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Laissez Faire in History—Fact and Fiction

By EDWIN PHELPS

IN FRANCE, near the end of the seventeenth century, during a period of strife and unemployment following intense industrial regimentation, Premier Colbert is reputed to have asked the merchants and manufacturers of Lyons, "Que faut-il faire pour vous aider?"—"How might the government help?" Merchant Legendre is recorded to have replied, "Laissez-nous faire." Freely translated, this appears to mean, "Let us alone!"

Keynes, in his *Laissez Faire and Communism*, written in 1926, appears to contend that Marquis d'Argenson, about 1775—nearly a century after the foregoing exchange—was the first writer to associate the phrase laissez faire with the previously-developed doctrine of the early seventeenth-century philosophers, that government has no right to interfere with "the working of natural laws of individuals pursuing their own interests (which) with enlightenment in conditions of freedom always tend to promote the general interest at the same time." This author also declares that the phrase laissez faire was first brought into popular usage in England by Dr. Franklin.

Henry George, in *Science of Political Economy*, says, "The English motto, which I take to come closest to the spirit of the French phrase, is 'A fair field and no favor'."

Keynes, in the previously-mentioned volume, credits Bentham, of English fame, with the assertion: "The general rule is that nothing ought to be done or attempted by government." But, one may ask, how was it understood in those earlier days in England? How is it commonly understood in the United States today?

J. E. Cairnes, professor emeritus of Political Economy, University College, London, writing in 1874 was of the opinion that the phrase was then commonly understood to mean, "... wealth may be most readily accumulated and most fairly distributed—that is to say, the human well-being may be more effectively promoted—by the simple process of leaving people to themselves; leaving individuals, that is to say, to follow the promptings of self-interest unrestrained either by the state or by public opinion, so long as they abstain from force and fraud."

Donisthorpe, another English writer of that time said, "laissez faire is still commonly understood in its oldest sense to mean; let things alone, let them drift, let that which is filthy be filthy still."

Funk & Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary (1913) offers this major definition:

"The let-alone principle; non-interference; in economics, absolutely uncontrolled industrial and commercial competition... the motto of the French physiocratic economists, which is a protest against the interference of government with the liberty of the individual in production and trade."

It is apparent that the idea of a minimum, if not a non-existent government involvement



in the economic affairs of man had its day of "popularity and prestige." But, it appears not to have prevailed. Why?

Hake, in *The Coming Individualism*, written in 1895, declares that the factor that made possible the English acceptance of legislative restrictions in the latter part of 1800—such, as for example, the "Factory Act" and the "Merchandise Act," requiring British exporters to mark German-manufactured goods "Made in Germany"—was their willingness to substitute the omniscience and omnipotence of the state for that which they had regretfully experienced under "despots, churches, and aristocratic oligarchies!" "As invariably has been the case with nations whose destiny has passed into their own hands," the author observes, "the English people did not see their way to achieve their material happiness through liberty, but longed for new masters."

This author envisioned a new party with leaders picked from among the then present "coryphrees," or new men. His goal, he said, was individual freedom; his motto, "Measures, not men." His platform was the revision of the then existing legislation to achieve, imperial free trade, free competition in the supply of capital and labor, free trade in drink, free trade in amusements, and free trade in land.

The Right Hon. Goschen, in an address in 1883 on "Laissez Faire and Government Interference," before the Philosophical Institution of Edinburgh, named four reasons for the failure of laissez faire to secure the support of the British people.

1. THE PUBLIC SENSE OF MORALITY: Factory Acts and Education Acts envisioned "the state and its inspectors in the place of father and mother as guardians of a child's education, labor, and health." The awakening of public conscience demanded "legislation respecting ships and sailors, the prevention of accidents in

mines and manufactories, the curtailment of hours of labor, the employment of women and children underground, the state of canal boats, unsanitary dwellings."

2. DISSATISFACTION WITH THE DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH: Regardless of whether or not laissez faire succeeded in producing wealth, the author presents the obvious fact of his day that laissez faire failed to bring a sound and just distribution of wealth. Laissez faire is a perfectly natural motto for capitalists, manufacturers, landlords, and tradesmen, and the cry is raised, "they have had their way and see what has come of it?" For the author, a special system of taxation held the promise of solving the problem.

3. COMPLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE CROWDED STATE: The complexity of society with its jostling, competing interests on the industrial highways, as well as the vehicular ones, demanded traffic control. The post office succeeded, why not try banking?

4. BELIEF THAT GOVERNMENT IS THE ONLY "DEUS EX MACHINA": i. e. "God out of a machine." Conditions being what they were, the rank and file of society came to demand control of the individual. The democratization of society tended to build up the people's trust in the state. To see what was done in certain areas of social health, safety, sanitation, and pure food control, encouraged sanction for government to be concerned about such things as housing.

The author further explains that even though government officials may not necessarily covet power *per se*, they do covet an extension of their power to serve. Moreover, the more the public puts up with civil servants the more civil servants offer to do for the public. Also, the author reminds, when a new departure is started it is, in the strictest sense, only a departure. It is not a terminus.

Even if we grant an admirable government control, the author contends, there is a serious risk of weakening individual responsibility. Furthermore, the protection secured by one group invokes another to attempt comparable protection. Thus, the author concludes, "Once pass a moral condemnation of 'laissez faire' in any particular case and its rehabilitation becomes a hopeless task."

Keynes, in *Laissez Faire and Communism*, states, but does not discuss, the provisional assumptions which he regards as the twin buttresses of laissez faire, namely:

1. Unhindered natural selection leads to progress, and
2. The efficacy and necessity of the opportunity for unlimited private money making as an incentive to maximum effort.

Irving Fisher, who died in 1947, is listed in the 1943-1950 *Who Was Who in America* as a political economist—with a column of comment on his achievements. In addressing the American Association for the Advancement of

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A Trip to the West

By ROBERT CLANCY

The opportunity to visit California, occasioned by the Seventh Annual Conference of the Henry George School in Los Angeles (reported in the August Henry George News), was most welcome.

Post-conference visits with school workers and friends were stimulating. At the headquarters of the Los Angeles extension Bill Truehart and his wife, Marcile, display devotion to the work, always eagerly seeking to improve. They are aided immeasurably by Mrs. Bessie B. Truehart, Bill's mother. A visit to the home of the Los Angeles school's president, George E. Lee, found me in the midst of a remarkable group.

I also visited fabulously beautiful San Diego where the largest self-sustaining extension of the school operates. At the invitation of Miss Ida Reeves, Miss V. G. Peterson of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation and I addressed a large group of school friends. The size and calibre of the San Diego school following thrilled both of us. Captain Jesse B. Gay, Sidney Evans, Henry B. Cramer, Miss Louise MacLean and Mrs. Emily Sheel deserve special mention.

Miss Peterson and I also were able to visit San Francisco, where a young but nearly fullgrown extension is functioning under the capable direction of Bob Tideman. There, the both of us again addressed a wonderful local group and were delighted to meet and re-meet the people whose names have meant so much to us. — Joseph Thompson, Glenn Hoover, J. Rupert Mason, Wallace Kibbee, Edgar Pomeroy, Frances Gray and Helen Wilson. I was particularly pleased to see Charles MacSwan who has migrated to San Francisco from Glasgow, Scotland. He was the first Georgist I met when I landed in Glasgow, on my way to the International Conference for Land Value Taxation in England in 1949.

From San Francisco I proceeded to Seattle (but, alas, unaccompanied by Miss Peterson). There is as yet no extension organized in that city, but thanks to a number of good school friends, there is strong promise of one. Discussions were held at the home of Dr. Kurt Graftman, a correspondence student, who is eager to help the educational work. Thomas B. Hill, A. A. Booth, George Dana Linn, and Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Orton, are our other staunch Seattle friends.

