

To Ireland and Britain

WHAT WAS THE REACTION OF BRITISH CONSERVATIVES TO THE land reform movement in Ireland? The London *Times* in 1880 apparently thought there was nothing to fear in the current Irish situation. On July 19, a leading article in the *Times* stated "there is hardly any social envy in the so-called Democratic classes of this country; there is no desire to attack the rich because they are rich, no sense of exclusion, and no keen political jealousies. Nor are the desires of the commonalty directed to any great and radical measures either of social or political change."

Not all British conservatives were as complacent as the *Times*. Editors of the High-Tory London Quarterly Review in April, 1881, published a circumstantial rejoinder, which read like an analysis of British political and social unrest by George himself.¹ According to the writer for the *Quarterly Review*, England was on the brink of social revolution; in "publications which are read and trusted by the people, [there is] a tone of rancour and vindictiveness which, if not absolutely new in this country is at any rate a more serious phenomenon than ever it was before." The evidence advanced to prove this statement indicated just how opportune the time was for George.

The *Quarterly Review* charged that Gladstone and Chamberlain were courting the votes of the working class. Gladstone had described the Liberal Party as the natural enemy of "wealth" and "rank," and of all "close" corporations, "organized monopoly," and "narrow and sectional interest." Gladstone, in his third Midlothian speech, in November, 1879, had described "compulsory expropriation" of land as "a thing which, for an adequate public

object, is itself admissible, and so far sound in principle." Chamberlain was likewise marked as favoring the enlargement of landlords' duties, the curtailment of their rights, and parliamentary interference in the management of large estates. More land was to be forced on the market; "the condition of things with regard to land caused a serious deduction from the prosperity of the country, and indirectly a great injury and wrong to the labourer employed on the soil."

These words had an ominous ring, though the *Quarterly Review* writer was yet to hear the more specific and forthright challenge of *Progress and Poverty*. To the *Quarterly Review*, they meant that "since property had no compassion, in its days of supremacy . . . it should receive none now," and that the "landed system" was to become the "whipping boy" of the Liberals. "The time is not far distant," warned the writer, "when 'landlordism' will be pronounced as great an offense in England as it is now in Ireland."

Other indications of the coming attack on the land system noted by the *Quarterly Review* were the Land Law Reform League and other organizations bitterly opposed to the "land grievance." The League manifesto—"the land, the people, and the coming struggle"—demanded that "all lands now uncultivated must be brought into cultivation on pain of disposition, with payment to the owner of twenty years' purchase . . . the land is then to become the property of the State." Charles Bradlaugh, president of the League, was quoted: "the enormous estates of the few landed proprietors must not only be prevented from growing larger, they must be broken up." The Farmers' Alliance and the Agricultural Labourers' Union were further evidence of the coming revolution; they were "spreading rapidly in all parts of the country," and were "becoming a considerable power."

The *Quarterly Review* article painted a vivid enough picture of the dangers facing landlordism in 1881, when George was preparing his crusade. The writer did not, however, include much which would have given his creation complete accuracy. His most glaring omission was the fact that, for some years, nature and American agricultural and mechanical development had been threatening the power of the British landlord and thus clearing the way for reformers like George. From 1875 to 1879 Britain's crops suffered from bad weather; about the same time, one of the most severe trade declines in the 19th century developed. In addition to wage reductions and labor trouble, this recession produced an agricultural de-

pression. European markets were flooded with cheap American wheat, made possible by the industrial expansion of the United States, and by speedier and cheaper ocean transport. In this crisis, the British government failed to protect agriculture, its most important industry; instead, as R. C. K. Ensor put it, "British agriculture . . . was thrown overboard in a storm like an unwanted cargo."² Clearly, the situation had causes more fundamental than the political expediency of the Liberal Party.

