

## **Georgism and the Decline of Liberalism in Interwar Britain**

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Few historical studies have critically examined the decline of Georgism in Britain after the First World War.<sup>1</sup> The loss of an electorally effective Liberal Party and the emergence of a Labour Party dedicated to taming the menace of capitalism have been highlighted as important factors in the steady decline in the influence wielded by Georgist supporters. Nonetheless, Georgist organizations continued to organize during the interwar period and worked to adapt their messages to altered social and economic conditions. Adherents sought new support for initiatives politically and economically tied to radical liberalism. The study of interwar Georgism allows for critical examination of how a political, social, and economic movement born in late Victorian Britain struggled to negotiate the politics of an interwar period in which the new centers of political power lay with the Labour and Conservative parties. Georgism propounded a message of reform that its adherents suggested would not only would give new life to the deflated capitalism of interwar Britain, but establish a fundamentally new basis of social and economic justice. An examination of how and why Georgism remained confined to the political margins during a period of economic upheaval helps to illuminate critical elements of the altered political make-up of interwar politics and the fate of political liberalism in early twentieth-century Britain.

The ideas of Henry George defied easy political categorization, but were nonetheless the spark for early movements in social and economic reform. George Bernard Shaw remembered

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<sup>1</sup> Two of the most important contributions to the overall question of land within Britain make 1914 their endpoints. See Avner Offer, *Property and Politics, 1870-1914: landownership, law, ideology and urban development in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Ian Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and the Land: the land issue and party politics in England, 1906-1914* (Rochester, NY: The Boydell Press, 2001).

the enthusiasm with which he and other socialists had expressed their support for the Georgist cause, and amongst the Fabians, George's ideas were eventually incorporated into plans for the reduction of rates through further taxes levied on the value of land.<sup>2</sup> As much as his ideas inspired socialists, so, too, did they worry conservatives and some liberals committed to preserving *laissez-faire*. Many could see little difference between the appropriation of economic rent in land and the Marxist socialism espoused by Henry Hyndman. The anti-socialist London Municipal Society wrote, "After the land there will follow in due course a raid upon all other forms of private property, and every one who has saved will be looted in order to make provision for those who either have not exerted themselves, or who consistently prefer agitation to productive labour." And yet, George saw in his efforts the means by which individual initiative could be protected and allowed to gain the full restitution which he believed was its due. Landlords held a monopoly on land vital for urban and suburban development and, through this, restricted individual initiative and capitalist growth. Capitalism would be strengthened if the economic rent in land were captured by the people and used to reduce the burden of their taxes. He wrote, "Capital is a good; the capitalist is a helper, if he is not also a monopolist. We can safely let any one get as rich as he can if he will not despoil others in doing so."<sup>3</sup>

Yet, though they recognized an enormous debt to George, few British socialists sought the capture of economic rent in land as a means of simply re-shaping the capitalist economy. Rather, in addition to highlighting the need to improve access to the land and to break the near monopoly of the aristocratic landlords, they looked more dramatically to the elimination of the capitalist model. Thus, although many Georgist advocates lauded the new land tax initiatives promoted by socialist groups – many of which referred specifically to George himself – they

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<sup>2</sup>George Bernard Shaw, *Sixteen Self-Sketches* (London: 1949, 58, cited in Peter d'A. Jones, "Henry George and British Socialism" in *Henry George (1839-1897)*, ed. Mark Blaug (Aldershot, Hants.: Edward Elgar, 1992), 360.