I have said little about the scenic beauty of the West Coast. The natural wonders and the interesting cities share a place with the wonderful people I met in making this trip to the West unforgettable.

Gems for Georgists

By NOAH D. ALPER

"One of the world's few great books today—*Progress and Poverty* by Henry George—owes its inspiration and its existence to the veteran editor. George was the disciple, McClatchy (James McClatchy, founder, Sacramento Bee) the teacher. The younger man desired that the elder should embody his views in a book, which George prophesied would live. McClatchy said he was too old to begin such a task, but that George was just the man to push it to completion. The work was commenced, and chapter by chapter was submitted to James McClatchy for ideas and suggestions. It stands today, a classic in literature of political economy, the undoubted product of its brilliant author, Henry George, but as indubitably the tree which sprouted from the seed sown by James McClatchy." (From Souvenir Edition, The Sacramento Bee, 1884)

National Sales Tax?

Are the skids being greased to launch a National Sales Tax? An A. P. dispatch from Washington (August 2, 1951) stated, "The National Retail Dry Goods Association, representing 7000 stores across the nation, came out yesterday for an 'emergency' federal retail sales tax."

"Another retail association, the National Association of Retail Clothiers and Furnishers, hotly disputed this stand and said its members are 'bitterly opposed' to a national sales tax."

Just how economically wise are our successful business men? Is ability to merchandise, advertise and set up beautiful window displays any reflection on ability to serve their own best interests in tax matters? Make way for a National Sales Tax!

Iowa Farm Land in the News Again

"John Bock of Mondamin, Ia., has purchased an 80-acre farm adjoining the town of Little Sioux, Ia., from Clarence Petty at \$412.50 an acre.

"The price is believed to be the highest paid for farmland in Harrison County for many years.

"The farm includes a six-room house and several other buildings." (The World-Herald's News Service, Missouri Valley, Iowa).

Single Tax Splitter in Missouri

"The Bridgeton district (St. Louis County, Missouri), at the time of its incorporation in 1864, was organized as the Bridgeton Academy and the Bridgeton Town School, including the town and commons. The commons at that time included 1,000 acres, granted by the Spanish government prior to 1800 and confirmed by an act of Congress in 1812. The land was leased to individuals in 1852 under the terms stated above" (leased to individuals at a rental of from 10 cents to \$1.85 an acre). In 1950 Pattonville annexed Bridgeton and the Pattonville School District filed suit to secure control of \$6,000 held by Bridgeton for school purposes. (From an item in the Community News, August 3, 1951).

New Patch—New Tax

"When new skins are added in remodeling a fur scarf, the added skin is considered sold at retail and is therefore subject to tax, the Bureau of Internal Revenue has ruled in response to a query from the National Dry Goods Association."—Rossner, St. Louis Globe Democrat, August 3, 1951.

Wanta Buy a Ranch?

Perhaps you saw it in the papers. A London A. P. dispatch, June 17, 1951, stated: "An American syndicate has offered \$18,960,000 for the Matador Land and Cattle Company, which operates more than 800 thousand acres of Texas Panhandle cattle ranches.

"Matador is a Scottish firm and 77 per cent of its 80 thousand shares are held in Britain." Oil, gas and 47 thousand head of Hereford cattle are mixed up in the situation.

Some Fun! Angle Tax Shooter

"Larry J. Kregert, the Chicago manufacturer who has been conducting a one-man crusade against 'hidden-taxes' for the last three or four years, is in Denver this week enlisting new recruits in his campaign that now covers the nation," reports Warren Lowe in the Rocky Mountain News, July 25, 1951.

"His complaint isn't against all taxes—he knows they are necessary—but it's the confusion that the brain trusters have inserted into the tax picture.

"As soon as the public realizes just how much of the money they spend is going into taxes, they'll do something about it, he said.

"I'm out thousands of dollars on printing costs, but I'm having fun needling government brain trusters for the way they have harassed business and grabbed taxes." (Note: Mr. Kregert will send sheets of his "needling stamps" for free or for nominal sum; Send self-addressed stamped envelope to his plant, 540 W. 35th Street, Chicago 16, Ill.)



Henry L. T. Tideman, dean of Chicago's Henry George School, has as wide an acquaintance with notable leaders in this movement as any living Georgist. He was born in Rockford, Illinois, and will celebrate his sixty-eighth birthday on September 11th. We hope he will have recovered sufficiently from a recent operation to enjoy the heartfelt good wishes of his many friends.

"Little Henry" remembers back to the age of four when he went with his mother to buy a copy of *The Standard*, published by Henry George. Later the family moved to Chicago where almost at once they joined the Single Tax Club. At the age of twelve Henry was taken to his first meeting and when he was fourteen something memorable happened on one of his visits. He heard the colorful orator, John Z. White; also Louis F. Post, John S. Crosby and Father Cox.

With such a background it is not surprising that in 1929 Henry Tideman himself became the motivating factor in reorganizing the Single Tax Club which continued until 1938.

Mr. Tideman married Ella Persson when he was twenty and began the happy family life which has been memorialized in all the years since his wife's death, by the esteem in which all members of that family are held. Robert Tideman is the founder and director of the Henry George School in San Francisco; Marian, wife of John Lawrence Monroe, Chicago director, is active in the Henry George Woman's Club; and Dorothy (Mrs. C. K.) Bradsher, is teaching Henry George principles in Durham, North Carolina, where she now lives.

Quite naturally it was this Chicago leader whom Leonard Recker of New York approached in 1934 to organize a school in Chicago. Henry Tideman was reticent, as always, but he was willing to try, and from that first class under his direction has grown the promising Chicago extension of today.

"Econo-quiz" the familiar column by Dean Tideman began in *The Henry George News* three years ago. Here this able Georgist has patiently tried to give his views on troublesome land problems. Next month he will deal with a question regarding land value and commodity prices.

Laissez Faire in History

(Continued from Page One)

Science in 1906, on the subject "Why has the doctrine of 'laissez faire' been abandoned?" in his opening sentence he said, "... the most remarkable change which economic opinion has undergone during the last fifty years has been the change from the extreme laissez-faire doctrines of the classical economists to the modern doctrines of government regulation and social control." (Mr. Fisher was fearful that the tendency was too greatly toward socialism.)

"The abandonment," Mr. Fisher noted, "has been gradual and is credited to the cumulative effect of experience which has brought men face to face with the practical limitations of the let alone policy." Among those limitations are the fallacious individualist doctrines implicit in laissez faire, which Mr. Fisher asserted to be:

1. "The individual is the best judge of what subserves his own interests and the motive of self interest leads him to secure the maximum well-being for himself, and
2. "Since society is merely the sum of individuals the effort of each to secure the maximum well-being for himself has its necessary efforts to secure also the maximum of well-being for society as a whole."

There is a close kinship between this parallel reasoning of Keynes and Fisher and that of Professor J. E. Cairnes, whom I quoted as to the early English meaning of laissez-faire. This is Mr. Cairnes' analysis.

"The implied... assertion in this; that taking human beings as they are, in the actual state of moral and intellectual development they have reached; taking account, further, of the physical conditions with which they are surrounded in the world; lastly, accepting the institution of private property as understood and maintained in most modern states,—the promptings of self-interest will lead individuals, in all that range of their conduct which has to do with their material well-being, spontaneously to follow that course which is most for their own good and for the good of all... And you will see at once that it involves the two following assumptions; first, that the interests of human beings are fundamentally the same—that what is most for my interests is also most for the interests of other people; secondly, that individuals know their interests in the sense in which they are coincident with the interests of others, and in that sense follow them. If these two propositions are made out," Mr. Cairnes concludes, "the policy of 'laissez faire'—the policy, that is to say, of absolute abstention on the part of the State in all that concerns material well-being—follows with scientific vigor."

