



In "Tolstoy: A Biography?" (May HGN) Sydney Mayers deals with the recently translated volume by M. Henri Troyat and quotes the author as referring to Henry George as a socialist. Mr. Mayers, who was a star student in my French class at the HGS, would have noticed a slight error in translation if he had read the book in the original French. M. Troyat wrote, "Inspiré par les ouvrages du sociologue américain Henry George . . .", that is "Inspired by the works of the American *Sociologist*, Henry George . . ." There evidently was an error by the translator, and the word socialist was not the choice of the author. Mr. Mayers also objects to the word "hypnotized." I would translate this reference as, "It is odd that Nekhlyudov (alias Tolstoy) should have become infatuated of (or enthused about) this pseudo-communistic utopia . . ." The case of the word hypnotized, unlike the word socialist, may be considered a justifiable liberty of the translator.

The criticisms by Mr. Mayers in general seem to be valid, for the passage by M. Troyat does speak of a "pseudo-communistic utopia" and of "abolishing private property" (or perhaps he meant private property in land); in either case *not* the proposal of George. The French author tells us that the great novel *Resurrection* was evidently first published serially and was under constant imperial censorship. Perhaps meddling by an early censor can be blamed for a somewhat garbled version of George's teachings. It might be wise for a Georgist scholar to check Tolstoy's work in the original to see whether it contains these distortions.

MATTHEW OSSIAS
New York, N. Y.

The views of T. A. Ende in the November 1967 HGN and the reservations of Betty Noble in the March 1968 reply, seem to agree insofar as both want to improve the lot of all the people. A simple change in one of Mr. Ende's statements might produce something Miss Noble would accept, to wit: "The result of the taxation of land values for the community would be to provide it with an enormous sum of money, and this would be used to promote the general welfare, as Henry George foresaw it would be."

John C. Lincoln, former HGS president and founder of the famed Lincoln Electric Company in Cleveland, wrote an article entitled "Stop Legal Stealing," in which he concluded that ground rent makes up about 25 percent of the national income. Among the items he considered in setting up his ground rent formula were house rent, food, meat, automobiles, clothes, gasoline and natural gas.

In what must have been the year 1953, he concluded that, based on the 25 percent figure, the ground rent would be all of \$75 billions. Actually the income was \$305 billion, hence the rent should have amounted to \$76 billion. That year the U.S. Treasury Department reported receipts of \$64.8 billion and expenditures of \$74.2 billion. Although the government incurred a big deficit that year the ground rent could have covered the expenditures with some to spare.

While Mr. Lincoln never claimed his figures were anything more than a fair estimate, I think they indicate the tremendous changes for the better which will come with the adoption of LVT. That the general trend of these figures would not change with more recent budgets is seen by considering the last year for which I have full information, 1965. The U.S. national income was \$562 billion—a fourth of it would be \$140 billion. This was the last year LBJ used every trick his comp-

troller could devise to keep the budget under \$100 billion—actually \$96.5 billion for expenditures, with a deficit of almost \$3.5 billion. It is apparent that many more Americans had learned how to escape their share of taxes.

For New Zealand I found in the Statesman's Yearbook for 1960-61, that the national income was 1,139 million N.Z. pounds. Ground rent should have been 275 million pounds and the revenue was approximately the same, though actually a bit in excess of expenditures.

That government is spending more in New Zealand than the amount of its probable ground rent seems to indicate too much government. I venture to disagree with Miss Noble's view that the single tax would raise the margin of cultivation and the rent fund would shrink. In "Effects of the Remedy" (*Progress and Poverty*, p. 442) George notes that at first there would be a positive decline in rent caused by the decrease in speculative land values, and adds that advances in productive power would result in still increasing rent and gains in production.

For example, thousands of marginal

workers have been lured to Rochester, New York, a city near my home, which employs more engineers per capita than any other in the nation—but they are ill equipped for this type of industry. On marginal farm land there's a point beyond which it is wasteful to apply more labor or capital, yet on the best land this is remote. If the single tax were to apply to Rochester overnight, the marginal workers might lift themselves up the economic ladder, but the engineers and their kind would soon start businesses of their own or find other lucrative opportunities on land of a quality to bring bountiful returns.

This is so important that I will resort to figures. If marginal land rates 10 as to production, then the best land might rate a 1000 or 10,000. With the single tax the marginal worker might climb to 100 land, but others more capable would climb, let's say, from 500 to 1000 or 5000. There would indeed be an increase of the economic rent fund under the single tax, and I'm sure it would be of most satisfying size from the Georgist viewpoint.

CLAYTON C. BAUER
Spencerport, New York

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They've been threatening overpopulation since the days of Malthus. Meanwhile the wealth of the ocean depths remains almost untouched, and who knows what new discoveries and technological advances will bring? Desalinization of sea water alone would transform deserts into gardens.

Our studies always bring us back to land and labor and capital, and to the distribution of wealth through rent, wages and interest. We know that land is a gift to all mankind and that the private appropriation of rent is what George called it — robbery. Yes, we know the answer to the world's problems, and what must be done to save

capitalism and individual liberty. We know that political freedom is an empty promise without economic freedom. The Chinese peasants didn't want to vote, they only wanted to farm a little land. The Reds promised them land—we promised them a vote. We lost China—will we lose Vietnam too?

Russel Conklin of Great Falls is opposed in the Montana elections and will be returned as auditor of Cascade County without campaigning. He is a former mayor of the city and served a term as representative in the state legislature. Included in his talk to the graduates in Calgary were the text of Agnes de Mille's letter (see page 1, May HGN) and portions of *Progress and Poverty* from pages 154, 243 and 433.