George looked forward to his first sight of Irish soil. His eagerness increased when he learned that Parnell had been arrested by the British government and was imprisoned in Kilmainham jail and that, in retaliation, the Land League had issued its "no rent" manifesto. The place for George, as correspondent for the *New York Irish World*, was at the storm center, not in Liverpool, where he had planned to land. Consequently, on October 25, 1881, he disembarked at Queenstown and hurried to Dublin. As the ship's tender carried him toward the dockside, a solicitous steamship agent recognized the name on his luggage and advised him to remove it if he wished to avoid trouble with the officials. After two weeks in Ireland, he was convinced that "this is the most damnable government that exists today outside Russia."³ In this frame of mind, he was to experience no difficulty in supplying the anti-British dispatches that the pro-Irish Patrick Ford expected.

The visit coincided with the height of Land League resistance to British domination. During this period, Parnell and his chief lieutenants were in prison because of Irish violence. On March 2, 1881, W. E. Forester's Coercion Bill had become law: the habeas corpus was suspended in Ireland, and the Irish executive received the absolute power of arbitrary and preventive arrest. Agrarian outrages increased sixty percent.⁴

Most of his dispatches to the *Irish World* reported only Irish events. He gave the Irish-American reader a detailed but partisan picture of the unrest in Ireland; he described the British generally as arbitrary and despotic in their treatment of the Irish, and the Irish as martyred heroes. Such dispatches did not endear him to the British reader. By his association with the *New York Irish World*, which was pro-Fenian, and by his Irish partisanship, he identified himself with what to many Englishmen was the party of lawlessness. Later, his identification with the Irish cause intensified the opposition to him in England.

He was unable, however, to maintain exclusively his role of re-

porter of Irish affairs; as a result, a third of his dispatches hinted at the campaigns he was later to conduct in England and Scotland. In such dispatches he wrote of British social conditions; of poverty, of the contrast between the rich and the poor, the heavy and oppressive hand of the landlord, and the plight of the Scottish crofters.

He charged that the population of the British Isles was underfed and underclothed. The story was the old one of enclosures. Agricultural districts had been depopulated to make way for cattle and deer. The poor were crowded together in large city slums, strangers to one another, spiritually isolated. The urban workmen he saw lived for the most part on bread and tea; meat was a rarity, and fruit was never served. In London he wrote of "workmen going to work, each with a little parcel containing a bit of bread which he takes into a coffee tavern and eats with the cup of sweetened hot water which he buys for a half-penny."⁵

In his belief, the condition of the poor was made more unbearable by the contrast between wealth and poverty. When he read in a London paper of a sweatshop worker who had been imprisoned for stealing jackets because she was hungry, he remembered "the miles and miles of houses in which no one but the very rich can live."⁶ When the House of Commons, with only forty-two adverse votes, granted a 25,000-pound annual pension to the Duke of Albany, his contempt for "the whole system of royal flummery" was withering. He wrote that "the only thing like a breath of fresh and pure democracy came from the Irish members, and Healy terrified the House by declaring the Duke of Albany ought to go to work for a living."⁷

For the benefit of his Irish-American readers, he spelled out the social implications of this grant to the Duke of Albany as follows: "But while there are large portions of the population that show in pinched features and stunted stature that they have been underfed, and while one reads in the papers of Coroners' juries in the heart of London returning verdicts of death by starvation, the Duke of Albany, the youngest princeling of her gracious majesty's brood, is voted a pension of 25,000 per annum to enable him to marry a German princelet. . . . what this royal prince is to get [is] wrung from the labouring classes by a system of indirect taxation which presses on them most hardly, and . . . for the mere trouble of being born of a royal mother is [granted a sum] a thousand times as much as many Englishmen are able to obtain by the hardest work for the support of themselves and their families."

Events during his year in Britain also made it possible for

George to seize upon the condition of the Scottish crofters as an instance of the oppressiveness of the English land monopoly, a theme he was later to exploit extensively. To embarrass the English further, the Land League had sent their agents across the Irish Sea to the north of Scotland to arouse the crofters. As George reported in a dispatch dated April 27, 1882, this action caused a clash between crofters and law enforcement officers on the Isle of Skye. Process servers had been sent from Glasgow to the Isle of Skye to serve writs of eviction for nonpayment of rent; crofters had met these process servers en masse and had forced them to burn their writs. Police were then rushed to the district and, after a pitched battle in which both men and women tried to drive the officers back with clubs and stones, the offending crofters were seized. This act touched off a popular demonstration. *The Scotsman* called the crofters' defiant stand "lawlessness," attributed it to the influence of Land Leaguers in and around Glasgow, and specifically accused Parnell of instructing crofters in the technique of rebellion.