Cautioning that human interests and class interests are not "at one," the author accepts the first assumption—that the interests of human beings are fundamentally the same—and then undertakes to show the falsity of the second assumption—that individuals know their interests—and follow them—in the sense in which they are coincident with the interests of others.

This leads author Cairnes to observe, "... as if it were an obvious thing that people knew their interests in the sense in which they coincide with the interests of others and that, knowing them, they must follow them; as if there were no such thing in the world as passion, prejudice, custom, esprit de corps, class interest, to draw people aside from the pursuit of their interests in the largest and highest sense."

PLAIN TALK by Jerome Joachim

What can the average individual do to fight communism?

Someone suggested that we immediately arrest and either deport or imprison all known Communists. His remedy was to create such a fear in the minds of men that they would refrain from joining with a group whose ideals may appeal to them. Probably this person has espoused a large number of the measures which have caused communism but likes to think of himself in terms that are more popular.

Just what is communism, anyhow?

No matter how many different definitions you hear, all of them can be summed up by saying that: "communism is a disease, sometimes mild and sometimes violent, which attacks human beings and makes them think that they can get the most out of life by forcing, through laws, a more productive member of society to contribute toward the gratification of their desires."

To kill or deport those who believe this way would leave very few people anywhere. It would make as much sense as suggesting that we deport those with exceptionally bad colds because their disease had now infected all of us.

To combat communism we must recognize what causes it and eliminate those causes.

Specifically if we are to fight communism we must subscribe to the following general principles and then use every effort to help other people understand the logic of our reasoning.

1. We must rid ourselves of the notion that we have a right, if we pass a law, to share in the production of others on any basis other than through the free voluntary exchange of goods and services.

2. We must make certain that we do not expect government to give us privileges which are denied to others of any race, color or creed.

3. We must rid ourselves of the notion that wealth would be produced if it were distributed on some basis other than the free market.

4. We must realize that when man creates something, or causes it to be created, he does so because of a personal gain which he hopes to realize and that if he is denied, by law, either part or all of the gain which results from his effort then his effort will be deterred and all of



us will suffer. If we appropriate by law even a part of what he produces then he will henceforth devote his effort to effecting such laws and so will you. In the end, the idea of gaining by methods other than greater production will cause complete communism, the impoverishment of the entire nation and loss of individual freedom.

5. If you think your need is the basis for a law which would force someone to give you what you desire, then you are thinking like a Communist. Remember that when you force someone by law to exchange what he produced for a lower price than someone else is willing to pay then you are using the law to raise the price of what you produce. This discrimination by law is the very basis of communism and not only tends to destroy production but eliminates freedom.

6. If you use the law to force someone to pay for something you want or that you think he should want, you are thinking like a Communist. You can kill communism and retain freedom only if you believe in freedom for others as well as for yourself. If you do not believe in freedom for others then you are fostering communism.

7. Every time you say "There should be a law" (except when you advocate measures which prevent the acquisition of property rights through the use of force) the chances are you are advocating a measure designed to force someone else to do what you want done. You are thus abridging his freedom and in the end he will abridge yours. The only province of law is to prevent others from curtailing anyone's freedom.

Communism can be killed by better understanding. No matter how many Communists we deport, nor how thoroughly we annihilate Russia and all others who espouse communism, it is a disease which will still get us unless we correct our thinking. The average man, giving thought to the simple facts of life, can do more to kill communism than can all of the soldiers of the world's greatest nation. And unless the man in the street does give the matter such thought the disease will continue to grow.

For evidence of the lack of "naturally harmonious" human interests, the author cites the action of the landlords incident to the passing of the Corn Laws and power by law given them to interpose "endless artificial obstacles between the land of the country and the living people who inhabit it; the attitude of the employers to the Statutes to limit labor to ten hours work," and trade unions, "who pass rules against task-work and in favor of uniform wages for the skillful and the inept."

Somewhat in the same spirit, Fisher comments on the drunkard not being the best judge of what is best for him, the building contractor not being trusted to provide fireproof constructions, the factory owner burning soft coal but not using a smoke-consuming furnace, thus forcing fellow citizens to seek remedial legislation.

The history of man is replete with complaints about the unequal possession and use of the

things that contribute to man's comforts and interests. From the smallest hamlet to the great metropolis people, when exposed to its existence, show amazement at the difference in comforts with which people are surrounded in various parts of their community.

Such conditions, these people declare, are not right. Protests in the market bring no amelioration. What is to blame, they have not the slightest idea. Finding no other to champion their complaints, they turn to government. The sweep of the eye over the map of the world pin points country after country where government has undertaken, in some way, to respond to these people and to alleviate these untoward conditions. The results are not encouraging. Hence the present-day pertinency of the flaming question: What is the function of government in the production for social maintenance?

To be continued next month.

Sir Issac Newton and Henry George Two Apostles of Natural Law

By HIRAM B. LOOMIS

[From an address before the Annual Henry George Conference at Los Angeles]

JUST as Sir Isaac Newton's law of gravitation restrains the centrifugal inertia of otherwise freely moving moons and planets, producing orderly solar systems in the universe; so Henry George's law of human progress, a statement of moral law, limits the freedom of individuals in the gratification of their desires, and thus points the path to higher and higher civilizations.

Newton wanted to know why the moon revolves around the earth, and why the planets revolve around the sun. They say the fall of an apple suggested the solution. The first law of motion demands that a body in motion shall continue moving in a straight line with a uniform velocity unless acted upon by an external force. Newton's contribution was the statement of his law of gravitation.

In the field of social science, Henry George also deals with two natural laws. His first law is stated in the Introduction of *Progress and Poverty*. "Men seek to gratify their desires with the least exertion." As stated, this law puts no limitation to the freedom of the individual. He may want anything he pleases, and satisfy that want in any way he can. If stealing is the easiest way, this law does not forbid stealing, but to put this law in the form of the first law of motion we add the phrase, *unless restrained by moral law*. George's second law imposes this restraint.

The argument in *Progress and Poverty* leads straight to Book X, the title of which is "The Law of Human Progress." George's statement of this law is "Association in Equality," and he calls it "the recognition of moral law." George's first law deals only with the individual; but his second law brings in society (individuals in association with each other)—it also gives equality, equal rights and equal opportunity, as the ethical relation that should hold between individuals. We find here decided limitations to the freedom of the individual, for among the moral laws universally recognized is the commandment, thou shalt not steal. His freedom is limited by the equal freedom of his fellow men.

George's recognition of the importance of society as a factor in human progress may be gathered from the following quotations from the last pages of Book X, Chapter II of *Progress and Poverty*.

"Each society, small or great, necessarily weaves for itself a web of knowledge, beliefs, customs, languages, tastes, institutions, and laws. Into this web, woven by each society, . . . the individual is received at birth and continues until his death."

Then, referring to the web, George continues, "Though it is this that often offers the most serious obstacles to progress, it is this that makes progress possible. It is this that enables any schoolboy in our time to learn in a few hours more of the universe than Ptolemy knew; that places the most humdrum scientist far above the level reached by the giant mind of Aristotle. This is to the race what memory is to the individual. Our wonderful arts, our far-reaching science, our marvelous inventions—they have come through this."

"Human progress goes on as the advances made by one generation are in this way secured

as the common property of the next, and made the starting point for new advances. . . ."

Turn where we may, we shall find that progress has always been evolutionary. Man lived through the Stone Age, the Bronze Age, and the Iron Age; men have lived in caves, tents, log huts, frame and brick houses, and in tall apartment buildings. Having worked with his hands, used windmills, waterwheels, steam engines, and internal-combustion engines, man is now splitting the atom. We find like evolutionary processes going on in horticulture, animal husbandry, medicine, transportation, every branch of industry, every science and every art. In these evolutionary developments, what part has the individual played? What part has society played?

