

New York Taxes Called Shocking

The Citizens Budget Commission, an independent New York City civic group, estimates a "shocking" 8.87% increase in the local real estate tax in the next fiscal year, 1972-73. The Commission bases this figure upon estimates of the City's debt released by the City's Budget Bureau.

According to an item in the New York Times of January 7, this would be a 53% increase over the present rate of taxation. Dr. David Bernstein, acting executive director of the Citizens Budget Commission, calls this increase "alarming and astonishing."

The real estate tax increase would be due to new needs and old miscalculations in the capital budget. First is balancing last year's budget. Second is paying the uniformed forces. Third is higher interest rates. Fourth is larger capital projects and their higher cost these days.

In dollars and cents, the increase would be from \$5.97 to \$6.50 for each \$100 of assessed valuation. That is, a home worth \$30,000-40,000 and assessed at \$15,000 would cost its owner about \$80 more in taxes this year. Rexford Tompkins, chairman of the Real Estate Board of New York, is reported to have said "Zowie!" upon hearing of the estimated increase. "We are taxing ourselves to death in our town." Tompkins also noted that new leases contain tax escalator clauses whereby landlords can pass on such tax increases to tenants. By 1974, tenants could be paying an additional 2½% apartment and house rent.

As economist M. Mason Gaffney is wont to say, "The property tax is a *progressive* tax!"

investigates the changes wrought in American society by technology, the distance of government from the people, communications break-throughs, and so on. Dr. Hoffman looks at women's liberation, the youth counter-culture, and all else that is bewildering in modern America.

Other courses to be given in the Spring semester are "Real Estate," a series of lectures by New York's real estate experts; "Investing in Securities," another series on the stock market; and, of course, "Reform for Our Time," dealing with George. The semester begins the week of February 22; all classes are from 7 to 9 p.m.; courses are either 10 or 15 sessions.

Irish Land Question Revisited

Should Ireland join the Common Market? A decade ago, public opinion was 11 to 1 in favor of entry, according to Garrett Fitzgerald, spokesman for the Fine Gael party in the Irish Parliament. But the Irish Republican Army has changed all that. Public opinion is now only 3 to 2 in favor of entry, and slipping fast—due in part to handbills put up by the IRA. The Wall Street Journal of January 17 reproduced one handbill, reading:

"For sale, by private treaty: a small but exploitable property... suitable for short-term investment with guarantee of quick profits... investors guaranteed bargain sale, cheap labor, cheap land, no small farmers, free fishing, cheap mining, etc. . . . No Irish need apply. Agents Jack Lynch and partners."

Jack Lynch is the Prime Minister of Ireland, or Eire. He sees Ireland's entering the Common Market as definite—he will simply keep advertising the benefits of entry and holding referendums until the vote is returned "yes." To Mr. Lynch's government, the wider markets and higher prices of the Common Market can do only good for the Irish economy, despite pushing a few small farmers out of business. The consolidation of small farms has been underway for some time, anyway.

But the Irish Republican Army, and an increasingly large segment of the public, see entry into the Common Market as opening up the possibility of exploitation by foreign companies, loss of sovereignty, possible conscription of Irish men into some future European army, and the demise of those small farms.

Mr. Fitzgerald sees Irish entry into the Common Market as ending British exploitation of Ireland, however. Over 2/3 of Ireland's agricultural products are now exported to Britain; the Common Market would put an end to this reliance on the British economy. "What was a colonial relationship became an exploitative colonial one and now is a neo-colonial relationship," says Mr. Fitzgerald.

Why the Irish cannot solve the land question is no longer a mystery: both sides of this controversy believe that the land resources of Ireland are destined for exploitation by other nations. And the small farmer goes under either way.

Vade In Pace

Josephine Billington Hansen died on December 13, 1971 in Florida after a short illness. She is survived by her son Peter and three sisters, and is mourned by her many friends at the Henry George School where she taught and was active in its educational projects.

Some will remember thirty odd years ago at the School, then located on 29th Street, New York City, when this strikingly beautiful woman rose to address a group of people who had completed their readings in *Progress and Poverty*. Her carriage was regal, yet there emanated from her such warmth and grace as to command immediate and complete attention. She spoke for perhaps ten minutes. Her theme was justice and it was presented with such sincerity, understanding and logic that those who heard her have not forgotten the experience. Truly, this was a woman for all seasons.

It was thus that Josephine Hansen began her deep study of Henry George and long association with the School. Her physical beauty was matched by a brilliant and searching mind. She embraced George's basic thinking but only after testing its validity for herself. Her intellectual life was devoted to the study of political economy and ethics and what she learned was freely shared with others. Her indignation at special privilege was boundless and proverbially she stretched out her hand to the poor.

Mrs. Hansen was an articulate speaker. Her charm, patience and learning earned for her the respect and appreciation of the hundreds of students who came under her influence and who looked upon her as a light and a power.

For her legion of friends, I say farewell to her with tears of affection to be worn as jewels in the memory of those who knew and loved her.

Arnold A. Weinstein