

"Civilization is Cooperation"

EDITORIALIZING on a guaranteed annual income for the poor, James Reston in The New York Times of March 1st referred to George Bernard Shaw, who wrote:

"Such poverty as we have today in our great cities degrades the poor, and infects with its degradation the whole neighborhood in which they live . . . When poverty produces outbreaks of virulent infectious disease, as it always does sooner or later, the rich catch the disease and see their children die of it. When it produces crime and violence, the rich go in fear of both. When it produces bad manners and bad language, the children of the rich pick them up, no matter how carefully they are secluded . . . For though the rich end of the town can avoid living with the poor, it cannot avoid dying with the poor."

Shaw's attention was drawn to this crusade a generation ago after he had been inspired and influenced by Henry George's prophetic book, *Progress and Poverty*. George, however, after exposing the dangers of poverty, proposed a solution. He traced the cause to evils arising from unjust distribution of wealth and inequality in the ownership of land, and explained that poverty was endangered by progress itself. "This association of poverty with progress," he stated was "the great enigma"

of the times . . . "the central fact from which spring industrial, social and political difficulties, and with which statesmanship and philanthropy and education grapple in vain."

Observing that contrast between wealth and want appears as land increases in value, he warned that "monopolization by some of what nature has designed for all must always result in slavery. . . . Political liberty, when the equal right to land is denied, becomes, as population increases and invention goes on, merely the liberty to compete for employment at starvation wages." Labor cannot reap the benefits which advancing civilization brings because they are intercepted. . . . All the advantages gained by the march of progress go to the owners of land, and wages do not increase.

But Henry George was not without hope. He believed that "whatever is potent for evil may be made potent for good," and that "in loyalty to higher impulses men will give even life. . . . This force of forces . . . we may use for the strengthening and building up and ennobling of society, just as we now use physical forces that once seemed but powers of destruction. All we have to do is but to give it freedom and scope. . . . We are made for cooperation. Civilization is cooperation."

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N. Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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