Let us use our imagination and picture what must have happened in the centuries between the Stone Age and the Iron Age. Sometimes primitive men found black stones in the ashes of their fires, stones not there before the fire was built, stones they found nowhere else, stones they kept as charms, stones they talked about. Finally it was noticed that they never got the black stones in the ashes unless certain other stones had been in the fire, and that the other stones had disappeared. At last someone decided to make the black stone in quantity. He put the right stones in the fire and had the first crude furnace for the reduction of iron ore to metallic iron.

Then, and not until then, was the stage set for Vulcan, Hephaestus and Tubal Cain, for until blacksmiths have iron, they cannot do their work. Had these geniuses been born earlier, they could not have worked in iron, but they were the kind of men who would have experimented and found from what stones iron could be produced. Were they living today, they would probably be working with jet planes or atomic bombs.

This division of labor between society and the individual will also appear if we compare the civilization of the American Indian with that of the colonists. I boldly assert that the main cause for the difference is the heritage the colonists had, due to the fact their past included over twenty centuries of a written as well as an oral language. The Indians had but two ways of transmitting the accumulated experience of their race from generation to generation, the habits the tribe acquired (their folkways), and the none-too-reliable memory of the living. But the colonists had a mechanical memory, a phonetic alphabet, twenty-six black marks on white paper, by which they could preserve word for word the thoughts of men long since dead.

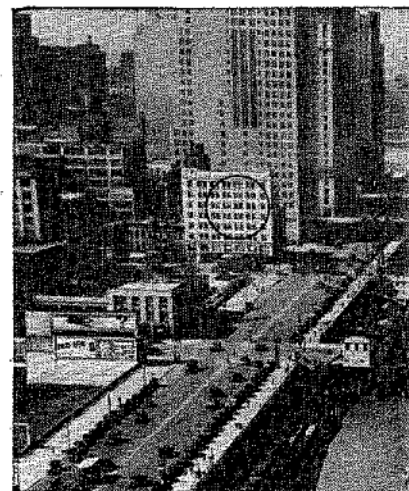
In the physical and biological sciences we get the past on which to build the future by assuming that the universe is orderly, governed by natural laws. Our objective then becomes to learn these laws and apply them. We do this by cutting and trying, and thus we gradually approach accuracy in stating a natural law. Probably the first statement of the law of gravitation was, things fall to the earth. But balloons go up, the moon goes around the earth, and the planets go around the sun. Finally Newton stated the law in a form that accounts for all of these phenomena. There has been an evolution

in our knowledge of the natural laws of physics, chemistry, botany and zoology, and evolution dating back to the infancy of the race.

Let us look at some of the changes that have taken place in the domains of civics, politics and ethics, and let us watch for trends. What pronounced changes have there been in folkways? All that is left of the widespread folkway of human sacrifice to appease the gods is the altar in our churches, on which today no animal is ever killed, no fire ever kindled. Many an Agamemnon had sacrificed his Iphigenia, but later many an Abraham had the courage to refuse compliance, and the had folkway died a slow death. Chattel slavery is also on the way out. So far as legislation can end it, it does not exist in the civilized world; but our last presidential election shows that the old slavery folkway is far from dead, for it is putting up a vigorous resistance to our Bill of Rights, to the fundamental law of the land. We face a conflict between folkways, between the dying folkways of slavery and the growing folkway prophesied by our Bill of Rights. Folkways change slowly; but the trend here is toward equality and freedom.

This trend toward equality and freedom may also be found in the evolution of government; and every government today is the present stage of an evolution still in progress. What does history tell of the changes? The father was the natural head of the family, and patriarchs like Abraham and Lot ruled larger family groups. This centralization of power into the hands of a single individual continued in the chiefs of tribes, many of which wandered west from central Asia, bringing with them our Indo-European languages. We had robber barons and Rob-in Hoods; we had Genghis Khans and Attilas. Now and then we had a great law-giver; a Hammurabi, a Solon, the Gracchi. In every case these prophets of the political future relieved the pressure on the people, and usually gave some of the people a voice in affairs. The trend was toward equality and freedom.

It is true that there have been recessions, that civilizations have passed out; but the better part of civilization has always remained. Men have never gone back to the Stone Age, nor to the Bronze Age. The ancients may have had some secret processes we do not know today. Some talk of the Toledo blade; but no previous civil-



Looking toward the Henry George School

ization had either the metallurgy or the science of today. Nor did any people, under any government of the past, have either the equality or the freedom enjoyed by the great mass of English-speaking people today.

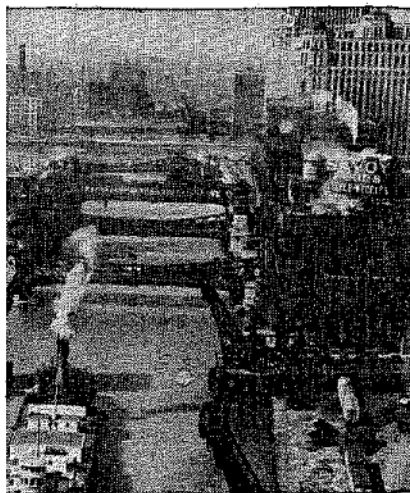
The analogy between Newton's law of gravitation and George's law of human progress is remarkably close. Both dealt with two laws that had opposing tendencies, and both limited the operation of one law by the other. Both avoided opposing catastrophies, and both secured order. One of Newton's laws was centrifugal, the other centripetal, in its tendency. Had the first prevailed, the moons and the planets would have gone off into infinite space, never to return. Had the second prevailed, they would all have fallen into the sun, and formed one great molten mass. But as both laws are acting all the time, neither calamity has happened. Instead every moon and every planet is going its own way in its own orbit, and we have an orderly solar system in an orderly universe.

Henry George also dealt with two opposing forces, the demands of the individual and the demands of society. Had the first prevailed, individuals would be flying off on the tangents of anarchy. Had the second prevailed, all would be merged in the one-togetherness of socialism. But both forces have been constantly in action, and we are living in a social evolution that has already advanced far, and whose tendency is toward greater equality and greater freedom.

Hiram B. Loomis, president of the board of the Henry George School in Chicago, is a former professor of physics at the University of Wisconsin and Northwestern University. Until his retirement from scholastic life at the age of seventy, he was principal of the Hyde Park High School in Chicago.

Mr. Loomis was born in Hartford in 1883 and in 1890 he received his Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins University — during his last year there he held a fellowship in physics.

He probably was the first person in America to have repeated Hertz's experiments based on Maxwell's electro-magnetic theory of light. Therefore, when he touches on topics such as are mentioned in the accompanying article, he writes with authority.



a circle) at 236 North Clark Street, Chicago.

The Town Without Taxes

A translation from *Vejen Frem*

By JOSEPH JESPERSON

IN THE town of Lethbridge, Alberta, new industries shoot up like mushrooms, the farms have the largest average income in Canada, and the only tax paid is the ground debt.

Gustave Hermansen, who visited Lethbridge, said he found the whole town shining with cleanliness, and when he asked the mayor why it was so clean, he replied, "Some people say that it is because the wind blows so hard down here. But I say it is because we keep it clean."

Lethbridge has great wide streets, houses in gay, light colors, and parks and golf courses with the greenest of grass. And this too, when it lies in sunny Alberta in the driest surrounding amid the ranch lands where the annual rainfall is between 12 and 16 inches, and where the supply of water is very limited. Thanks to the irrigating works it is now possible to cultivate such crops as sugar beets and green vegetables, and the region will be able in the course of the coming year to produce 70 per cent of Canada's sugar consumption, which at present must be covered by importation. Lethbridge obtains its largest income from agriculture, and especially from the wheat harvest. But the town owes its origin to coal, and there are about 500 employed in the coal industry.