<sup>3</sup> Henry George, *Social Problems* (New York: Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 1981 (1983)), 57.

were to be disappointed in the post-World War I years when Georgist ideas seemed to be all too easily cast aside by political and economic reformers seeking greater controls on capital, itself.<sup>4</sup>

The political prospects for Georgism in the nineteenth century became bound to the changes taking place within both intellectual and political liberalism. Reform measures that challenged entrenched property rights and sought a wider role for the state in ensuring the well-being of the working classes began to alter the character of the Liberal Party's traditional reliance upon *laissez-faire*. Joseph Chamberlain, who had successfully built a fortune in Birmingham's screw-making industry, picked up the mantle of reform and as a Non-conformist argued in the 1870s that the next chapter in the Liberal program ought to be "Free Schools," "Free Land," and "Free Church." "In this country and this alone the agricultural labourer is entirely divorced from all interest in the soil he tills," Chamberlain argued.<sup>5</sup> His political career made him mayor of Birmingham where he established municipal services in gas and water and took charge of efforts to reconstruct a portion of the city's business center under the banner of "improvement."

Chamberlain was impressed by the Georgist call for property owners to be held accountable in the face of both urban and rural poverty, but never saw the acquisition of the entire economic rent in land as the means for fundamentally reshaping the nature of land ownership and the ways in which human beings made use of resources. In fact, he suggested that the pronouncements of *Progress and Poverty* were "facts full of significance and warning" for the British ruling classes and argued for an increase in the number of smallholders as an

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<sup>4</sup> Portions of this discussion are repeated in Jules Gehrke, "Georgist Thought and the Emergence of Municipal Socialism in Britain, 1870-1914" (Research paper, Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 2005)

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in J.L. Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (London, 1932), Vol. I, pp. 149; as cited by Michael Silagi, "Henry George and Europe: George and His Followers Awakened the British Conscience and Started a New, Freer Society," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 50, No. 2 (April, 1991), 244.

antidote to the passions unleashed by Georgist rhetoric.<sup>6</sup> “There is only one way of giving security to this kind of property, and that is to multiply the owners of it. Peasant proprietorship in one form or other, and on a large scale, is the antidote to the doctrines of confiscation which are now making converts.”<sup>7</sup> **It’s likely** landowners could not rest easily after hearing **Chamberlain’s** “doctrine of ransom” **speech which he** delivered in 1885 as he undertook an “unauthorized” Liberal campaign:

But then I ask, what ransom will property pay for the security which it enjoys!...Society is banded together in order to protect itself against the instincts of those of its members who would make very short work of private ownership if they were left alone....I think in the future we shall hear a great deal more about the obligations of property, and we shall not hear quite so much about its rights.<sup>8</sup>

Chamberlain did little to act upon the implications of his speech as in the following year he moderated his stance on social reform when he established an alliance with the **Conservative Party** to defend political union with Ireland. Yet, the influence of Georgist philosophy upon Chamberlain helps to identify at least two significant weaknesses in the movement in support of Henry George’s ideas in Britain. The first is that although both the radical Liberalism espoused by Chamberlain and the later ‘new’ Liberalism of David Lloyd George offered important bases of support for George’s philosophy, few political leaders considered introducing Georgist policies that would follow through on the fundamental economic transformation he envisioned. Georgist thought was to act as a magnet **to the cause of social reform for many**, while failing to galvanize **these same reformers** into the kind of political action necessary for the recovery of Britain’s economic rent in land. Lloyd George appeared on the verge of establishing the administrative and legal framework for reclaiming the unearned increment in land values before

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<sup>6</sup> *Fortnightly Review*, 34 (N.S.) 1883, 761.

<sup>7</sup> Dorothy Nevill, *Under Five Reigns*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (London, 1911), pp. 206; as cited in Silagi, “Henry George and Europe”, 246.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Chamberlain, “The Doctrine of Ransom (Birmingham, January 5, 1885),” in *Mr. Chamberlain’s Speeches: Vol. I.*, ed. Charles W. Boyd (London: Constable, 1914), 137-138.

the First World War, but was willing to trade it for security of office in the years after. He would later return to the theme of land reform, but only as part of wider Liberal efforts to confront interwar economic difficulties. Georgist supporters found themselves cast adrift after being abandoned by Lloyd George's postwar government.

