

GEORGIST JOURNAL - AUTUMN 1978

THE BIGGEST OBSTACLE OF ALL

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From time to time in the Georgist Journal, friends try to explain why people don't pay more attention to the Georgist point of view. There are several reasons. One is that there are people who think they have been educated, and since they didn't hear about it in the course of their education there must be something wrong. There is another group who are just scared to think for themselves because they lack any self-assurance and they feel they will come out with the wrong conclusions. There are many others who are scared to differ with the majority. Another reason is, as we Christians believe, you cannot have morality in a fallen world based on greed and self-centeredness. Moral persons are in the minority.

But the biggest obstacle of all is simply the vested interests of those less-than-moral people who believe it is to their interest to prevent the Georgist doctrine from getting across. This includes very powerful people.

This is not a new problem. The Bible laid down definite land laws, the spirit of which is essentially Georgist. The idea was that the land belongs to all of the people and is to be apportioned equitably. The Biblical system was that if you had to alienate your land you could not do it permanently but it was returned in the year of Jubilee, so nobody could build up big estates.

The greedy people didn't like these laws and they looked over the border to Phoenicia where they had huge feudal estates and powerful feudal lords, and finally under Omri and Ahab they adopted Phoenician laws. That's when the ancient Hebrew prophets began protesting and the conflict between the prophets and the kings continued until the destruction of Israel, and then the destruction of Judah.

One of the basic issues all the way through was the ownership of land. The Baal system allowed the system of estates and the exploitation of tenants and all the rest of the vices that come with landlordism, whereas the system of Jehovah limited land holdings.

The fact is that land greed is one of the most vicious forms of greed there is. Vested interests will do anything to hold onto their privileges. They may appear polite up to a point, but if their privileges are threatened, they will take action.