Along with these two great advantages must be added natural gas, which is found in this area in the greatest quantities so far known, and inasmuch as the town can deliver the world's cheapest fuel it has great possibilities for attracting industries to itself.

But how do the inhabitants regard this prodigality of nature? As elsewhere in the world is there not recognized the economic law which provides that wealth be gathered into a few hands and poverty be shared by the many? Are there not, here as elsewhere, private capitalists who exploit the earth's bounty at the expense of the consuming people?

Does one not find here also in one section of the town splendid mansions, in the other the gray, uniform homes of working men — or slums? No, the most remarkable discovery is that all this does not exist. The mayor relates that it has been calculated that the average income of farms in the Lethbridge area in 1948-49 was \$5,137, while that for all Alberta was \$4,447, and for all Canada \$3,175. In 1949 there were built 420 houses of all kinds, but in 1950 more were built than ever before, and at present 1,500 buildings are under construction.

Mr. Hermansen, after an automobile tour, said he saw one section after another of sparkling new homes. The houses are large and beautiful, the grounds small. In answer to a question about this the mayor revealed the secret of Lethbridge: "The people here hate to pay taxes. If we made the grounds larger, it would have a noticeable effect on the land tax, which is our most important source of income—we prescribe no direct taxes."

"But how is this possible? Whence does the town obtain the necessary money?"

The proud mayor was glad to answer the interviewer. "That we obtain from the land tax and the profit of the community enterprises, for instance, the gas and water service. Furthermore, there is this about Lethbridge, that the people do not complain about taxes. For when the receipts and the population both increase rapidly, as here, the burden becomes lighter for

Economic Animals,

Lesson No. 3

By MARSHALL CRANE

OUR SPECIMEN for study today is one of nature's nudists. If you are a bird watcher, you have seen him on many spring mornings, giving some robin an exciting tug of war; if you are a fisherman, you have dug him up for bait in the garden, or have stalked him on the lawn at night. In appearance, he is not much of a glamor boy. As you can see, he is long, slimy, and wiggly, sort of. All in all, though, he has not many unpleasant features. In fact, he has not many features, period. He is a worm.

In disposing of her blessings, kindly old Mother Nature would seem to have short-changed the worm somewhat. He has no arms or legs, nothing that you could call a figure, and very little of anything else. He does not seem to have an inferiority complex, though. He has no eyes, but he is not blind. If you are hunting for him at night with a flashlight you will be wise not to shine it on him very brightly, for he will see the light with his skin, and pop down his hole as quick as a wink, or quicker. He has no ears either, but you had better walk on tiptoes, for he can hear you coming, also with his skin. And he seems to find his pals without any trouble at all when he is in the mood for company. Yes, in spite of all his handicaps he does very nicely, thank you. In every part of the world where things grow, from the equator to the edge of the icecaps, you will find him, prosperous and healthy.

However, this is not as surprising as it might seem at first. For this worm of ours is an earth-worm. The earth and its resources are his to use freely, as he is able, and as he pleases. From the time he first becomes a worm until he dies the land which feeds him is his own. He may lack almost everything else, but he has not been denied this. He is free to make his living without restraint, as free as a worm could be.

It is as fortunate for us as it is for the worm that this is so. For a very wise man named Charles Darwin once wrote that we ourselves would not be here if it were not for the millions and millions of worms who have found the earth a good place to live in. For thousands of centuries they have been turning over the dead sand and clay, slowly transforming it into soil without which we could not live. With little or nothing of their own they have been the benefactors of all terrestrial life. All honor to the worm!

And think, *mes enfants*: What might not man accomplish, if he too were free to use the land on which he is born?

the individuals, and we can hold the revenue to the same average even where the expenditures increase sharply. This is one of the secrets of this town's progress."

The mayor of Lethbridge said most of the inhabitants of the region were from the fugitive camps of Europe including many East Europeans, and there is constant use for many more, particularly for sugar beet farmers.

Conditions in Lethbridge are described here, not because they fulfill every objective of the program which the Justice party sets forth for the realization of a just state. But they show as plainly as can be wished that a community can with great benefit be based upon ground rent as the only revenue to the community.

Letters

To the Editor:

Evidently Mr. Don Thompson is in the position of M'Choakumchild when Sissy Jupe thought statistics and stutterings were the same thing. What clumsy tools words are! *Progress and Poverty* is surely well written yet how few get the essence of its meaning.

What a lot of nonsense is written about the higher standard of living.

Nearly all the folks I know down here have cars, freezers, refrigerators, electric or gas ranges, for all of which they are constantly trying to make the next payment, sometimes borrowing money from the loan sharks.

In the early '90s when I was receiving \$16 per week we had sirloin and porterhouse steaks and would not think of buying chuck or round steaks. As a boy when we had chuck steak or trimmings at 6 cents a pound we considered we were in poverty.

Of course we walked instead of taking "our car" to run up the street, but we were able to see something on the way. As a boy I was often awakened at three in the morning by my father to go fishing—walking from south Brooklyn to Coney Island Creek—because there were no horse cars running so early in the morning. We heard the birds sing and saw and smelled the beauty of the dawning day.

But about the high standard of living, what about the millions of share-croppers who live in poverty? There is no proper schooling or life for the children nor proper living conditions for the family, nor have they the right to stand upon the earth without paying tribute to some landlord who does nothing to improve the land that he has title to.

Have we forgotten how Roosevelt tried to reduce unemployment by "pump-priming" and failed until the war came on? Many of my friends down here could not find employment though they are intelligent workers, until they applied at Brookley Air Field. Now they think they are doing well. How many unproductive bureaucrats are employed by the government now?

But all this is beside the main point. Folks like Don Thompson do not see that there can be no real freedom, freedom of enterprise or any other kind until the land is free to use by those who can use it, whether to make shoes or plant potatoes or ~~any~~ in the air. Government pensions, social security and all that goes with it merely means beggars and slaves. And so the Decline of Western Civilization! Do we own ourselves now that the state can take from us whatever part of our production it chooses?

—ALEXIS C. FERM
Fairhope, Alabama

To the Editor:

In answer to the article by Don L. Thompson (August), I don't believe Henry George would have to revise his teachings because of any modern developments. He recognized that unions could modify the action of the law of rent and doubtless would recognize that other monopolies and arbitrary acts of government could do likewise.

It seems to me he made it plain that the science of political economy dealt with natural laws. He said we could not be expected to diagnose the ills of erroneous systems until we knew what could be expected of a natural or realistic system—the system known as free enterprise.

George saw clearly the great possibilities of progress that would follow the release of human energies when barriers to freedom were removed. But at the collapse of our monopolistic system in 1929 we took the wrong fork and are now embarked on a course based upon the same fundamental error that guides socialism and communism, i. e. the belief that man can, himself, create a better world by substituting arbitrary laws of his own for the natural laws that govern the actions of man. This only leads to frustration, since, by making it a crime for a man to act naturally, the government manufactures criminals and corrupts the people.

All the material benefits of this system, even if they were real, would not compensate for the evil and unhappiness resulting from this erroneous idea. But these benefits, mostly temporary and illusory, are sustained largely by more and more inflation, greater debt and heavier taxes. Taxes now take one-third of each family's income—how high can they go before calamity strikes?

All the progress that has brought higher material standards has been due to the scientific application of natural laws to the problem of production. Is it not time for men to realize that the same course—application of the natural laws to the problem of distribution—is the key to peace, progress and plenty?

—J. P. HAIR
Lakewood, Ohio

To the Editor:

The article headed "Great Books on Land," in your July issue, tells of a session of a Great Books group with the writings of Patrick Edward Dove, and a move for further sessions with the works of other precursors of Henry George.

Many followers of Henry George are doubtless not aware that the economic principles and means for their observance he gave himself to elucidating with most telling effect, were clearly recognized before the Christian Era.

