

"Prosperity, it must not be forgotten, is a function of a rising market."

"A Board with the power to control investment could, by easy alliance through politics with the top economic planning board, also control obsolescence."

The references to the Single Tax will prove of interest to readers of LAND AND FREEDOM.

On Page 48 our author writes:

"However intelligent and desirable it may be, the Single Tax offers little for marching men in the modern world to take hold of."

"Henry George appealed to these men because the State, in 'Progress and Poverty,' was reduced to a gang of tax collectors who were, periodically, to raid the landlords." (Page 57).

"The Single Tax is deceptively simple, deceptively perfect. On paper it hasn't a flaw; all its implications flow directly from George's own splendid definitions. But its definitions are—just definitions; one is not compelled to use George's geometry, for there are other axioms in an Einsteinian world. George, for example, failed to explore the whole question of the ownership of surplus value and whether or not creative brains are as much a 'natural' resource as a gold mine or a prairie." (Page 66).—B. W. B.

#### A GREAT WORK\*

In this volume of a little less than 600 pages Henry George receives his first definite assignment to the realm of philosophy. His sphere of thought is seen to be not the merely restricted economic field but the whole region of activities which constitute man's thought and being. Henry George is now found in a higher altitude than any previous commentator has been able to track him. The Henry George of Dr. George Raymond Geiger is a more impressive figure than is possible to any mere biography. We begin to appreciate the towering genius whose thought is destined to shake a world.

The work is not in the nature of an eulogy, and the impression of greatness is not gathered from what the writer says directly. Rather it is subtly conveyed. Dr. Geiger has done his work in no spirit of laudation. A calm, quite austere aloofness is the characteristic of what the author has written, yet we are conscious that we are asked to look on one of the most significant figures that has ever trod the earth. Yet the scales are never absent; our author weighs this philosopher and his conclusions with scrupulous exactness.

It is not a work to be skimmed through. It is high thinking and is not easy reading because high thinking is not easy. It was Goethe who said that "The Highest cannot be spoken in words." It is at least true that in an excursion into the higher realms of human reasoning and into the domain of rapt philosophy where the atmosphere is rarified to a degree that makes difficult its translation into the vernacular, we must proceed with caution and slow steps.

But after all philosophy is only a process of weighing, pondering and considering. Henry George proposed a tremendous change in the social order. He buttressed his defences with a system of philosophy that is all-embracing.

No embodiment of that philosophy since "Progress and Poverty" appeared has been so significantly achieved.

It is hard to speak of this work in words that will not sound superlative. The word "scholarly" only half defines it. For that definition would not tell how the thought of Henry George is wrested from the content of his great works, the economic philosophy linked with the ethical, and the nice distinctions of George's reasoning facilitated for our more complete understanding. And to this task Dr. Geiger has brought a more general knowledge of the literature of the movement in all languages than is possessed by any man living. No summary of our philosophy will in future be complete without reference to this most important contribution to its literature.—J. D. M.

\*The Philosophy of Henry George. By George Raymond Geiger, Ph. D. Cloth. 596 pp. Price \$2.50. See advertisement on back page of cover.

## Correspondence

### THE SCAPE-GOAT DOLLAR

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

The "best minds" of the country have been making every attempt to solve the present depression, and instead of trying to find out the cause of it are looking for an excuse. Conservatives, as well as radicals have come to the conclusion that the fault lies in the fact that the dollar is becoming more expensive, therefore goods are cheap. They continue by saying that if they could raise prices, conditions would improve, labor would be employed, goods would be sold and prosperity would again return.

To bring this about, it is proposed (a) to cut down the gold content of the dollar, (b) to remonetize silver at the ratio of 16 to 1, (c) to start the printing presses turning out dollar bills.

From 1918 to 1929 these same philosophers held that the rising price of goods was due to the falling dollar, a 50 cent dollar as they call it. Today there are just as many dollars in the country as there were during the period of so-called "prosperity." The only difference is that those people who need the goods have not the dollar with which to purchase.

