

# the Henry George News

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## Rudolf Steiner and Henry George

by H. JAN RITSCHER

GEORGISTS have received such perfect inner training for an understanding of Rudolf Steiner's social order proposals that they should be able to succeed where Steiner's students have thus far failed. At the same time, Georgists, who have concentrated their efforts too narrowly on the solution of the land problem only, should, by grasping Steiner's three-fold approach to social problems, be able to succeed where they too, have thus far failed.

George's entire work, as he emphasized in *The Science of Political Economy*, concerns the true nature of the spirit, not only in man, but in the cosmos, with respect to its action in the economy. Students of Rudolf Steiner can bring a new understanding of this aspect of his work, for in whatever success Georgists have had in effecting land value tax reforms, little notice has been taken of the disease of the social organism which continues to spread from focal points disregarded by Georgists.

Steiner refers to the land and labor problem almost in the beginning of his basic work, *The Three-Fold Commonwealth*. He was more anxious to have the public accept his three-domainedness concept for human society than any of the other practical applications of his new universal science, such as his agricultural method, his medical



H. Jan Ritscher and Lancaster M. Greene

therapy, pedagogy, new stage art, etc. Yet it was this concept which failed, possibly because through his paradoxical style he inadvertently attracted the Utopianists. His proposals called for a radically new approach to social questions and it was perhaps natural that social reformers of the right and left, plus the so-called "lunatic fringe," felt attracted to these proposals. This eager crowd naturally succeeded in repelling many sounder minds. I wonder if Henry George's proposals ever met a similar situation?

Not being an economist, Steiner did not elaborate on his land reform measures. Only a Georgist would understand such statements as: any landowner makes other people dependent on him by seizing on a human right. A human right must never enter the economic domain—it must not become a commodity. Possession of land must be treated as an element of the *jural* rather than the economic life and, as such, be dealt with in accordance with the principle of *equality*.

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## Steiner and George

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Henry George, an inspired *thinker* and teacher, taught his students to *think* with him. Rudolf Steiner, an inspired *seer* and teacher, taught his students to *see* with him. Steiner taught very precise methods by which students might awaken and develop their own dormant seeing-powers. Both men may be called physicians of the illness that now afflicts the social organism everywhere. What is a social organism? What is its world-wide illness?

### The East - West Split

A social organism is the polar opposite of a biological organism, where the cells are formed by forces impinging on them from the *periphery*. Contrarily, in a social organism, the character and interaction of individuals shapes the total organism from *within*. This is not a definition of the two types of organism but is merely meant to characterize the polarity of their respective dynamics. Because socialists do not pay attention to this polarity, all their theories on the relationship between society and the individual are upside-down.

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 is the most glaring symptom of the world's social illness, leading to the East-West split. This split is merely the external image of the cleavage all men now experience between their inner world, which is subject to the moral order, and their external world, which is subject to the physical order: between these we cannot make any rational connection. Since people cannot live a double life successfully, even in their thinking, the cleavage has gone underground, has become unconscious, and, in accordance with a psychological law, has grown more powerful in its effects—especially in the East, where the reality of the inner world is being denied by state doctrine. But this doctrine has its roots in Western scien-

tific philosophy. How is it that they *do* in the East what we merely teach in the West?

Western man is relatively much stronger in his will than in his thinking, while the opposite situation prevails in Eastern man. An understanding of this polarity between Western and Eastern man becomes easier if we remember that, for instance, in America every second man is supposedly a born mechanic, whereas in Russia every second man is reputedly a born chess player. This distribution of native talent makes the American typically a pragmatist, averse to dogma, while it makes the Russian typically dogmatic and highly logical.

Thus we teach our children that physical evolution, far from being the result of divine guidance, is the work of blind material forces, producing finally, and by accident, man as the surviving top dog. The Russians, accepting this, see nothing wrong in improving on the seeming planlessness. Would it not be much more humanitarian, they say, to rule individuals in society for their own good from a central spot? If there is no divine guidance, plan, or intention behind physical evolution, would it not be more logical if a state brain trust guided human destiny in accordance with sound earthly necessity? Is such an outlook, on the premises of Darwinism, not more logical than our western society? Of what use is personal liberty if it is not essential to a higher purpose?

A science that bases itself entirely on physical and terrestrial premises will produce a totalitarian state by way of inner necessity if it takes hold of a population with a highly intellectual bend of mind. In such a society there is no room for any wisdom beyond the physical in which man may be able to participate. Even so, it should be noted that the Russians, typically, did make a religion out of our western theories,



Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) was the educator, scientist and philosopher whose teaching initiated the world-wide Anthroposophical movement. Today his discoveries are well known and highly regarded for creative and significant new methods in education, art and agriculture, as well as for their metaphysical implications.

