

BELGIUM

The journal *L'Industriel*, weekly organ of Belgian Industry, had a page article in its issue of February 21 devoted to the principles and policy of Georgeism, with special reference to the interests of employers and employees. The article came from a correspondent in the Belgian Georgeist movement and is given editorial commendation. Following is a translation of some of the passages:

'The whole community contributes in creating the value of land. This value increases along with the increase in population and in the measure that technical methods of production and means of transport are expanded and extended. The land being private property, it is the owner who benefits not only through the rent of land but also by its price, in the case of sale, although he has in no way contributed to the increase of population or to the extension of technical progress and means of transport. The community thus finds itself deprived of its natural resources, resources which ought to supply the costs of administration and of public works, so that it is compelled to have recourse to the taxes of which we are aware.

'In that way private property in land is the means of appropriating the results of production in the form of rent, which is always on the increase, leaving to workers by brain or hand no more than the bare necessities of life, just as formerly the ownership of slaves took from them the fruits of their labours.

'The industrialist, he, too, suffers because he is not compensated for the maintenance and replacement of the productive means which he places at the disposal of the community. Is it not generally true, Henry George says, that interest (the return for the use of machines, etc.) is high where wages are high and low where wages are low? The interests of the employer and of the employee are thus identical. The employee, too much imbued with Marxian ideas, believes that the employer is an exploiter and is aggrieved if his demands for increased wages are not met. In reality employer and employee are one party in the conflict and the other party is private property in land. It is that which should be abolished, not however by making land the property of the State as in Russia, but simply by causing the rent of land to be returned to the community, the rent which belongs to it by right, enabling it at the same time to abolish existing taxes.

'Taxation of the work of man's hands decreases purchasing power and as a consequence the production and sales of goods decline. It is thus a cause of unemployment. The unemployed become a charge on the taxpayers and as purchasing power, sales and production all decline, so the number of the unemployed is increased.'

Illustrating the principles of land value taxation, the article took theatres as an example where payment for the seats varies according to the advantage of situation. The same should hold good, it is explained, with regard to communal life; that is to say, all land holders should pay a rent proportionate to the value of that area of land which they engross.

Thus briefly, and in simple terms, the case has been stated to an important section of Belgian business men and such publicity is a matter for congratulation. Our co-workers are bent upon reviving the movement after the years in which it has laboured under severe handicaps and especially by the tragic personal loss it suffered under the Nazi terror—Sam Meyer. We subjoin Madame de Wispelaere's just tribute to that martyr and great servant of the Henry George cause.

IN MEMORIAM

No news has reached us of Mr. Sam Meyer since he was deported to Germany, so that now, in spite of our hopes that he might return, we must accept the worst—that he met his death. We picture again this man of noble character who was held in highest esteem. Many of us will remember having met him at the International Conferences in Copenhagen, Edinburgh and London. He aimed to be present at any demonstration for the promotion of the cause which he upheld without faltering up to the day when the Nazis arrested him. In 1924, along with Albert Cauwel, he founded the journal *La Terre* and that was the beginning of the Georgeist movement in Belgium. In 1926 he went to live in Paris and in collaboration with Daudé-Bancel, he edited the journal with the goodly name *Terre et Liberté*, sparing neither time nor money to advance the Georgeist philosophy.

He published a new edition of the French translation of *Progress and Poverty*, also such books as *Le Grand Malaise* by Paul Lafitte,

La Rente Foncière by Précy and *La Réforme Foncière* written by Daudé-Bancel and himself. He was one of the Vice-Presidents of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade and was Vice-President of the Free Trade League of France. The loss of Sam Meyer will not only be deplored in France and Belgium where all were friends to him—so much he did in the cause of humanity—but Georgeists in all parts of the world will mourn this exceptional man.

During the years of the occupation little could be done to popularise the Georgeist movement and although it is the case that in France and Belgium the political parties have dominated the stage often to the disadvantage of idealist conceptions, Sam Meyer's work has left deep traces which will inspire new efforts sooner or later.

G. DE W.

MALTA

For the forthcoming elections in Malta the local Labour Party is launching a campaign in favour of Land Value Taxation. Requests for explanatory literature have come from Mr. J. Orlando Smith, who is leading the campaign, and the United Committee has been glad to help by sending a considerable selection of books, pamphlets, leaflets, etc. *The Bulletin* ('Independent-Non-Party') in its issue of March 5 carried an article by *Ypsilon*, *Msida* entitled 'One Way to Collect Revenues'. In the course of his article the writer declares:

'Malta is passing through one of her toughest periods of instability and material insecurity. The war has brought up momentous social questions and financial difficulties never so marked in all its historical course and it is like a riddle as to how these intricate problems may be solved by the present administrations or by any of its future responsible ministries.

'There is growing unrest and bitterness among the masses, whatever be the form of Government, and this tendency will continue to spread until an adjustment of our finances becomes possible and the growing needs and changing conditions of the people be tackled in some suitable way. Problems which require pounds, shillings and pence.

'Many are of the same opinion, but the fundamental problem is from where are we to obtain the resources with which we may satisfy the progress made? From taxation—will be the intellectual prompt reply. But the intelligence required for the solving of social problems is not a thing of the mere intellect. It must be animated with a sympathy for human sufferings. It must stretch out beyond self-interest, whether it be the self-interest of the few or of the many. It must seek justice.

'The wolves are again advocating increase in indirect taxation with which the slaves will further be enslaved. Others, pretending to be more lenient, want to introduce some kind of 'Income Tax' which, in the long run, will rebound on all wage earners to the detriment of the standard of living. . . .

'There is only one just way to collect the revenues needed for our organised community. The way preordained by the Creator, author of civilisation and of its needs. The Land Tax! The land hath He given to the children of men.'

'To permit any portion of this public property to go into private pockets, without a perfect equivalent being paid into the public treasury, is an injustice to that community which is increasing the value of the natural bounties created by God.

'What other more just measure can be adopted than appropriating a portion of the fruits of the increased value, produced by the community, for the benefit of the people's treasury?

'Do not procrastinate any further. Choose Land Tax and you will be fulfilling a service to your country and a sacred justice to its people.'

If by 'increased value' in the second last paragraph is meant the value of the land *itself* over and above the value attaching to buildings and improvements, the statement is good and the policy so far sound. Even so, that paragraph wants clarifying. It reads as if the community, creating the whole value of land, shall have only a portion (much or little or how much?), the landowners continuing to appropriate the rest. But in view of what goes before, that can hardly be meant.

Other articles advocating Land Value Taxation are those by 'Ypsilon' in the *Bulletin* of March 23 and by 'Ogigia' in the *Torch* of March 7-14.

3s. 6d. PROGRESS AND POVERTY. An Inquiry into the Causes of Industrial Depressions and of Increase of Want with Increase of Wealth—the Remedy. By Henry George. Complete edition.