There are several ways in which to increase prices, if this is what the best minds propose to do: (a) curtail the production of goods to a minimum, (b) forbid the importation of all goods, (c) place a set price by law on every article either grown or produced in the country. This, of course, will raise prices, but the goods can only be purchased by those who have the dollar. Those who have not the money and cannot purchase at the low prices today, surely will not be able to buy the goods when prices have gone up.

Reducing the gold content of the dollar, or printing more dollar bills will not place the new dollars into the pockets of those who need money with which to purchase the necessities of life.

The high prices of goods, up to 1929, were not caused by a falling dollar, but since everybody was working there was a demand for goods and merchants were making large profits. In other words, purchases were competing with each other for commodities and prices went up. Today, 12 million men are out of a job and the merchants are competing with each other for business and are offering their goods at a low price, taking less profit.

During the hectic days of prosperity, workingmen were condemned for buying silk shirts at \$12.00 a piece. That, of course, was good for the manufacturer as well as the retailer. Wages were high, piece goods were expensive, and the retailers not only took a profit on what they sold but also made a profit on the material from which their products were manufactured and also a profit on the wages of labor. These great minds point out, and the advertisements in the newspapers tell us, that a suit of clothes which now sells for \$18.00 formerly sold for \$40.00. We know, however, that in the good old days of prosperity a suit of clothes that retailed for \$40.00 cost no more than \$15.00 to manufacture. The manufacturer sold it for \$20.00 and the retailer sold it for \$40.00. So then we had a situation in which something that cost \$20.00 to produce, labor had to pay \$40.00 to buy it back again.

Now one can get a good suit of clothes for \$18.00. The retailer certainly does not lose any money on it. He pays less to the manufacturer, the manufacturer pays less for his goods and wages have been reduced for the reason that workingmen are competing with each other for a job. In spite of the elaborate advertising, in a suit of clothes today while the style is as good as ever, the lining is poorer, and less attention has been paid in putting the suit together; consequently it is worth much less than the higher priced garment.

This holds good for every other commodity manufactured. Competition is now setting the price and not the manufacturer and retailer. Should labor again be steadily employed there would be an increased demand for goods and competition for goods always raises the price.

**C**APITALISM is the name given a system under which owners of true capital are exploited and robbed.



for the price is never regulated by the manufacturer or retailer except where there is a monopoly.

The way to raise prices is not by legislative edicts, nor by increasing the number of dollars in circulation, but by employing labor so that wages may be earned and exchanged for goods.

Since the professors of political economy have to have an excuse when too indifferent to make an examination of the causes, they blame it on the dollar.

Starting the printing presses or reducing the gold content of the dollar will materially reduce the savings of the people, and will only benefit those who have gold. Labor would be worse off than ever, for it would receive wages in dollars which would have only half the gold content of the present dollar. Since he would have to pay higher prices, even though he had a job, he would receive none of the benefits which these wise gentlemen undertake to provide for him.

New York City.

JOSEPH H. FINK.

#### DISAGREES WITH MR. PLATT

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Concerning Mr. Platt's contention: I have been rather attentive to happenings in the Georgian cause the last thirty-five years. I have noticed this; That when a Single Taxer, who was also a government ownership advocate, got up to speak at any of our meetings he always spoke for government ownership, not for Single Tax. The same is true of the Single Taxer who has a theory of his own about money. With him the burning issue is the money issue. A prominent advocate who gives all his time to Proportional Representation proclaimed himself several times in my presence a Single Taxer, but at Single Tax meetings he never speaks of anything but Proportional Representation.

At our Henry George Club meetings one attendant always brings in the income tax. He wants Single Tax, he says, but as an emergency measure he insists on the income tax. This is somewhat of a joke, the emergency part of it. The "Liberals" campaigned for thirty years for the income tax, they got it and it was declared unconstitutional. Then they campaigned for years for a constitutional amendment so they could have it. Now they have it. Conditions are worse than ever, partly due to the income tax. Fifty years of strife for an emergency measure that has made things worse, and now they want a larger dose as an emergency measure!