Mang-tze, or Mencius as Latinized, (372-289 B. C.) ranked with Confucius as one of China's most revered philosophers. He told the rulers of his day that their chief aim should be to assure the economic well-being of their people, and to that end advised them to take for public use the social value of the land in place of taxes on what was produced from or built on it, and to abolish all barriers to trade. He also advocated compulsory education.

The above concerning Mencius and his philosophy is taken from the great work of our present day philosopher Will Durant, *Our Oriental Heritage*, pp. 682 et seq. The excerpts from the *Book of Mencius*, and matter relating to him from other sources given in that work might serve for another session of the Great Books members.

—WALTER N. CAMPBELL
Washington, D. C.

To the Editor:

I am sending this in the hope that it will be publicized in the forthcoming issue of *The Henry George News*.

In Geneva, Switzerland, the United Nations Economic and Social Council is in session to study methods of financing economic development throughout the world. A parley of major consequence to the future of world trade is being held to determine practical methods, conditions and policies for improving the sources of external finance, both private and public.

John C. Lincoln Says—

Under land-value taxation, two sites of equal value would pay the same, though one might be vacant and the other occupied by a million-dollar building . . . Landowners would have the right of title and exclusive possession of their land just as they now have. But they would have no right to hold land idle and deny other men jobs. And they would have no right to the return which comes to them solely as the result of the social and public advantages pertaining to their land. Those advantages result from the presence and activity of society. Their value can not of a right belong to any individual.

Land value belongs to society and it should be taken by society for society's needs—in the place of taxes on the products of labor and capital. Though the selling price of land would largely disappear, the owner of land would not suffer. He would still have his land, and the ground rent he would have to forgo would be no greater than the taxes of which he would be relieved. While he could not sell his land for any appreciable sum—the improvements, of course, would bring full market value—he could change locations, if he wished, with only a nominal outlay, if any, for the new site.

—From the August Lincoln Letter

Proposals for achieving adequate expansion and steadier flow of foreign capital to underdeveloped countries may be expected.

It seems to me that the conference offers an opportunity for the advocates of the Henry George economy to advance their doctrines of economic freedom concerning production, distribution and commodity prices, and thus to help determine wise methods of combating inflation and unemployment.

In the period from June 1950 to May 1951, according to the U. N. schedule, 125 experts from 29 countries advised 24 requesting governments on a broad scale of economic problems. *Progress and Poverty* offers a conclusive answer to all economic and social ills.

—MYRON A. KESSNER
New York City

Animal Antics

By ED NOFZIGER



"We're starving in the midst of plenty!"

—Chicago Sun-Times, May 31, 1951

Readers of this issue of *The Henry George News* with its special articles by Ernest B. Zeisler, Edwin Phelps, Hiram B. Loomis and Jerome Joachim and the short biography of Dean Henry L. T. Tideman, will gain an appreciation of five Chicago attractions not mentioned in the ordinary tourist's guide.



Those who heard Dr. Zeisler and Mr. Phelps at the monthly lectures in Chicago and Mr. Loomis at the conference in Los Angeles, said they wished the talks of these men might have a greater audience. This "Chicago issue" of the *News* helps provide that.

Our hope is that out-of-Chicago readers will feel impelled by these articles to visit Chicago during the year, attend some of the functions, and meet the authors and those associated with them in "the great work of the present."

JOHN LAWRENCE MONROE
Director

Chicago

When the Henry George Woman's Club holds its annual John Z. White picnic there is always lots of good food and good conversation. Among the seventy-five guests at the picnic on August 12 were Hiram B. Loomis, Helena Mitchell McEvoy, Mrs. Edward C. Goedde, Mr. and Mrs. Edwin Hamilton, and Mr. and Mrs. George M. Menninger, all old friends of the late Henry George lecturer, and Gordon A. White, a cousin. Dean Henry L. T. Tideman sent greetings from a hospital bed. Other guests included Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Forrest, former instructors of the Boston extension, and Mrs. Robert Tideman with her two daughters, Elinor and Cynthia, who had arrived from their home in San Francisco the morning of the picnic. The address of Mrs. Bessie Beach Truehart, "A Doctor for Uncle Sam," at the national school conference in Los Angeles, was heard on the tape recorder as a featured part of the program. The picnic was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. George Raymond Jackson in Skokie.

Cecil Cowherd, formerly a member of the staff and an instructor of the Chicago extension, has moved to her former home in Louisville, Kentucky. There she will join in the work of the school with another former Chicago leader, Rex Cleveland.

Dr. Harry Gunnison Brown, former professor of economics at the University of Missouri, will open the Freedom Lecture Series in Chicago on October 16. During the coming season he will also conduct a special course on "Fiscal Policy and Taxation in a System of Free Enterprise" and lecture in the Greater Chicago area before civic and college groups. Registrations for the special course and requests for him to speak are now being received at headquarters, 236 North Clark Street, Chicago 1.

Ohio

Joseph Stockman, Philadelphia director, was the featured speaker at the first annual conference of the Ohio Henry George School held August 17-19 at Indian Lake, Ohio. The conference attracted interested students from Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Lima, Springfield, Hamilton and Middletown.

Robert Benton, Detroit director, and Bennett Challis, head of the school's correspondence division in New York, also gave interesting addresses.

If you subscribe to *The Henry George News*, you may request, free of charge, a reproduction in color of the advertisement featured in the August issue, with the portrait of Henry George. Copies are being mailed to all who have so kindly contributed money to the support of the school.

News readers who enjoyed Glenn B. Hoover's article, "Old Errors Never Die," will be glad to know that they can now receive this complete address, also by writing to the Henry George School, 50 East 69th Street, New York 21, N. Y.

The printer's error in that article has been corrected: Professor Hoover said: "We insist that all socially created values should be taken for public purposes by the society which creates them, and that the incomes earned by individuals should go to those who earned them. It is only when the site value of land is insufficient to cover the expenditures we wish the government to make, that individuals should be taxed on either their wealth or their income."

We are sorry that the omission of several lines created an entirely erroneous impression.

St. Louis

Noah D. Alper sends this answer to the comment in our August report on the California conference, regarding his new experiment, "The Public Revenue Education Council." He says all are eligible for membership "who hold that the principal thing we must do is to collect the publicly created rental value of land as a substitute for taxes." He will furnish additional information to anyone writing to him at the St. Louis headquarters, Room 765, 818 Olive Street, St. Louis 1, Missouri.

Over 100 men, women and children attended the picnic on August 4 by the St. Louis Henry George Women's Club. Swimming, badminton, soft ball, horseshoes and cards were offered as diversions—the club earned a gratifying sum.

A number of new locations will be used this coming season for the ten or more basic classes which are being planned for St. Louis.

New York

Completion exercises for the summer term will be held September 5 and will include a class from Far Rockaway organized by David Goldstein, the new regional secretary, who succeeds Arthur Lea, now a successful salesman. A tape recording of a class in Woodhaven, another extension, will be a feature of the faculty dinner on September 19. Classes in Fundamental Economics begin October first.

Advanced classes beginning the week of September 24 include, besides the science and trade subjects, Modern Tax Practices, a revival of a class which was very popular a few years ago, and which is again to be under the expert guidance of Isidore Platin.

Human Nature and Conduct, using John Dewey's book by that title, continues the philosophy study with A. Kossa and C. Wood as leaders. Other advanced courses will be European History, with Julius Maier; Human Rights, with Benner Challis; and Public Speaking, with Joseph B. Rose, as instructors.

The Friday Evening programs will open on October 12 with a speaker from the Henry George Foundation, to be followed on October 19 by a film showing. The speaker on October 26 will be Richard Noyes of Peterboro, New Hampshire, formerly an actor, now a journalist, and contributor to *The Henry George News*.

What's the nicest thing about a New York summer? The visitors! We love them all!