George took this opportunity to describe to his American readers the crofters' grievances. He told of the enclosing and clearing of lands in the Highlands in the 18th century, when land formerly owned in common became the private property of certain lairds, was depopulated to make deer parks, and when the system of rack renting was established.

In the same dispatch he castigated Lord McDonald, whose "rapaciousness" was the alleged cause of the Skye uprising, characterizing him as an absentee landlord who squandered in foreign countries the income he extorted from his tenants, and, through his agent or factor, remained the absolute master of the crofters on his estate. He stated that Lord McDonald drew twelve thousand pounds a year from his Skye tenants, "on which he lives luxuriously in France." In addition, Lord McDonald's factor was also the agent of other absentee owners and therefore controlled four fifths of the island. The factor, ordinarily a steward or bailiff, was, in addition, bank agent, justice of the peace, solicitor, distributor of stamps, chairman or clerk for all the school boards in Skye, chairman of the parochial boards, captain of the volunteers, and parliamentary agent for the Skye Conservative Party. To cap all this, he was, incredibly, even a sheriff's officer under one of his own clerks, and could thus execute any order he had given. Such descriptions of landlords and their absolute power became part of George's agitation in Great Britain.

George cited evidence that although the crofter revolt might have

been inspired by the Land League, it was developing into a Scottish issue. Scotsmen of education and professional standing were beginning to voice extremely radical opinions on the land question, such as Commissioner Sutherland's "the land of Scotland does not belong to the nobles and lairds, it belongs to the people"; or the question asked by the Reverend David Macrae, of Dundee: "Who gave the landlords the right to take the soil and degrade those who have been upon it for generations? People speak about the rights of property; property has no rights. It is not property but men who have rights."⁸

George's estimate of British social conditions fitted in with his role of interpreting Land League activities to American readers. An attack on conditions in England was a blow struck for Parnell's cause. George went further than this, however, and became a critic of the Land League itself.

In *The Irish Land Question* he had urged the Irish Nationalists to abandon the idea of peasant proprietorship and to adopt the more radical program of restoring the land to the people. For the first seven months of his visit to Ireland, George had endorsed the League's activities; the "no rent" manifesto had given the cause a mass appeal. He had hoped that the rank and file would soon be converted to State control of all land, through taxation. But this conversion was not to come about. Two events in rapid succession deflected the movement from radical toward conservative nationalism. One was the Kilmainham Pact, May 2, 1882, whereby Parnell struck a bargain with Gladstone's government. The second was the Phoenix Park murders, four days later, which put an end to the League as a revolutionary organization.⁹

George now felt it proper to criticize the policy of the League and to speak out for his own remedy. The immediate occasion for his declaration of his principles of land nationalization was a speech by Michael Davitt in Liverpool on June 6, in which, contrary to Parnell's wishes, Davitt came out in support of George's program. Davitt had always been sympathetic with land nationalization as a remedy for Irish problems,¹⁰ and it was this feeling which had attracted him to George in the first place. Like George, Davitt disapproved of the Kilmainham Pact.¹¹

Davitt's Liverpool declaration was unequivocal; he contended that "the nationalization of the land under the existing political relationship of the two countries would be no more of an abandonment of national right or national honour than is involved in any transaction of the everyday political life of our country, while I

claim for such a settlement more solid special advantages . . . than can be obtained under an improvement of the existing system or by the substitution of a peasant proprietary. (Loud cheers.)”¹² In this summary fashion, Davitt defied Parnell, split the ranks of the League, and turned the sympathy of thousands of Irish, many of them living in England, to George’s ideas. Davitt also provided George with a perfect opportunity to express his own views in print.

