



I am impelled to express my concern arising from the willingness of dedicated and ardent Georgists to disclaim, apologize and even to disown particular principles enunciated by Henry George — and all with the avowed intent to popularize his philosophy.

At the risk of impaling myself on the swords of the academic elite, I must call attention to two incidents which have arisen in the recent past.

Dr. Steven Cord, in *Henry George — Realist or Dreamer?* in several places agrees with some critics that Henry George was in error when he declared that rent consumes an ever increasing portion of the wealth produced. He cited the reports of statistical investigations. I respect statistics. But I do so guardedly, knowing how they can be distorted. In any event, the statistics are based on the market values of improvements and land.

One must recognize that the values of parcels of land are notoriously underestimated—as tax rates on real estate (land and improvements) are increased the market values of the improvements are increased, while the market values of the land parcels are decreased. Because taxes can be shifted for improvements but not for land, vast amounts of vacant land are overlooked by the tax assessors.

Should such obviously unreliable statistics of land values be accepted for the purpose of refuting Henry George? I would be willing to acknowledge a deficiency in his philosophy, but only on unassailable proof. I should think this is sound policy.

Mrs. Josephine Hansen, at the Chicago conference and as reported in the

August HGN, stressed the thesis (recently repeated by Dr. Galbraith in *The New Industrial State*) that the monopoly of concentrated wealth (money) has a stranglehold on the economy—as though this idea was a refutation of Henry George's claim that land monopoly is the greatest monopoly and the elimination of this monopoly would remedy all the others. I must remind Mrs. Hansen that Henry George recognized the fact that the basic monopoly on which all others rest, is the land monopoly—the private collection of rent. George did not deny the existence of other monopolies.

Several speakers at the same conference advocated soft pedalling the phrase "single tax" and avoiding mention of Henry George's name, on the grounds that these words represent lost causes and block acceptance or consideration of the proposed reform. I am not concerned about image. I am concerned about principle. Henry George was honest and forthright. I am certain that he would not worry about image, nor would he compromise with his principles or use subterfuge to gain his ends.

I have no quarrel with anyone, regardless of his basic philosophy or belief, who is enunciating his principles or philosophy, but I do quarrel with those who palm off their own views as the philosophy of George. I maintain that consciously doing so or attempting to do so, is a misrepresentation of Henry George's ethical philosophy.

I am aware that I leave myself open to the criticism that I might not be enunciating Henry George's philosophy—that others might be correct and I wrong. I shall concede that. But I can honestly say that I speak from conviction and from my understanding of his philosophy gleaned from his writings. (Fire away, you who think the shoe fits!)

EMANUEL CHOPER
Albany, New York

My fellow Georgist, Emanuel Choper, is right to question the validity of those particular statistics. In fact, in my book I devote two pages to Robert Clancy's able refutation of them (*Henry George—Realistic or Dreamer?* pp. 191-193).

But Mr. Choper's argument that rent consumes an ever-increasing portion of wealth produced would carry weight if (a) he could cite reliable statistics to support his case, and (b) if he could explain away the very reliable statistics which show a steady increase over the years in real wages, an increase which exceeds even the healthy rise in gross national product (source: see Stat. Abstract of U.S., 1964, p. 337, also N.I.C.B. Road Map #1404, 11-23-62).

Why should we make extravagant claims to support our case when we have so many perfectly sound arguments to rely on?

But when all is said and done, Manny Choper and I stand in complete agreement on the quintessential matter of advocating the collection of the full land rent in taxation. That's what really counts.

STEVEN CORD
Indiana, Penna.

I have been subscribing to and reading your monthly magazine with great interest ever since I took *Fundamental Economics* locally. I do find it well written and informative, but since I am far from well-informed on matters economic, I must confess that often the articles are over my head. I am writing this because I imagine that if I feel this way, perhaps some other of your readers do also. I would expect that not all of them are economic experts or hundred-year Georgists. I suggest adding an article or two for us "laymen" to follow.

