

# Land and Freedom

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## Comment and Reflection

WITHOUT regard to the natural order, or any reference to natural laws, among which economic laws are included, we may elect to try the Great Iniquity, by which term Tolstoy has characterized the denial of man's equal right to the use of the earth, by the moral law. It is the everlasting credit of Henry George as it is of Oscar Geiger, now linked inseparably with his great Mentor as the interpreter of our philosophy, that both these men stressed the need for the observance of the moral law in society. From this teaching the Henry George School under its eminent director, Frank Chodorov, will not depart.

THE identity of the moral law with the natural law is taken for granted. Society cannot do things that are forbidden to the individual. Society cannot transgress the right of property any more than the individual can, and expect to escape the penalty. It is preposterous to assume that there is one law for society and another for the individual. Its sanctions are as binding on both. No amount of tergiversation or excursions into the realm of metaphysics can obscure this truth. To abandon it is to sacrifice the mainstay of our argument. After all emphasis is laid upon the natural laws, the ethical imperative calls aloud for recognition.

THIS concept, an inseparable part of our philosophy, dates from no special period, now to be laid aside, and a so-called scientific interpretation substituted. "The School of 1897"—why this date?—is the School of Henry George and Oscar Geiger, and now of the rapidly growing institution founded by the latter. But it is unfortunate, besides being a trifle ridiculous, that a controversy should have arisen over this point. At a time when there is a more wide-spread knowledge of our philosophy than at any time since "Progress and Poverty" was written; and which still remains the invulnerable citadel of our teaching.

THE land is Mine and shall not be sold forever," and similar injunctions were the teachings of the School of 620 B. C., or thereabouts. It does not differ materially from the School of 1897 started by the followers of Henry

George on or before that date. Its teachings contain the moral injunctions for society of which this seems to be the supreme command. It comes to us from the highest authority that can be cited. It is a moral injunction of tremendous solemnity. Of this Henry George and Oscar Geiger were supremely conscious. It was an inseparable part of their preachment. The moral law in society and the natural law were one and the same.

WHAT consideration other than this did Tolstoy have in mind when he referred to "The Great Iniquity?" He was thinking of the moral law of which this was the supreme violation. What do we mean when we say a thing is wrong or wrung from the right? What do we have in mind when we say of some social arrangement or the law of man that it is wrong? Do we not at once conceive of some violation of an ethical principle. Is not this man's first reaction when we say it is not just. "Justice the end, Taxation the Means," was George's title to one of his most important lectures. It is mere juggling with words to protest that that what we propose is only the abolition of all taxation. We will, nevertheless, do what we set out to do through the machinery of taxation, the instrument with which the people are most familiar and which they are not likely to misunderstand. Mr. George has given us reasons for discarding other means, and these show him to have been a statesman as well as an economist.

## A Supplementary Word

IT is in no spirit of controversy that we again consider our old friend, the moral law, as related to economic law, which was touched upon in a recent issue of LAND AND FREEDOM.

We are wont to consider the marked contrast between law and what is known as the common law, and the statutes. Basically law was recognized in early concepts as natural law only. All other so-called law was considered as man-made, viz., enactments or recorded precedents or customs. Law carried its own penalty if violated. All else required a specific penalty and human enforcement. Blackstone affirmed this in his chapter on the nature of law in his Commentaries, Vol. I, Chs., 2 and 3. Concerning the relation of law to human enactments we quote as follows: "This law of nature being coeval with mankind, and

dictated by God Himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe in all countries and at all times; no human laws are of any validity if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid derive all their force and all their authority mediately or immediately from this original." We further quote from the same volume: "No human laws should be suffered to contradict the laws of nature." "On the contrary, if any human law should allow or enjoin to so contradict a law of nature we are bound to transgress that human law or else we must offend both the natural and the divine." In ignorance of the economic law has not society offended both? But here is the source of sovereignty expressed in man through his compliance with law, natural law. Ignorance is no excuse; the penalty is inevitable.

It requires only slight elevation of thought to realize that in considering law as natural law we are dealing with invisible and invariable principle. It is incessant and eternal and without dimension; its invariable effects only, are registered through our physical senses. From these effects we learn by trial and error, by stumbling, falling down stairs, burnt fingers or electric shock. Thereafter we recognize law but we can neither analyze or define it. In so recognizing and in obeying law we register a good effect and so consider it as positive and its violation an evil effect and negative.

As Georgeists we state a positive philosophy, an idea, technically, a natural law, an eternal principle. It was its violation as perceived by bad effects that led George and his predecessors to its discovery. Reasoning therefrom the law was sought out and found. It was the principle of equal rights, the invisible moral law itself, and then its application expressed as equal rights to the source of all external things, land. Tested, it was found good, not evil, and true, not false. Its truth is worked out to mathematical exactness and to that extent fulfils the requirements of science. Tested by its violations the automatic visible results are always poverty, distress, misery and crime and all that flows from these things. Given invariable evil effects of the violation of the economic law and that law itself, the essence of goodness and truth, wherein does it fail to coincide with the moral law. Let any Georgeist discover if he can the slightest violation of the moral law in the philosophy of Henry George, let him find any intrusion of evil or falsity in the principle which George enunciated. Humanity in its ignorance has failed to obey the unchangeable economic moral law. The four horsemen still ride.

C. H. KENDAL.

**I**NDUSTRY being the result of employment, there can be no productive employment where there is no industry, a fact the last session of congress failed to recognize when seeking to curb industry at every turn.

*Cause and Effect, Foley, Ala.*

## Report of The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation at the Toronto Conference

SEPTEMBER 8, 1938

ANTOINETTE WAMBOUGH

**I** AM glad to be able to speak before so many good friends of both Canada and the United States, whom I feel I know well through long years of pleasant correspondence.

To the newcomers and strangers I am grateful of an opportunity to bring news of the purposes and aims of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, and to show how that organization cooperates and coordinates with other branches of our movement.

The trustees of the Foundation send their heartiest greetings to this Conference and their good wishes for the success of any plans that may be here worked out for land value taxation and the Henry George movement in Canada and the United States.

In particular do the trustees desire to thank Mr. Perc Williams and Mr. Owens, for the elaborate book display that they have sponsored, and the opportunity they have afforded to have the work of the Foundation brought before the Conference.

My husband in reading this speech said, "Why don't you throw in a joke or two?" When preparing to talk I don't think any of us feel very much in joking mood and so I didn't respond to his suggestion very warmly but something happened as we crossed the border that might be considered as a tepid little joke!

The customs officials asked us various questions, and all went well until they said, "Why are you coming to Canada?" I replied, "To attend the Single Tax Convention." They looked very severe. I gathered that they thought it was a convention of single people, and as we were married, they wondered why we were attending. At 4:30 a. m., we gave them a brief talk upon the Single Tax, the life and work of Henry George, and the aims of this Conference. At last satisfied that everything was all right, they admitted us to Canada.

If the work of the Tax Relief Association, the Henry George School of Social Science, and the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation can continue on the ever increasing front that they are now proceeding upon such ignorance and such feeble witticisms as we are all familiar with with regard to the name "Single Tax," will disappear, and instead, we can hope for a real understanding of our aims and ideals.

Now you will all want to know just how the Foundation is at present furthering the principles of Henry George. But before I go into this discussion, I should like to take a few minutes to outline the history and character