In his *Irish World* dispatches dated June 13, July 23, July 31, August 7, and August 14, 1882, George expounded land nationalization in detail. He claimed that Davitt’s program had been received with enthusiasm in Ireland, and that this showed how far the people were in advance of their leader, Parnell. Gladstone’s proposed land act would merely substitute many landlords for the present few, but land nationalization would forever destroy the centralized despotism exercised by the English. Even as a matter of policy, Davitt’s program would work wonders, he said; by advocating it, the Irish party would strengthen its chances of securing Home Rule. He began his last dispatch on this theme with the assertion: “It seems to me that there is every reason for making land nationalization the avowed programme of the League.”¹³

Yet even as he strove to unite the Irish people behind land nationalization, he must have known that he could not expect support from the Land League. On August 31 he stated that the popular cause in Ireland was divided by uncertainty and dissatisfaction, that agitation for a radical reform in Ireland was at an end, and that henceforth all eyes must be turned Londonward. When he wrote this, he had no reason to believe that his ardent desire to preach his revolutionary land crusade in England would be gratified immediately. Still less did he foresee that in less than a month his name and his program would achieve international recognition.

George’s sudden “fame” in England later that year resulted largely from his arrests in Ireland. His detention was, as the *London Daily News* later declared, “a mere blunder of overzealous vigilance,”¹⁴ but it set in motion a train of events which gave him public recognition. So far as the English newspapers were concerned, up to September, 1882, the month after his arrest, George might not have existed. By that date he had written all his dispatches to the *Irish World* and had made six speeches: two in Dublin, two in Glasgow, and one each in Manchester and Liverpool. *Progress and Poverty* and *The Irish Land Question* were being circulated in cheap editions, but one searches the columns of

London papers in vain up to that time for evidence that George had made even a ripple on the surface of public opinion. The *Manchester Guardian*, dealing with the Irish meeting in Manchester on May 21, devoted three columns to Davitt's speech and dismissed George in one sentence: "Mr. George then delivered his address."¹⁵ Only after the beginning of September was interest awakened. The *Times* summed up the transformation when it declared that George had been "labouring for some time but with little success, to instill certain ideas into the minds of the English-reading public. Now, however, he has attracted attention both among our countrymen and his own, and both are curious to know more about himself [*sic*] and his writings."¹⁶ George's brief stay in jail in Ireland had gained him notice.

Arrests in Ireland had been frequent and arbitrary, the law enforcement officers being permitted under the Prevention of Crimes Act to detain anyone who might be described as a suspicious character. George probably qualified as a suspicious character because he was a reporter for the *Irish World*. He had been warned both by Helen Taylor, the stepdaughter of John Stuart Mill, and by Joseph Chamberlain, that he was in danger of arrest in Ireland.¹⁷ Early in August he had taken a trip through Galway to observe the conditions of the peasants. The arrests followed.

On August 10, one London paper only, the *Daily Telegraph*, informed its readers that "Mr. Henry George, of the U.S.A. and Mr. James Leigh Joynes, an Eton master" had been arrested at Loughrea under the Prevention of Crimes Act, and had been taken to the police barracks; there their luggage had been searched and their papers read. The *Telegraph* also reported the subinspector of police as claiming that instructions had been telegraphed to him to detain these "suspicious characters" on arrival. After three hours Joynes and George were released. The day after the Loughrea incident George was arrested at Athenry.¹⁸ The search of his possessions for treasonable documents revealed two pieces of evidence: a pamphlet entitled *The Irish Land Question* and a notebook, which contained, among other things, a list of names. After some of these names, the police found the initials F. C., which they interpreted to mean "Fenian Centre." In the evening, George was brought before a magistrate and confronted with the evidence. He first demanded that the case be dismissed as frivolous and foolish; when this request was refused, he consented to make a detailed statement. He was, he said, a correspondent for an American paper and the notebook contained material for his next dispatch. The list

contained the names of knowledgeable persons he had been advised to visit for information about Irish affairs, and the initials were not *F. C.* but *T. C.*, standing for Town Councillor. Finally, he said that his pamphlet could not be fairly judged by the suspicious passages abstracted by the police, and he presented copies of *The Irish Land Question* to all those present. The magistrate, satisfied by his defense, dismissed the case.

