

the Physiocratic argument that industrial and commercial activity, as distinct from that of agriculture, was "non-productive", the absurdity of which is self-evident. As Henry George explains, in his *The Science of Political Economy*, their strange error arose simply from the concept of agriculture as the generative or reproductive principle while industrial and commercial activity was concerned with "merely changing things in form, place or ownership." The error, as George said, has been effectively used to discredit their system, which, this aberration apart, laid the foundation of the true political economy.

Neither Adam Smith, nor Ricardo, nor John Stuart

Mill nor even Marx, followed the logic of their own perception to the end of a national revenue based solely upon the *produit net*, the surplus product. Others, like Patrick Edward Dove (1815-1873) in *The Theory of Human Progression*, Dr. Thomas Nulty, Bishop of Meath, in an address to the clergy and laity of his diocese, in 1881, and, of course, Henry George, did so. Posterity preferred Marx, the revolutionary socialist, and Keynes, his unacknowledged neophyte.

Nevertheless, there can be little doubt as to the relevance of the author of *The Wealth of Nations* for the bewildered world of 1977.

How the Indians Regard the Land

RUUD MOORS

(From an article in *Ons Erfdeel*, translated from the Dutch by Basil Butterworth).

FROM the deep south of South America to the North Pole there were Indian cultures that differed more from one another than America and Russia do now.

One thing, however, they had in common and that was that the land everywhere was common property; whether it was an agricultural, fishing or hunting culture there was no talk anywhere of individual property in land.

Chief Seattle of the Duwamish tribe spoke as follows, in 1854, about a proposal by the President of the United States to buy the land on which his tribe lived:

"The great Chief in Washington has spoken: he wants to buy our land. The great Chief has also spoken words of friendship and peace. That is very good of him, as we know that he does not need our friendship.

"But we shall consider your offer, since we know that if we do not sell our land, the white man with his weapons will come and take it.

"How can you buy or sell the air, the warmth of the land? That is difficult for us to imagine. As we cannot possess the freshness of the air and the rippling of the water, how can you buy them from us? We shall in due time take a decision on this.

"Every piece of this land is sacred to my people. Every spruce tree that shines in the sun, every sandy beach, every mist in the dark woods, every

buzzing bee is sacred in the thoughts and memory of my people. The sap that rises in the tree carries the memory of the red man.

"The red man has always retreated before the advancing white man, as the mist on the hills flees before the sun in the morning. But the ashes of our fathers are sacred. Their graves are consecrated ground, so are the hills and these trees. This part of the earth is holy ground for us. We know that the white man does not understand our way of life. For him one piece of land is just like another, as he is a stranger who comes in the night and takes what he wants of the land.

"The earth is not his brother but his enemy. And when he has conquered it he moves on. He gets nothing from it. He forgets the grave of his father and the inheritance of his children. He treats his mother, the earth, and his brother, the air, as merchandise, that he can exploit and sell again like cheap coloured beads.

"His hunger will eat the earth bare and leave only a wilderness behind."

A remarkable prophecy from a man whose people were considered "savages". And now, more than a century later, the rivers are fouled, as is the air and parts of the land.

But the conquest still goes on.

A newspaper report in 1971 gave a laudatory account of the Brazilian government's plan for the Amazon region. The region was to be transformed into pasture for the benefit of wool production and of the great landlords, who had all claimed parts of it and "cleaned" it of Indians. The first step in this gigantic project was to drive a road across the Amazon region from the west to the east coast.

Property in land is theft of community property, not only from the "civilised" people, but also from the natives, who have always had a reverence for life, and for their land and are one with it. We too must again become one with the world about us, realising that the earth is part of us, to be used only to sustain life and not to turn into marketable property so making life almost impossible for others.

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SOCIALIST TURNS TO FREE ENTERPRISE

NOT all critics of nationalisation can claim personal experience of its operation at such a high level as can Sir Richard Marsh, former Chairman of the British Railways Board who, in a recent speech, deplored any further extension of nationalisation, except as anything other than a last resort, and even then "with feelings of gibbering terror and foreboding." He said he had found his ten years of working in the public sector had left him with a convinced belief in free enterprise.