The second is that social, political, and economic conservatives found it too easy to categorize **Georgist thought** among the **ideological** threats to capital and property they believed lay amongst radical Liberals and socialists. Georgists have continued to experience difficulties in making clear to potential converts how control over the products produced by land differs from control over the rental value of land. However, this difficulty had serious repercussions in the post-World War I era when the same polarization of politics that contributed to the Liberal Party's continuing electoral misfortunes made it virtually impossible for Georgists to stake out a clearly defined solution to Britain's economic woes. George's ideas had been absorbed into the proposals for land taxation that circulated amongst municipal reformers, Fabians, and the Liberal Party. As such, however, they lost their force as a coherent set of ideas – a set of ideas whereby the taxation of the entire rental value of land would be the starting point for extensive social and governmental reform.

In the late 1880s, no legislation yet envisioned a complete return of the rental value of land to the people, and few politicians envisioned a transformation of society on the basis of Georgist principles. George's visits to the United Kingdom had spawned a number of organizations devoted to advancing the cause of land values taxation and among these were the Scottish and English land restoration leagues, two of the earliest contributors to an evolving list of groups advancing the ideas of Henry George. The English group would later come to be known as the English League for the Taxation of Land Values (ELTLV) while the Scottish group

disbanded. Scotland was, however, an early center of the land values taxation movement and after 1890 a new organization known as the Scottish Land Restoration Federation was founded, later changing its name to the Scottish Single Tax League and then, after 1904, the Scottish League for the Taxation of Land Values (SLTLV).<sup>9</sup> *The Single Tax* (later to change its name to *Land Values* and then *Land and Liberty*) was first published in Glasgow under the direction of John Paul, one of the most venerable adherents to the Georgist cause in Britain. These organizations offered important mediums for those coming together to discuss the land values tax movement, but their role as pressure groups left the development of Georgist legislative and policy initiatives in the hands of Liberal and, later, Labour politicians.

Although efforts to secure parliamentary legislation enabling land values taxation at the national level would gain prominence in the immediate prewar period, municipal officials struggling to achieve local rating power over site values provided some of the most consistent support for the Georgist vision. Rising land values and the gains accruing to owners were dramatic in urban areas, and municipal organizations played a critical role in pressing for Georgist legislation. Like the later efforts to secure national land valuation, however, municipal efforts ran into roadblocks. The report of the “Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes” (1885) did recommend that owners, who currently paid taxes only on the income generated from their land, face a greater tax (of perhaps of four percent) on its selling price. Such further taxation would help to alleviate rising rates and force more owners to offer land for sale. “Your Majesty’s Commissioners would recommend that these matters should be

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<sup>9</sup> The evolution of Georgist organization in Britain is complex. This account is drawn from Joseph Dana Miller, *Single Tax Year Book: the history, principles and application of the single tax philosophy* (New York: Single Tax Review Publishing Company, 1917), 112-114.

included in legislation when the law of rating comes to be dealt with by Parliament.”<sup>10</sup>

Nonetheless, the final report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation, published several years later in 1901, rejected both the separate valuation of land and the enactment of specific rates upon land values (a minority conclusion was offered in favor of a site value rate).<sup>11</sup> Despite these setbacks, finances prompted many municipal officials, even if they had only been marginally influenced by George’s visits to Britain, to look with favor upon site values taxation. Few envisioned a social and economic transformation under the principles of Georgism, but many saw a pragmatic solution to the perennial struggle over local rates.