When the news reached England there was a stir among certain members of the House of Commons. Joseph Cowen asked the Chief Secretary for Ireland, "whether it is a fact that Mr. Henry George, the distinguished American writer, has been arrested under the recent Coercion Act?"¹⁹ As usual, the Irish members seized on the incident as an opportunity to taunt the government. One member asked, "In view of this danger to tourists in Ireland would the right hon. gentleman consider the propriety of the Irish government issuing passports for the use of inoffensive foreigners in that country?"²⁰ Another reminded the Irish Secretary that George had been "considered by two Cabinet Ministers [Bright and Chamberlain] to be a person of so much importance that they invited him to dine with them at the Reform Club . . . ?"

All this was welcome attention for George. His arrests proved what he had always contended: that the British were pursuing a stupid and arbitrary policy in Ireland. To be mentioned in the House of Commons as a chief actor in a constabulary blunder which embarrassed the Irish Secretary was an unexpected piece of luck. Yet the full impact of this episode waited, it seemed, on the initiative of the Eton Master, Joynes, who had accompanied George. What happened to him as a consequence of this association illustrates the attraction of George's crusade for young, idealistic gentlemen, and the horror with which many Englishmen viewed George's ideas.

Joynes was one of the few Englishmen who had read *Progress and Poverty* on its publication. When he had learned of George's visit to Ireland, he had determined to meet him. For this purpose he had asked for a letter of introduction from George's English publisher. The request was granted because Joynes had another project, in which he had interested Kegan Paul—a tour of Ireland to report conditions there. Most important of all, for George's future reputation, Joynes had arranged with the *Times* to write several special articles on his experiences in Ireland.

Joynes traveled to Dublin. There he met George and made the rounds of Land League centers with him. The week he spent with

George, which ended with the arrests, provided the controversial matter of his report. He published his first—and last—dispatch in the *Times* on September 4, 1882, under the title “A Political Tour of Ireland.” Its publication was important because, as a result, George’s arrest was aired in the columns of an influential British newspaper.

Joynes’s dispatch described his sojourn in Dublin and George’s arrest at Loughrea. It presented an almost completely favorable picture of the League cause; it described with feeling the misery of the Irish peasants, and it gave the impression that most of the landlords, far from desiring to see justice done, were eager only to preserve as much as possible of their unearned increment from the land. Joynes also reported some of the views of “my friend G—” in a way which indicated his sympathy with them, such as “my friend G—said with some contempt that people called Gladstone a Radical now, so that the word had very little significance.”

This was too much for the *Times*. Not only did the editors refuse to publish subsequent dispatches, but an editorial denouncing Joynes appeared on the same day, as the dispatch. Although, said the editorial, the dispatch was “interesting and discursive,” its author had been “indoctrinated” by “an American Journalist, staying in Ireland as correspondent of an American paper of extreme views,” with the prejudices of the Land Leaguers. Law enforcement regulations in Ireland, in particular the Prevention of Crimes Act, deserved praise, not criticism, and “our readers will probably be of the opinion that they got off very easily from a trouble of their own creating. One of them may not unfairly be described as a suspicious character. The other had taken great pains to make himself resemble one.”

Conservative papers concurred in the rebuke, indicating early in George’s crusade their attitude toward any criticism of the status quo. Joynes himself reported in the preface to his *The Adventures of a Tourist in Ireland* that he had been called “a conscientious prig,” a “shallow globe-trotter,” and a person with “second-hand views.” The *St. James Gazette* thought that the “whole account of this pretentiously named ‘political tour’, from the hour of the traveler’s arrival in Dublin to that doubtless proud moment when he was arrested at Loughrea, is a perfect study in the natural history of a prig.”²¹

George was scheduled to make his first London address on September 5, but he interrupted his preparations to write a letter to the *Times* in defense of Joynes.²² Admitting that he might well

have been, as charged, a "suspicious character," he pointed out in detail the tyranny exercised by the military in Ireland over the people, and cited instances of arbitrary and tyrannical enforcement of laws. He concluded, in a vein which he was to make known throughout England in a year or two: "It does not seem to me that any fair-minded Englishmen can visit Ireland, mix with the people, and see how laws passed by an English Parliament are administered there, and how English power is used to bolster up a reckless and stupid class tyranny, without feeling both indignation and shame."

