

## CHINA

The ancient land regulations of China were a crude form of Single Tax. This land system was well described by Mencius. There was free trade and at the borders of the country there were officers to examine and keep the enemy out. As Mencius says, "Formerly those officers were meant to keep out the plunderer but now they are the plunderers." This refers to the establishment of tariffs at a later day. There was a site tax and no tax on buildings or personal property. The land of the country was divided in the form of a square, making eight outer squares and one central square. Eight families held the outer squares and together worked the central square for the government tax. In the cities there was a similar division into nine squares, but the central square was for the temples, the upper central for the palace and government buildings, while the six squares at the sides were for residence and the lower central for the market and business sites. In the country the farms were of about 15 acres and in the city each family occupied about  $\frac{3}{4}$  acres of residence site. There was a fine or tax on a man who did not use his farm or site.

This ancient system was destroyed before the Christian era, and private property in land became general. As certain writers say, "The rich added field to field and the poor had not land enough to stand an awl upon." Many great Chinese writers bemoan the doing away of this ancient method. Some of them tried to restore it, but all failed, and China has to this day a powerful landlord or patrician class that will fight like the similar class in Rome fought against the Gracchi. Sun Yat Sen was a later Gracchus and he has failed absolutely.

About half of the farmers are tenants, as are also a very much larger percentage of towns people. Some of the farmers owning their farms have too small holdings to support the family. Usually the rent is a share of the produce, from three-tenths of

the crop to six-tenths. All the famines I have seen in China have fallen on the tenant farmers. Those owning land in any quantity can tide themselves through the half year of dearth. The tenant farmer is cursed by the parasite that drains his life blood. Terrible pestilence always follows the famine (typhus fever and relapsing fever), carried by lice and ticks. The famine is due to one parasite and the pestilence to another. In famine years the landlords and rice merchants have great stores of grain and keep a corner on it though the people may be starving. The famine area is about two miles from Nanking North. It is about the size of England. Famine relief has passed through an evolution. First the funds supplied by the Am. Red Cross, *New York Herald*, the London Mansion House Fund and others were doled out to the people, but the landlords and rice merchants raised the price of grain and largely reaped the benefit. In later famines grain was shipped into the district to break the market, and that successfully, but some missionaries refused to do famine relief work as free grain was pauperizing and degrading the poor sufferers. Then work was given on dykes and drains, but this was a benefit to the landlord and not to the tenant. The missionaries in a big meeting took steps to oust the old famine committee and put in a more efficient one that would look into the economic conditions.

The result was that the Am. Red Cross sent an engineer to survey the region. Money is to be borrowed, the water level lowered and this famine area saved. The expense is to be met by taxing the increased value of the land due to the improvements. Col. Siebert is one of the engineers to be employed. The war has temporarily stopped this good work; but I feel sure it will be carried out. Land subject to flooding is worth say \$10 an acre, land above the flood line is worth \$100. \$90 an acre will be a nice sum to make the improvements.

When Sun Yat Sen was President I had talks with him, and though he claimed to be a Socialist the land question was uppermost in his mind. Prof. Bailie and I visited him to talk over the idea of immediately using waste land for the poor, and he told us that any land that was no man's land could be used for the pur-

pose. He gave us letters to his Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Chang Chien, and later he, his Prime Minister Generalissimo and other leaders signed their names to a document endorsing the colonization scheme. Later I went to Peking and secured Yuen Shi Kai and his followers. Mr. Chang Chien is the President and it is a growing concern under the able promotion of Prof. Bailie. Prof. Bailie and I made the constitution that is endorsed by the government. The tenants are allotted land and at the end of three years pay rent that goes partly as the government tax and partly for community expenses. I look on this as a temporary expedient, for a heavy tax on land values would open the land and give the people a chance without any effort at colonization. I suggested this to Chang Chien but he said the proposal was to confiscate any man's land if he would not improve it. He does not understand the full force of the tax on land values. He is reading however. China is in about the condition of Persia when Alexander the Great changed the political situation. Prof. Bailie has about 80 families on the waste land and most of them are doing well and I believe paying back loans made to them in starting.

China has enormous mineral wealth and we advocate securing all the royalties for public uses. Unfortunately the foreign powers have secured concessions that will rob the Chinese of these natural rights. About 20 years ago I memorialized our viceroy telling him to look out for mining and railway concessions. I suggested to him that the old plan of robbing the weaker nations was to come in and swallow them whole, or to rob everything in sight, but that the modern more fully evolutionized plan was to imitate the spider in laying out nets and webs and when the fly fell in to absorb all the dainty portions of his anatomy. Of course, the semblance of a fly is left in the web. When the foreign powers are through stealing all the mining rights, railway franchises, China will be like the poor fly, nothing but the shell being left. Japan is doing more effectual plundering than the foreign powers did. She is an apt disciple in these lines. Now that the European powers are with tooth and claw rending one another for similar plunder the Japanese have things

all their own way. Poor China through her inefficiency is having a worse Alexander than the Persians. Alexander got the stored up wealth but did not get much of a hold on the wealth underground. The Chinese are an able people and their laborers are the best in the world, but under present prospects they will be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the despised foreign devil.

