henry George strived and struggled will yet come true—his prayer will be answered.

"Of all modern prophets and reformers Henry George is the only one whose arguments are absolutely unanswerable and whose forecast was sure."

ABOLISH special privileges and Government interference in industry. Give to all equal natural opportunities—equal rights to the inexhaustible storehouse of Nature—and wealth will distribute itself in exact accordance with justice. This, the ideal of Henry George, is what I would place before our people instead of the will-o'-the-wisp of socialistic despotism.—MAX HIRSCH.