On the same day, the *Times* replied in an editorial which was the first serious public recognition of the menace of George's views to entrenched British institutions. Readers were warned not to conclude, from the comic-opera details of George's arrest, that he was, therefore, a figure of fun. On the contrary, "respectful attention" should be given to his views, for "he is known to represent a party and a political force," in particular Michael Davitt, his disciple, and Davitt's followers in Ireland and England. In thus alerting the British public to the danger represented by George, the *Times* justified, in effect, George's arrest in Ireland; those who hold subversive social and economic views must expect to be restrained by the police in times of emergency; they must submit to "vexatious detention, a disarrangement of their plans, the fingering of their shirts, and the reading of their private papers."

This exchange of views in the *Times* did not bring to an end the notoriety which came to George as a result of his arrest. On August 26, George had forwarded to the President of the United States, Chester A. Arthur, details of the affair, and had made the additional allegation that mail addressed to him from the United States had been opened, read, and burned by the Irish postal authorities. When news of his protest leaked out to the British press, the *Times* editorialized stuffily that "he seems to have persuaded himself that there was nothing in the condition of Ireland to justify the extraordinary measures of precaution and restraints on liberty. This may be his opinion, which he is at liberty to illustrate from his personal experience on American platforms when he returns to his native land; but it is not the opinion of the Imperial Parliament."²³

Leading Irish papers resented George's accusation, in his letter to President Arthur, that in Ireland an American was regarded as "peculiarly a subject for suspicion and annoyance." Hundreds of Americans, they pointed out, visited Ireland yearly without let or hindrance; the danger of restraint existed only for Americans like

George who "obtrude advice in our political problems which we really understand ourselves so much better than strangers can do, that not unnaturally we desire to be left to manage our own affairs, which is the essence of freedom."²⁴ Nevertheless, diplomatic action was taken, and in October the United States Department of State conveyed to George "the regret of Her Majesty's Government that this incident should have occurred."²⁵

George's arrest and the discussions which grew out of it placed him before the public as a vaguely menacing figure who represented violence and disorder. Only the *Times* had spoken of him with cautious respect as one whose views would have to be considered.

The next event in George's rise to fame was his first London speech in September, 1882. He had had little opportunity during this first visit to set forth his program to British audiences, and it is possible that he was not as yet aware of the potentialities of his impact. In six public appearances in 1881-82, he was handicapped, in his effort to state his own views, by the character of the sponsoring organizations.²⁶ He was presented as a Land Leaguer, a Social Democrat, and a land nationalizer, never as Henry George, the land reformer. What he had to say about social and economic problems and remedies was colored by the views of the organizations that supported him.

Therefore, it was natural that his presentation of his land policy had been both incomplete and to some extent misleading for his audiences. To a Dublin audience in November, 1881, George had not outlined any specific program for land reform.²⁷ The gist of his comments concerning a remedy for conditions in Great Britain was that the land belonged to the people by natural right, and that *any* measure short of returning the land to the people, including the Parnell scheme of peasant proprietorship, was a mere palliative. In June, 1882, George again spoke in Dublin, and this time he was more explicit than in November. "Land" he defined not only as agricultural land, but *all* land. "It meant the property in the land, in which every single one of the people had an equal share and right." He said he thought the true solution to the land question was to "give every man that which he had fairly earned . . . It was merely necessary to take those profits coming from the land for the benefit of the whole people, which were not due to the exertions of the labourer or the use of the capital required."²⁸

These statements were certainly subversive in their references

to conditions of land tenure, but they set forth no clear program. This lack of specific clarity was found also in his speech at Glasgow in March, 1882, under Socialist auspices, at a meeting to establish a Scottish branch of the Social Democratic Federation. On this occasion he limited himself to an endorsement of the points set forth in the Federation's prospectus.²⁹

George's most important public appearance was in London on September 5, at a meeting staged by the Land Nationalization Society. The audience may be forgiven for thinking that George was nothing more or less than a land nationalizer, an imputation which single taxers later warmly denied. He was introduced as "our very able coadjutor in the main question," and the chairman, Alfred Russel Wallace, said that George favored "the abolition of private property in land."³⁰ George did not repudiate the first statement, and the second had, of course, been set forth in *Progress and Poverty*.