Educate for Freedom

BY THE process of education, a man leads himself out; that is, he liberates himself by gaining independence . . .

The early years of education are years of apprenticeship; a time of finding one's self; of bringing one's self into a simple and ever more simple relation to the environment . . .

We cannot secure in youth all the benefits of education. During the years of training in scholastic work we interpret narrowly, for the point of view is not sufficiently removed from the thing itself to be objective. When these years of training are past, and we have entered upon the life work, we move forward partly from the inspiration and demand of work itself, partly from the momentum of knowledge already acquired. There comes a time, however, when we should conscientiously return to the essential portion of this early experience of study and pass over its steps again, not merely to relearn what it has to offer as knowledge, but to discover its fullness of spiritual suggestion. This is to the individual the Renaissance period of life. It is his time of the Revival of Learning. It transforms all knowledge of other days, gained by consciously directed study, from mere intellectual attainment into a conception of wider significance. If a man will undertake this Revival of his education at the same time continuing, as Cicero did, to learn something new by direct study every day he will become able at a certain period in life to go forward with both the old and the new learning to the end of his days . . .

These two processes proceeding simultaneously—the Revival of Learning and the New Learning—lead, if rightly conducted, to the spiritual freedom which is the distinct aim of all education. No knowledge displays its fullness of meaning until we have exercised upon it both these processes. Without the one we are in intellectual darkness; without the other is spiritual darkness. Education, then, even in its most simple and familiar aspect is pathbreaking towards perfect freedom . . .

As we make this journey again over the old path, a new light will shine before us. This process transforms life for us, only because it transforms us.

—THOMAS TAPPER.

From *Efficiency—Its Spiritual Source*.

From a Correspondence Course Student To Her Teacher After the First Lesson

I want you to know what a satisfaction this course is to me. My husband is a teacher in this small Colorado mining community (Idaho Springs). We are surrounded by progress and poverty in their most glaring obvious forms constantly. Unfortunately, there are very few concerned with the problem, so we have been doomed previously to question it out by ourselves. Now, we have Henry George! It is as if a dark, long tunnel had reached an end. Maybe we are overwhelmed, but we cannot take issue with George on any subject!

When my husband returns to school teaching (at present he has been recalled into the army), I am very glad that he will be able to let the young under his guidance know that there is a way out of the quagmire so many of them are in. The underlying moral and Christian teachings of George are certainly a hope in this world of strife. Thank you for making this possible for us. —MRS. JEANNE J. ATTLESON

Justice and Benevolence

By ERNEST BLOOMFIELD ZEISLER

[From an address before the Henry George School of Social Science, Chicago]

HOW CAN one go about choosing a set of postulates for a theory of human rights? If one agrees with Dean Inge's opinion that "The silliest way to settle a dispute is to break heads; the next silliest way is to count them," one will hardly rely on majority opinion. Nor are the opinions of the best and most enlightened individuals always the most useful; when John Stuart Mill wishes to choose that form of society which brings the greatest good to the greatest number, he is saying something which sounds nice but is meaningless in an operational sense. It is in practice not possible to determine quantitatively how much good a system brings to each person and to add the total for all persons and then compare it with the analogous quantity under some other system.

Suppose we illustrate ethical theory by choosing the following postulate: Every person has the right to perform any and every act he wishes to so long as he does not thereby interfere with the equal rights of other persons to do the same. (It is understood that a failure to act is also an act.) Now this postulate purports to determine what acts are right. But experience quickly shows that it does not serve its purpose: In countless instances every answer would lead to the infringement of some right of at least one person. Actually, in practice the above postulate can serve only as a general guiding principle, which must be supplemented by various compromises. But let us continue with this postulate.

We can define an *unjust act* as a human act which in some way infringes on at least one right of at least one other person. We then define a *just act* as a human act which is not unjust. Injustice is then defined as the commission of one or more unjust acts, and justice is defined as the absence of all injustice, that is, the commission of only just acts. (This is distributive justice only, and not retributive or corrective justice, which is merely the attempt to rectify injustice.) It is seen that injustice is positive action, whereas justice is negative, simply the absence of all positive action of a certain kind. This justice which we have here defined is philosophical justice or equity, not legal justice.

According to our definition, nothing can be unjust except a human act. Destruction of innocent life by earthquake or disease can perhaps be called disastrous, but not unjust; it is not unjust that Albert Einstein is a genius and Senator Broyles is not.

But even in the case of human acts there is room for doubt. Dropping bombs on non-combatants is just when we do it and are told that it is for the purpose of shortening war and thereby saving American lives, but it was manifestly unjust when the Nazis did it and said it was in order to shorten the war and save German lives. It may be merely ignorance that I know of no divine revelation to the effect that God considers the life of an American more precious than that of a Korean or a Chinese, even if he is a Communist. But there are, of course, many acts concerning which there will be no dispute; some are admittedly just and others unjust.

Justice as here defined requires that one should

not commit acts which infringe on the rights of another, but does not require that one commit acts designed solely to promote the welfare or the happiness of another. A human act not required by justice and designed to promote the welfare or the happiness of one or more other persons is called a *benevolent act*, and the performance of one or more benevolent acts is called benevolence. Thus, whereas justice is a negative quality—the absence of all positively unjust acts, so that his behavior is necessarily just; he also has no opportunity to commit any benevolent act, so that he is just and not benevolent. If a person commits no unjust act and does commit benevolent acts, then he is both just and benevolent. If one steals from A and gives to B, then he is unjust (to A) and benevolent (to B). If I push a man into a river from a bridge my act is unjust; if I do not rescue him I have not been benevolent, so that I have been unjust and not benevolent. Thus, neither or either one or both of justice and benevolence may be present in a given situation, so that *justice and benevolence are, logically, completely independent*. Since, by definition, benevolence consists of acts which are not required by justice, it must be the right of each person to decide for himself whether or not he wishes to commit any benevolent act at all and, if he does wish to do so, what benevolent acts he will perform; to compel a person to perform a benevolent act against his wish is to abridge his right in this matter and is, therefore, an injustice. Hence we see that *justice and compulsory benevolence are absolutely incompatible*.

Justice and benevolence are, of course, quite compatible, but only so long as the benevolence is voluntary; each person deciding for himself, on religious or other grounds or by caprice, just how much if any benevolence he wishes to undertake; the moment it is compulsory it is unjust. It is precisely this last fact which is not understood by many very kind people; they would like universal benevolence, realize that this can not be attained voluntarily, and so wish to adopt compulsory benevolence, not aware of the fact that they thereby give up justice.

Aside from complete anarchy, with no law whatever, there are essentially only two rational choices: first the just society, with laws for justice and against injustice, but without any compulsory benevolence, though there may or may not be voluntary benevolence; and secondly, the so-called welfare state, with compulsory benevolence and hence, by necessity, injustice. The welfare state purports to try to abolish those differences among its citizens which arise in the course of events. Of course, the prevention of such differences as would arise through injustice, and the efforts to correct such differences as have arisen through injustice, are among the functions of a just society. But it should not be overlooked that in fact most widespread and flagrant differences which the welfare state purports to wish to correct are the fault of that state itself, in either having permitted injustice or actually connived in it. The state is merely a collection of persons; it produces nothing and can never have anything except what it has from time to time stolen from its citizens. Its main occupation is to confiscate

wealth from its citizens; part of this wealth goes to support its minions and part is returned to its victims in the form of purportedly benevolent hand-outs so as to delude them into permitting it to continue its nefarious activities.

It would be disingenuous not to mention that what we have said concerning the injustice of compulsory benevolence is due on the basis of the heretofore stated postulate concerning human rights. If instead of that we had adopted a different postulate, then compulsory benevolence might have been just. Suppose, for instance, we make the postulate that justice is the taking from each according to his ability and the giving to each according to his needs; there will be great difficulty in determining just what each person needs, but at least then the American income tax, which operates on precisely this principle—as does also highway robbery—will be just.