During the revolutionary time I wrote articles warning the rulers against accumulating debts and getting into the toils of the money-lending class. China is like a rich man who smokes his opium pipe, gambles and borrows money for his pleasures and takes a mortgage on his lands and property. By and by there comes the time of foreclosing, and all the land and property belong to the money-lender. China like Japan is becoming a deeply involved debtor nation. There is hope for Japan if she steals all the natural wealth of China and has the Chinese labor produce for her. She can shift her debts over onto China. If China had a real democratic party there would be some hope; but alas! the democrats when in power did a good deal of stealing. If they had put up a better thing when they had the chance the people would desire them back.

When the revolutionists were in power the Socialists developed very rapidly under the patronage of Sun Yat Sen. Mr. Kiang Kan Ruo was their leader and they used to hold great meetings in Nanking, Shanghai, Wuhu and other places. They were Socialists of the Platonic type, with free love, atheism and all the rest. They frequently asked me to speak at their big rallies, and while I emphatically opposed their atheism, free love and community-raised children my advocacy of Single Tax was pleasing to them. I tried to get them to give up their wild programme which would overturn everything the people hold dear and propagate the Single Tax as the natural development of the ancient land system of China; but they seemed to desire to break with the past and have an entirely new thing. They read my translations of Henry George and other Single Tax literature, and propagated Single Tax in their own papers. After the establishment of the dictatorship the Socialists were suppressed.

Nearly 20 years ago I translated *Progress and Poverty* and it was published by the Christian Literature Society. It is not a literal translation, as the illustrations could not be understood by the Chinese. Quotations were made from Chinese history and literature, and the illustrations are Chinese. Sun Yat Sen said that I should have made a literal translation and asked why I left out the illustrations from Robinson Crusoe. I said that the Chinese did not know the story of Crusoe. He asked why I did not tell the story. It is an adapted translation aiming to give the ideas of the book as if written by a Chinaman. Dr. Fryer, of California State University, congratulated me on so successfully clothing my books in Chinese dress. If the Chinese had followed the books published by the Christian Literature Society, including the best histories and biographies of the West, and not tried to follow the French Revolutionists and Socialists and Agnostics they would have had a greater chance of success. If they had studied my translation of Green's *History of the English People* and Motley's *Dutch Republic* rather than Rousseau they might have built up more than they destroyed.

I translated Spencer's *Social Statics* and Patrick Edw. Dove's *Theory of Human Progression*. For a few years Mr. Fels helped me to the sum of \$1500. With this I put out the third edition of *Progress and Poverty* and distributed it among the Chinese Senate and Assembly and leaders. I also published papers which I bound in pamphlet form. One series shows the History of Land Value Taxes for over 2000 years from the time of Mencius. Another has translations of articles showing the development of the Single Tax in recent times. I also translated and published *Protection or Free Trade*. It is a small edition, but I got very influential people to read it. I have written and continue to write Single Tax articles for dailies and magazines, both Chinese and English.

Some years ago Mr. Karl Schmidt boarded with me and I got him to read *Progress and Poverty*. He was a friend of Dr. Schrameier, first governor of Kiauchau, and got him to adopt it to prevent speculators destroying the colony. There is a tax of 6% on the value of the land and no tax on improvements; the experiment was a success. Dr. Schrameier has since devoted his life to propagating the movement in Germany.—W. E. M.

## HISTORICAL—ADDENDA

In other countries than those noted under preceding headings the Single Tax, through the teachings of its advocates, while failing to influence legislation, has nevertheless in many cases permeated public thought or secured distinguished converts. In Japan Charles E. Garst, while working as a missionary, became interested in the Single Tax through reading *Progress and Poverty*. He set to work doing what he could to influence public opinion. Many distinguished Japanese became favorably inclined to the doctrine through his teachings. On the day of his death the *Japan Daily Mail* came out with a strong article on the Single Tax. This paper at the time urged that Japan hasten to adopt the Single Tax "rather than the illogical, uneconomical and demoralizing system now unhappily pursued in Europe and America." It may be that the work of Charles E. Garst, devoted servant of Christianity and kindly, high-minded gentleman, for economic justice, has found somewhere disciples who will carry forward the doctrine of economic righteousness. But the way of freedom in a country where royalty is accounted divine is a tortuous and difficult one, and there is at present no visible sign in Japan that her feet are set in the right path.