In his speech he made no mention of taxation as a means of returning the land to the people. The closest he came to doing so was to tell them to "make the land free, and they would relieve industry of all taxation, obtain really free trade, and make great progress toward equality and true socialism."³¹ A semanticist would have no difficulty in detecting the blurred meaning of some of these words, and no Socialist could call George a comrade on the strength of such a statement. But to non-Socialists the distinction was not worth making.

George did not make a strenuous attempt to dissociate his views from those of the Land Nationalization Society; he merely endorsed their program with the added proviso of no compensation to present owners. He said, ". . . this fight for the nationalization of the land was a world-wide fight . . . He did not mean to say, however, that when they had accomplished nationalization of the land—when they had secured to every human being . . . his full and equal right to the land . . . they would have accomplished everything . . ."

Instead of ignoring George, the usual and the most effective method of discouraging dissident views, the *Times* took his speech seriously and made a reply. Its argument showed how little conservative opinion was aware of the state of the nation in 1882. Socialism was an illogical doctrine; George was a Socialist; therefore his views were illogical. The writer threw up his hands in mock despair: "We hardly know where to begin in pointing out the fallacies in a train of reasoning which starts from the assumption

that all men are created equal and ends with the conclusion that private property in land is a monopoly in some sense which distinguishes it from private property of other kinds. The majority of people, says Mr. George, never form a clear idea of what land is, and it is certainly difficult to resist the conclusion that both Mr. George and his audience belong to this majority." ³²

Why, holding this opinion of George's views, did the *Times* continue the interest it was creating in him by devoting, just eight days later, three and one-half columns to a review of *Progress and Poverty* and *The Irish Land Question*? The answer may be found in another *Times* editorial, already referred to in connection with his arrest, in which it had declared that "respectful attention" should be given to his views because through his book he was a prominent representative of social and political revolution at that time. The *Times* admitted that *Progress and Poverty* was being "widely read and still more widely discussed." ³³ It justified this conclusion by a long review, which had the effect of elevating George and his book to the level of serious consideration.

Most of the review was a careful and accurate summary of *The Irish Land Question* and *Progress and Poverty*, much of it in George's own words. The reviewer agreed with George that the land problem and the social problem which underlay it were international. He praised *Progress and Poverty* for its fearless attack on social problems. He agreed with George's analysis of social conditions in civilized countries and with his refutation of the theories of Malthus, but he balked at the remedy proposed. It was as impractical as the proposals of Sir Thomas More and Auguste Comte, as those of Brook Farm, and of the Oneida Community; it was Utopian. Imperfection was the inevitable consequence of original sin, and "Mr. George's ideal will long be found in his book only."

Yet, wrote the reviewer, many reasons exist as to why *Progress and Poverty* ought to be read: "It contains many shrewd suggestions and some criticism of economic doctrines which future writers on political economy must either refute or accept. Mr. George's reading has evidently been wide; he has reflected deeply; he is an acute reasoner, and he is the master of an excellent style. The readers of his book may dissent from his statements and conclusions without regretting the time they have spent over it, and if conversant with economic doctrines and interested in the problems of social science, they will find in its pages much to ponder with care and much that is highly suggestive."

Before George sailed for New York on October 4, there were intimations that he was not to be, like other touring savants, a mere nine-days' wonder. The *St. James Gazette* considered him important enough to compare him with the redoubtable William Cobbett, the "craziest" writer of his day, whose views bore the "closest possible resemblance to those of Mr. George and the Land League." By way of warning George of his own fate, the *Gazette* closed its attack with: "Let it be recollected that Cobbett, like some other people, denied that there was any injustice in confiscating private rights if the nation so wished it; that he too failed to see that destroying one form of property would have any effect on the others; that he laughed at political economy and despised the sanctity of contract; and that he had a patent plan for ensuring progress and abolishing poverty; but that he is now only remembered as a half-mad demagogue who wrote idiomatic English."³⁴

On the positive side, recognition came in a letter from Professor Max Müller of Oxford University.³⁵ George had sent him earlier a copy of *Progress and Poverty*; Professor Müller now wrote—too late, as it turned out—to invite George to visit him at Oxford. He told how Bonamy Price, the political economist, had borrowed his copy of the book to write an unfavorable critique on George, but that Price had failed to convince "me that your views are entirely Utopian."