Henry George Congress To Plan Action Program

THE Henry George Foundation Congress in New York, October 5-6, will be held at the Park Sheraton Hotel. Plans for the forthcoming program of political action in Pennsylvania will be discussed. A banquet will close the congress on Saturday evening, October 6.

On August first another decisive victory was recorded at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, when the House of Representatives passed the original McGinnis bill, Senate No. 121, by a vote of 184 to 11. This bill had passed the Senate on April 17 by a vote of 50 to 0, and when signed by the Governor will become effective immediately.

Among the congress speakers will be Gilbert M. Tucker of Albany; J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco; Clayton J. Ewing of Mobile, Alabama; George F. Hellick of Gaston, Pennsylvania; Dr. Henry George III of Wilmington; Senator Bernard B. McGinnis, Charles R. Eckert and Percy R. Williams of the Pittsburgh district. New York speakers will include: Miss V. G. Peterson, secretary of the Schalkenbach Foundation, R. M. Dreyfuss, Charles Johnson Post and Sidney J. Abelson.

Some of the sponsors are John Dewey, Lawson Purdy, Mrs. Mary Fels, Harry Gunnison Brown, John S. Godman, George Raymond Geiger, Otto K. Dorn, Rabbi Michael Aaronsohn, Herbert S. Bigelow, Saul Cohn, Lancaster M. Greene and Charles Johnson Post.

Charles R. Eckert is president of the Henry George Foundation and Percy R. Williams is secretary. Sidney J. Abelson is chairman of the committee on arrangements. Reservations may be made through Miss Helen Cartier, secretary of the committee, 252 East 61 Street, New York 21, N. Y.



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By ERNEST BLOOMFIELD ZEISLER

[From an address before the Henry George School of Social Science, Chicago]

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We can define an *unjust act* as a human act which in some way infringes on at least one right of at least one other person. We then define a *just act* as a human act which is not unjust. Injustice is then defined as the commission of one or more unjust acts, and justice is defined as the absence of all injustice, that is, the commission of only just acts. (This is distributive justice only, and not retributive or corrective justice, which is merely the attempt to rectify injustice.) It is seen that injustice is positive action, whereas justice is negative, simply the absence of all positive action of a certain kind. This justice which we have here defined is philosophical justice or equity, not legal justice.

According to our definition, nothing can be unjust except a human act. Destruction of innocent life by earthquake or disease can perhaps be called disastrous, but not unjust; it is not unjust that Albert Einstein is a genius and Senator Broyles is not.

But even in the case of human acts there is room for doubt. Dropping bombs on non-combatants is just when we do it and are told that it is for the purpose of shortening war and thereby saving American lives, but it was manifestly unjust when the Nazis did it and said it was in order to shorten the war and save German lives. It may be merely ignorance that I know of no divine revelation to the effect that God considers the life of an American more precious than that of a Korean or a Chinese, even if he is a Communist. But there are, of course, many acts concerning which there will be no dispute; some are admittedly just and others unjust.

Justice as here defined requires that one should

not commit acts which infringe on the rights of another, but does not require that one commit acts designed solely to promote the welfare or the happiness of another. A human act not required by justice and designed to promote the welfare or the happiness of one or more other persons is called a *benevolent act*, and the performance of one or more benevolent acts is called benevolence. Thus, whereas justice is a negative quality—the absence of all positively unjust acts, so that his behavior is necessarily just; he also has no opportunity to commit any benevolent act, so that he is just and not benevolent. If a person commits no unjust act and does commit benevolent acts, then he is both just and benevolent. If one steals from A and gives to B, then he is unjust (to A) and benevolent (to B). If I push a man into a river from a bridge my act is unjust; if I do not rescue him I have not been benevolent, so that I have been unjust and not benevolent. Thus, neither or either one or both of justice and benevolence may be present in a given situation, so that *justice and benevolence are, logically, completely independent*. Since, by definition, benevolence consists of acts which are not required by justice, it must be the right of each person to decide for himself whether or not he wishes to commit any benevolent act at all and, if he does wish to do so, what benevolent acts he will perform; to compel a person to perform a benevolent act against his wish is to abridge his right in this matter and is, therefore, an injustice. Hence we see that *justice and compulsory benevolence are absolutely incompatible*.

Justice and benevolence are, of course, quite compatible, but only so long as the benevolence is voluntary, each person deciding for himself, on religious or other grounds or by caprice, just how much if any benevolence he wishes to undertake; the moment it is compulsory it is unjust. It is precisely this last fact which is not understood by many very kind people; they would like universal benevolence, realize that this can not be attained voluntarily, and so wish to adopt compulsory benevolence, not aware of the fact that they thereby give up justice.

Aside from complete anarchy, with no law whatever, there are essentially only two rational choices: first the just society, with laws for justice and against injustice, but without any compulsory benevolence, though there may or may not be voluntary benevolence; and secondly, the so-called welfare state, with compulsory benevolence and hence, by necessity, injustice. The welfare state purports to try to abolish those differences among its citizens which arise in the course of events. Of course, the prevention of such differences as would arise through injustice, and the efforts to correct such differences as have arisen through injustice, are among the functions of a just society. But it should not be overlooked that in fact most widespread and flagrant differences which the welfare state purports to wish to correct are the fault of that state itself, in either having permitted injustice or actually connived in it. The state is merely a collection of persons; it produces nothing and can never have anything except what it has from time to time stolen from its citizens. Its main occupation is to confiscate

wealth from its citizens; part of this wealth goes to support its minions and part is returned to its victims in the form of purportedly benevolent hand-outs so as to delude them into permitting it to continue its nefarious activities.

It would be disingenuous not to mention that what we have said concerning the injustice of compulsory benevolence is due on the basis of the heretofore stated postulate concerning human rights. If instead of that we had adopted a different postulate, then compulsory benevolence might have been just. Suppose, for instance, we make the postulate that justice is the taking from each according to his ability and the giving to each according to his needs; there will be great difficulty in determining just what each person needs, but at least then the American income tax, which operates on precisely this principle—as does also highway robbery—will be just.



Henry George Congress To Plan Action Program

THE Henry George Foundation Congress in New York, October 5-6, will be held at the Park Sheraton Hotel. Plans for the forthcoming program of political action in Pennsylvania will be discussed. A banquet will close the congress on Saturday evening, October 6.

On August first another decisive victory was recorded at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, when the House of Representatives passed the original McGinnis bill, Senate No. 121, by a vote of 184 to 11. This bill had passed the Senate on April 17 by a vote of 50 to 0, and when signed by the Governor will become effective immediately.

Among the congress speakers will be Gilbert M. Tucker of Albany; J. Rupert Mason of San Francisco; Clayton J. Ewing of Mobile, Alabama; George E. Hellick of Easton, Pennsylvania; Dr. Henry George III of Wilmington; Senator Bernard B. McGinnis, Charles R. Eckert and Percy R. Williams of the Pittsburgh district. New York speakers will include: Miss V. G. Peterson, secretary of the Schalkenbach Foundation, R. M. Dreyfuss, Charles Johnson Post and Sidney J. Abelson.

Some of the sponsors are John Dewey, Lawson Parry, Mrs. Mary Fels, Harry Gunnison Brown, John S. Codman, George Raymond Geiger, Otto K. Dorn, Rabbi Michael Aaronsohn, Herbert S. Bigelow, Saul Cohn, Lancaster M. Greene and Charles Johnson Post.

Charles R. Eckert is president of the Henry George Foundation and Percy R. Williams is secretary. Sidney J. Abelson is chairman of the committee on arrangements. Reservations may be made through Miss Helen Cartier, secretary of the committee, 252 East 61 Street, New York 21, N. Y.