Tackling a Parliament dominated by Conservatives proved difficult for Georgist supporters.<sup>12</sup> A bill supporting local site values rating for Glasgow was introduced into Parliament in 1899 and then again in 1905, but was unsuccessful both times. Later, it was rejected once by the new Liberal Parliament in 1906, then passed only to be altered out of recognition by the Lords.<sup>13</sup> Efforts by the London County Council (LCC) proved equally unsuccessful. A bill submitted to Parliament in 1893 was rejected by the Speaker who found its provisions too wide to be included in a private Bill; a second bill submitted in 1901 did not reach

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<sup>10</sup> Miller, *Single Tax Year Book: The History, Principles and Application of the Single Tax Philosophy* (New York: Single Tax Review Publishing Co., 1917), 98. The component of the *Single Tax Year Book* cited here, and signed A.W.M., was likely written by A.W. Madsen. In recounting events related to land values taxation in Parliament and, in particular, the ‘Land Values Group’, Madsen draws heavily (and without attribution) upon a speech delivered by P. Wilson Raffan before the National Liberal Club in November, 1912. Raffan’s speech is a thorough review of the efforts of land values supporters and was delivered during a critical period in the land values campaign just before the First World War. See P. Wilson Raffan, “The Policy of the Land Values Group in the House of Commons: an address delivered by P. Wilson Raffan, M.P., at the eighty-fourth dinner of the National Liberal Club Political and Economic Circle, 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1912,” *Land Values*, February 1914, 388-396.

<sup>11</sup> Miller, *Single Tax Year Book*, 100.

<sup>12</sup> A brief summary of legislative efforts in favor of land values taxation is offered in, Lord Douglas of Barloch, *Land-Value Rating: Theory and Practice, Revised Edition* [London: Christopher Johnson, 1961(1936)].

<sup>13</sup> Elwood Parsons Lawrence, *Henry George in the British Isles* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1957), 117.

a second reading.<sup>14</sup> Nonetheless, supporters of land taxes could seemingly point to several ongoing sources of support around the country. As the *Municipal Journal* remarked early in 1901, “The general principle of the taxation of site values has been so thoroughly canvassed of late years, that it is with a feeling akin to relief that we witness this transition from abstract to concrete...”<sup>15</sup>

The results of the parliamentary election of 1906 gave Georgists their best hope of making land values taxation a concrete reality. The Liberal Party gained an overwhelming majority with 399 seats to the Conservatives’ 156, while 30 seats went to the new Labour Party.<sup>16</sup> Though the traditional Liberal emphasis on free trade and reform was critical in securing the party’s victory in 1906, the election opened the door to philosophic and political thought championing the necessity of collective action by the state to ensure a just society. The National Liberal Federation had given its support to a resolution as early as 1889 declaring any reform of the land laws must be accompanied by the equitable taxation of land values and ground rents.<sup>17</sup> This reform, it hoped, would be of wider benefit to the working classes as duties were removed on a host of basic foodstuffs. Though many traditional Liberals remained wary of potential threats to liberty and property, the ‘new’ Liberalism’ of the early twentieth century would stand as a beacon of hope to many Georgists. A deputation of 150 municipal officials presented a petition in support of a bill allowing the separate rating of land values to Prime

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<sup>14</sup> See London County Council. *Local Government and Taxation Committee. Land values (taxation by local authorities) bill, 1893. Memorandum by the vice-chairman of the council* (London: Steel and Jones, 1893); and *The Ratepayer and London Municipal Notes*, August, 1938, 276.

<sup>15</sup> *The Municipal Journal* (January 25, 1901), 63. For a further discussion of municipal issues, see Jules Gehrke, “Georgist Thought and the Emergence of Municipal Socialism in Britain, 1870-1914.”; Georgist organizations continued to publish pamphlets supporting the various pieces of legislation introduced into Parliament. See, for instance, English League for the Taxation of Land Values, *Land Values in Parliament: speeches by Charles P. Trevelyan, M.P., Dr. MacNamara, M.P., M.L.S.B., Thomas Shaw, M.P., and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, M.P., G.C.B.* (London: English League for the Taxation of Land Values, 1903).

<sup>16</sup> N.J. Crowson, *The Longman Companion to the Conservative Party Since 1830* (London: Pearson Education, 2001), 43.

<sup>17</sup> Miller, *Single Tax Year Book*, 101.