Two other indications of the rise of George's reputation concerned land nationalization. Late in September, 1882, in a circular advertising a meeting in Hackney on "The Land Question," the Land Nationalization Society included the following recommendation: "Working men should read the masterly works, 'Progress and Poverty', 6d., and 'The Irish Land Question', 3d., by Henry George, in which land is clearly shown to be the property of the whole people, and not of a few so-called land owners." At the same time J. C. Durant, of Clement's Inn Passage, London, was advertising his cheap editions of *Progress and Poverty* and *The Irish Land Question* as textbooks in land nationalization: "As the Land Nationalization movement is yet in its infancy, many of its leading advocates deem that at present it cannot be better promoted than by the dissemination of these clear and brilliant works."

When George sailed for home, he was no longer merely the correspondent for an American newspaper. The publicity occasioned by his arrest, the *Times* review of *Progress and Poverty*,

and the beginning of his association with reform organizations like the Social Democrats and Wallace's Land Nationalization Society had placed both George and his book at the forefront of public interest. It was of great importance to his future influence in Great Britain that his name was associated in the public mind with fundamentally radical doctrines such as nationalization and Socialism, and that he should be attacked by the conservative press as an "apostle of plunder." This linking of his name with social and economic reform gave assurance that he would be sympathetically received by the working class, then beginning to move in the direction of trades unionism and Socialism.

When he left for home, George had no idea that he would return to England in less than a year and a half. His visit to Ireland and subsequent events had established his reputation in Britain.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

1. "The Revolutionary Party," London *Quarterly Review*, April, 1881, pp. 149-65.
2. R. C. K. Ensor, *England: 1870-1914*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936, p. 115.
3. Henry George, Jr., *The Life of Henry George*. New York: The Schalkenbach Foundation, 1943, p. 360.
4. Ensor, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
5. July 6, 1882. Dates for George's articles in the *Irish World* refer to the date on which the dispatch was sent. For the articles, see the Henry George Collection in the New York Public Library.
6. April 10, 1882.
7. *Ibid.*
8. May 18, 1882.
9. Lord Cavendish, chief secretary of Ireland, and Mr. Burke, undersecretary, were murdered while strolling in Phoenix Park, Dublin, by Irish assassins who belonged to a small murder club known as the "Invincibles."
10. F. Sheehy Skeffington, *Michael Davitt: Revolutionary, Agitator, and Labour Leader*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1908, p. 74.
11. Michael Davitt, *The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland*. London: Harper and Brothers, 1904, p. 362.
12. "Mr. Davitt at Liverpool," *London Times*, June 7, 1882.
13. August 14, 1882.
14. January 10, 1884.
15. "Irish Meeting in Free Trade Hall," May 22, 1882.
16. "Progress and Poverty," September 14, 1882.
17. Henry George, Jr., *op. cit.*, pp. 365 and 371.
18. James Leigh Joynes, *The Adventures of a Tourist in Ireland*. London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Company, 1882. This book gives an eyewitness account of what occurred.
19. Hansard, *Parliamentary Debates*, CCLXXIII, p. 1353.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 1383.
21. September 4, 1882.
22. "A Political Tour of Ireland," September 26, 1882.
23. October 2, 1882.
24. "*Irish Times*," October 3, 1882.
25. Henry George Collection, New York Public Library.
26. The two organizations which sponsored George's earliest platform appearances in Britain were A. R. Wallace's Land Nationalization Society and Henry M. Hyndman's Democratic Federation, later called the Social Democratic Federation. Both groups were agitating for land nationalization.
27. "Land and Labour," *Irish Times*, November 15, 1881.
28. "Mr. Henry George's Lecture," *Irish Times*, June 12, 1882.
29. "Democratic Federation," *Glasgow Herald*, March 21, 1882.
30. "The Nationalization of the Land," *London Times*, September 6, 1882.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *London Times* editorial, September 6, 1882.
33. *Ibid.*
34. "The Sponge," September 27, 1882.
35. Henry George Collection, *op cit.*, October 3, 1882.