1) Could you publish interviews with Georgist and non-Georgist econo-

mists giving their solutions side-by-side to the burning issues of the day?

2) Could you publish a few questions from non-believers in order to logically refute them? My big objection to the way the course was given was that George's principles were presented as Revelations From Above. No other economic principles or theories were discussed, refuted, or accepted. Never having had the usual survey course in college economics, I had no basis for judging the validity of George's theories. Do you suppose others might also feel this way?

3) Could you gear a few articles to the beginners at a lower level (include a few basic explanations, that is)?

4) Could you explain in some detail the relationship between Georgist philosophy and today's political system, parties, and practical politics? It's a bit muddy to me.

5) How would LVT affect today's conservation efforts? Can we tax land heavily and expect it to remain untouched for future generations? Wouldn't LVT force more farmers off the land? Would elderly homeowners living on valuable mid-town land have to give up their homes if LVT were instituted? Would LVT force even more unkempt building (more factories next to homes, more gas stations, etc.) than presently litters up the land around our towns? How would the establishment of LVT interact with oil depletion allowances and tax incentives to industry?

As you may see by the above questions and suggestions, some of the articles I have read in your magazine have been too abstract and have not, for me at least, answered these concrete questions.

CLAIRE MEIROWITZ
Massapequa Park, N.Y.

Vacant land speculators and landowners love to hide behind corporate

names. It's their business to impose on land owners and they have a cherished belief that they are legally untouchable. They believe that the land value is more important than the building located on it. The owner of vacant land believes that the owner of built-on land should pay a higher tax to subsidize him. Where is the equality here when there is so much shouting against the inequality of our capitalistic system? It is generally true that all are not equal in cunning, but why overdo it?

It may be some "sham" on the part of the landowner. We are all being numbered and are moving toward "oneness" through computerization, mass movement and elimination of individual identity. Why the inequality of land values?

JOHN J. HICKS
Elmhurst, N.Y.

In his report on whale money (June HGN p. 7) Mr. LeFevre writes: "If a private citizen makes a coin that pur-

ports to be a genuine U.S. coin, that is counterfeiting." True, for a U.S. coin means that the issuing bank pays the debt. A counterfeiting man is not prepared to pay the debt.

In the case of whale money, Mr. Howard, who issued the coins, is prepared to pay the debt and to exchange his coins for souvenirs from his shop or for genuine U.S. dollars. One's only worry would be whether he will issue more coins than he can cover. So the government should not forbid issuance of the coins—its real task is to see that Mr. Howard doesn't issue coins beyond the tangible value of his properties.

If people cease to have confidence in his coins they will return them for exchange in U.S. money. Howard's coins are a little more cumbersome than an IOU or a check, but no less legal. And if Mr. Howard fails to redeem them the people will ask for help from the government.

J. J. POT
Slikkerveer, Holland

REDIRECTING MENTAL ENERGY TOWARD PEACE

THERE have been "wars and rumors of wars" for five thousand years or more because the conditions which cause wars have been in existence all that time. Henry George, in *Progress and Poverty* (Book X), explains that depressions and wars are two sides of the same coin. Land monopoly, land speculation and special privileges; which locally and nationally cause depressions, poverty and want; together with inequality and lack of association on an international level; are the basic and direct causes of continuous aggression and warfare.

If nations would observe the "law of human progress," reconcile their differences and "free their mental

power for expenditure in improvement," they could reap benefits instead of dissipating their strength and resources in fruitless Machiavellian power tactics.

Tomorrow may be too late. The nuclear hardware available could cause utter destruction. If properly understood, Henry George's "law of human progress" could redirect the mental energy of the masses against war and aggression, and all nations would benefit in attaining peace and plenty.

As the first step a copy of "The Law of Human Progress" should be sent to all members of the United Nations.

—Salvatore V. Manganaro