In France there is no Single Tax movement deserving of the name. For some time a paper was printed in Paris by M. Georges Darien in advocacy of our principles, but this admirable little journal came to an end with the war that has engulfed so much of promise for the economic betterment of the nations.

One often hears of France as preeminently the land of happy farmers, of independent husbandmen, of the "morcellement," where every family is rich in its way, etc. But what are the facts? The giving of the land to the peasants at the time of the Revolution was a delusion. Today the peasants possess less than one-twelfth of the French soil. Out of 49,000,000 hectares they occupy less than 4,000,000 hectares. There is no country in the

world which has more to hope from the adoption of the Single Tax.

In Austria-Hungary, with land monopoly and the alienation of the common lands, the pinch of poverty has been severely felt. With perhaps the most fertile soil in Europe its average yield of crops per acre is rather less than that of any country of the same area. There has been a quiet agitation for land reform, in which the advocacy of the Single Tax has not been unheard. A translation of *Progress and Poverty* into Hungarian has been made by Robert Braun, now a lieutenant in the Austrian service, whose visit to America a few years ago is pleasantly remembered by many Single Taxers in New York and other cities.

Victoria, the one Australian division not treated in this work, is behind the others in the progress made, probably because Victoria prior to the Federation was a protectionist colony. But the Single Tax movement has an active Land Value League with headquarters at the London House, Melbourne. The League publishes a monthly paper, *Progress*, at the same address.

The first association in Victoria that tried to effect reforms in the system of land tenure and taxation was founded in 1872 by William Hutchinson Gresham, a ship chandler of Sanridge (now Port Melbourne), who based the principles of the League on the teachings of John Stuart Mill. The circular announcement of its formation declared that "The land is the inalienable property of the inhabitants of every country throughout all generations." It declared for "The gradual abolition of all indirect taxes whatsoever. The revenue of the State to be derived solely from the rental of the land." Mr. Gresham was drowned a few years later. Advocates of the taxation of land values should hold his name in high esteem. In 1877 a Land Tax Act was passed by the government of Mr. Berry, afterwards Sir Graham Berry, against the fiercest opposition. It continued in force until superceded by the Land Act of 1910. It applied, however, only to country lands of a certain area and value.

In 1889 the first Single Tax Society was organized. Among the original members was Mr. John Brunton who had been a member

of the League organized by Mr. Gresham in 1872. It had been formed in anticipation of the visit of Mr. George to Australia.

The movement in Victoria owes much to Max Hirsch,<sup>1</sup> whose *Democracy versus Socialism* is one of the best known, and certainly one of the most powerful and searching examinations of the tenets of socialism from the standpoint of the Single Tax. To John S. Higgs, of Echuca, is due the honor of forming the first Single Tax League in Victoria.

In 1910 the Watt (State) government passed a Land Tax Act imposing a tax of  $\frac{1}{2}$  penny in the £, from which the revenue derived in 1910 amounted to £210,640. In 1914 an Act was passed to give Municipal Councils the option to exempt improvements from local rating. This was to become operative on a day to be proclaimed by the Governor in Council upon his being satisfied that valuations of land made by assessors under the Act of 1910 were available for adoption. The government up to the present has not made them available.

In March, 1912, Melbourne was the convention seat of an important two days conference of Single Taxers of Australia. Among the delegates were E. J. Craigie, of Adelaide, and A. G. Huie, of Sydney.

Though Victoria may be considered one of the most backward States of the Commonwealth in a democratic sense, it has yet something to show for the labors of as devoted a band of Single Taxers as can be found anywhere.

Though Russia was the home of Count Leo Tolstoy, whose acceptance of the Henry George philosophy was proclaimed to the world, there is no movement which can properly be characterized as Single Tax in that country. A translation of *Progress and Poverty* has nevertheless appeared from the pen of Mr. Nicolaiff, and thousands of tracts containing translations of the writings of Henry George have been distributed among the peasants.

There is, however, a land reform movement which is not confined to the liberals and radicals, but is so strong that it has found lodgment even among the conservatives. A few years

<sup>1</sup>See appendix for Max Hirsch.



ago Count Heyden, the then leader of the conservative party in the Douma, announced himself as in agreement with the demand to expropriate the Crown, State, Church and private lands to satisfy the land hunger of the peasants.

In Natal Henry Ancketill has done much to keep the movement alive. For years he was the foremost advocate of our cause. He was in early life a member of the Royal Navy. He came to New York, worked on the *Standard*, and was one of the earliest members of the Anti-Poverty Society. He left this country for Natal, and was soon after elected as one of the members for Durban to the Legislative Assembly of Natal, which seat he resigned in 1905.—EDITOR.