Another speaker thought our proposition seemed to have merit but as an emergency measure he wanted a federal law to prevent selling stock short.

If our Henry George movement is to give space, time and encouragement to all these side issues because they are advocated by men who profess themselves in sympathy with our aim we might as well forget our own issue and jump in and help them all put over their own little palatives.

In my time I have attended a great many meetings called for these issues enumerated above and many others that I will not take space to mention. I can not recall a single instance where a Single Taxer injected himself or Single Tax to the elimination of the issue the meeting was called for.

If we are to forever tolerate this kind of interruption we will get nowhere, for these side issues are as numerous as the days in the year. The latest here is the city manager issue.

The time is thirty years overdue when we should notify all these proponents that if they wish to take part in a conference called to promote Single Tax they should come prepared to advance that cause and not to propagate for anything else.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

H. W. NOREN.

#### AGREES WITH MR. PLATT

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Permit me to express my entire concurrence in the views set forth by Mr. Chester Platt at the Memphis Conference. I find difficulty in

understanding any other position when taken by any one believing in the doctrines represented under the name of Single Tax.

The fundamental idea behind these doctrines is the use for community purposes of the values created by the community. At the present time a large portion of these values is represented by the special and particular use made by the public utilities corporation of not alone the land occupied by their structures, but also our streets and highways, coupled with the exercise of the governmental power of eminent domain. Only public utilities among all privately-owned corporations are granted this exclusive power. To repossess these landed privileges as well as the power spoken of is to advantageously turn to public benefit what is in its nature public.

There is nothing else for us as Single Taxers to do about this particular question. Taxation is not the method of dealing with that which is in its nature monopolistic. After allowing a fair return to the investor any taxation upon the monopoly is at once paid back in the shape of added charges to be met by some one other than the owner of the monopoly. This undoubtedly Henry George clearly saw, and therefore he favored public ownership of such properties as a part of the programme for securing to all the benefits of the creation for all. Is there any sufficient reason at the present time for us to be "more royalist than the king, more Catholic than the Pope?"

But we are told that the taking of this kind of property will raise the value of the land not taken, and that *all* the benefits will result to the owners of the remaining land. This has been assumed by some, but never proven, and in my judgment never will be, even though a large part of such benefits will accrue to the landholder. Is there one among us who will not prefer to live in a community where good schools, well-paved streets, property well protected against loss, and the other improvements of modern civilization exist, rather than in neighborhoods of the opposite character; and this even after the landlords' toll is taken? This single consideration will serve to show that other than landlords gain something—tangible or otherwise—from any step toward general diffusion of comfort, as they must from greater equality of opportunity.

Of course, unconsciously the argument of these opponents of any step toward public ownership of public utilities goes much further. It would be equally good or equally baseless against any advance of whatever nature. To be consistent they must seek—even though they cannot find—a neighborhood free from any service of government, lest they contribute to the landlord. But are we under any obligation to be reactionary and retrogressive in everything except the Single Tax, and must the term be given its narrowest and least effective interpretation? I think not.

Judson King is teaching that a certain part of the public property should be restored to the public. We have but to add that certain other values should also go to the public. He addresses himself to a part of a great problem. To attack him or depreciate his work is simply to enfeeble our own efforts upon a larger field. Let him fight out his battle without our interference. More than any other class of adventures in reform we should help him.

JACKSON H. RALSTON.

Palo Alto, Calif.

#### TEXAS SHOWS SYMPTOMS OF RETURNING SANITY

EDITOR LAND AND FREEDOM:

Our legislature promised to run wild for a sales tax or an income tax to make up its deficit and also to substitute for an ad valorem tax. They are getting toned down, and a good many of them are wondering if they are not on the wrong tack. I had great fun with them a week ago at a public meeting of the Committee on Revenue and Taxation on the sales tax. It was an evening session held in the House Hall with some 200 or more present. I made no specific argument against the sales tax but spoke on the text that it was "the very nature of evil to be self-destructive," and that all taxes on production and distribution were evil, and showed them from actual figures that they are self-de-