H. Jan Ritscher, Vice President of Volkswagon of America, in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, spoke at the New York Henry George School on February 19th. This article presents the main points in his address and indicates a Steiner-George similarity of outlook. Lancaster M. Greene, Vice-President of the Henry George School, presided.

and their society is in essence a perverted theocracy; not subservient to a god in heaven, but to its anti-image on earth — a power that works in matter and in the economy. Thus in the Russian and other Eastern revolutions a thought error of the West incarnated in the form of social monstrosities and now threatens our survival.

In 1916 Rudolf Steiner provided the leading men of his time with an answer that could have staved off the threat of totalitarianism in Russia if his proposals had been heeded. In 1919 he elaborated them in his book *The Three-Fold Commonwealth*. It demonstrates how the law of the triad in cosmos and man works in human society. This should not sound strange to Georgists since Henry George speaks of the "three world factors" — matter, energy and cosmic spirit — and calls them the basis of existence. Similarly, he refers to three factors — land, capital and labor — the cooperation of which produces all wealth.

Steiner's law of the triad demonstrates the existence in every field, of an active factor or force at one pole, a passive factor or force at the other, and a mediating (sometimes oscillating) factor between the two. In the cosmos, spirit is the active force and matter is the passive one, while energy

flows between. In society we have at one pole the human search for truth, beauty and the good — the domain of culture. It gives the inner sinews of performance, the possibility of achieving the useful, to the economic or business domain, its opposite; while in between is jural or political life, embodying the human desire for justice, mediating between the cultural and economic domains. The cultural world is that of the individual, the economic world that of the world-wide community of trade and industry, but the political world is by nature the world of groups. A "world government" at this time would be a super-tyranny, since our notion of justice, for instance, is quite different from that of the Russians, Arabs, Chinese, etc.

### The Principle of Equality

As Steiner pointed out, the French Revolution in 1789 culminated in the slogan, "liberty, equality, fraternity." It is obvious, however, that we cannot apply these principles with equal relevance in each one of the three social domains. The principle of equality serves as a perfect orientation for any action taken in the jural or political domain, for individuals are indeed equal before the law, or should be.

But what happens if we transplant the principle of equality into either the cultural or economic domain? In the first it would result in efforts to make people's attitudes alike. This is indeed what happens through our public schools, because we think of educating mistakenly as a community task. Actually, educating is a cultural effort that should be left to the freedom of individual choice and organization. Thus, education may well be financed by the local community or even the central government based on equality among all types of education, without a financial penalty on parents who choose other than state or community-operated schools for their children. But we



should not "equalize" the process of educating itself, as we do when we create a de-facto monopoly position for the public schools.

Transplanting the principle of equality into the business domain results in tax or other penalties on the efficiency of human labor in the attempt to equalize peoples' economic status. Even the Russians have found this socially unfruitful. That does not mean that the element of liberty is inadmissible in the economic domain, for the freedom of contract is a vital ingredient in any sound economy. But this freedom has, in the economic domain, a *regulative* rather than a constitutive, char-

acter. In the cultural domain, where the relationship between individuals is not a contractual but entirely an inner one, liberty is a *constitutive* element — without it there could not even be any inner or cultural relationship between individuals.

Again and again people argue the question, "what is the social good?" I do not believe it is possible to give any static answer to this because it involves the development of our inner vision. Yet we can hope that the social good may have a better chance to *happen* if our society corresponds in structure to the structure of the cosmos, to the Law of the Triad.

The Editor of *The Standard* is offering a cash prize of £5 for the clearest and simplest reply on what is wrong with the following:

"The rent of a piece of land is equal to the excess of its produce over that yielded by the same application of labor (including capital) to marginal land."

The competition will remain open until the first of July 1965, and if two or more answers share equal merits the prize will be given to each in full. Write to *The Standard*, Box 666, G.P.O., Sydney, Australia.

The annual banquet of the Henry George School will be held Wednesday, June 9th at the Sheraton Atlantic Hotel, New York. The theme will be the 40th anniversary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation. A panel of speakers will discuss various phases of this Georgist organization's work and goals. One speaker will be Walter Rybeck (see page 3). Miss V. G. Peterson, Executive Secretary of the RSF is presently touring Africa, and will visit the New Era College in Nairobi, where Kul B. Sharma has started an extension of the Henry George School.

Many friends are responding to the call of the west and have announced their intention of coming to the annual conference of the Henry George School, July 14-18 at Pacific Grove, California (100 miles south of San Francisco) in the Asilomar Hotel.

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