Minister Henry Herbert Asquith in February of 1906. Asquith offered his support for the separate assessment of site values, but suggested that the government must be allowed more time to avoid piecemeal legislation. “I have...always regarded this movement...as being not a derogation from, but an assertion of the rights of property. It is right and just that the community should reap the benefit of the increased values which are due to its own expenditure and growth...,” he announced.<sup>18</sup>

The breadth of support for land values taxation seemed secure, even if the ideal of a Georgist social transformation was absent from most rhetoric. The future prime minister, Campbell-Bannerman, said, “nothing short...of the taxation of land values will suffice to get at the root of urban over-crowding.”<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, he stopped short of supporting a single tax and instead opted for a “moderate application of the principle of site value taxation.”<sup>20</sup> The inability of the Georgist message to transcend fears that land values taxation ultimately meant confiscation made itself felt at the national level. Liberals responded to the demands for reform of taxation in the interests of supporting municipal finances (and would do so again as they sought to enact the primary components of the ‘People’s Budget’ of 1909), but stopped short of supporting a Georgist platform. Once again, for Liberals and others among the politicians who supported land values taxation, the Georgist message remained a motivation, but encompassed no economic or social philosophy.

Despite these underlying weaknesses, the creation of the “Land Values Parliamentary Campaign Committee” under the leadership of J.H. Whitley appeared to signal new energy at the national level. Eventually commanding the adherence of perhaps 280 members of Parliament, the Committee appointed John Paul, editor of *Land Values*, as the group’s secretary and focused

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<sup>18</sup> Miller, *Single Tax Year Book*, 103.

<sup>19</sup> *Land Values*, January, 1903; quoted in Lawrence, *Henry George in the British Isles*, 120-121.

<sup>20</sup> *Glasgow Daily Record and Mail*, January 28, 1904; quoted in Lawrence, *Henry George in the British Isles*, 121.

its first activities on the Land Values Taxation (Scotland) Bill, often referred to as the “Glasgow Bill.” Though it passed a Second Reading in the House, a Select Committee recommended against it and it was superseded by the Land Values (Scotland) Bill, which faced such substantial revision by the Lords that the Government considered it useless and abandoned it.<sup>21</sup> Finding their cause stymied by opposition from the Lords – a frustration that was in evidence among many Liberals as wider reform legislation continued to be blocked by the Lords – the Land Values Group presented a petition to the Government calling for a valuation of land separate from its improvements and a land tax **on the unimproved value**. Among the extra-parliamentary forces joining in the continuing campaign in favor of land values taxation was the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, formed in 1907 by representatives of various land tax leagues. The United Committee provided an umbrella organization and organized a variety of propaganda efforts including meetings and demonstrations as well as the publication of *Land Values*.<sup>22</sup>

Parliamentary forces received partial payment on their plan with the Budget introduced in April, 1909 by the Liberal Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George. Lloyd George had been inspired by the ideas of Henry George as a young politician and now, as an impassioned advocate of ‘new’ liberalism, introduced the budget of 1909 complete with taxes on land.<sup>23</sup> The

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<sup>21</sup> Miller, *Single Tax Year Book*, 105. For a further discussion of the intense activity on the part of Georgists between 1908 and 1909, as well as a personal account of events within Liberal circles, see Francis Neilson, “The Land Values Movement in Great Britain,” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 18, no. 3 (April 1959).

<sup>22</sup> Miller, *Single Tax Year Book*, 117. Among the early propaganda efforts of the United Committee was W.R. Lester, *A Business Man’s Question: How Permanently to Improve Demand for Goods* (London: “Land Values” Publication Department, 1908?). Lester’s pamphlet suggests that some land tax proponents were making the connection between land taxation and the overall business health of the nation by arguing that taxation which focused upon land and not the improvements to it would help to stimulate the ‘secondary’ industries whose health was based upon prosperous “primary” industries related to the land.

<sup>23</sup> For a valuable digest of the information the Government collected on land value taxation, see *Taxation of Land, &c.: Papers bearing on Land Taxes and on Income Tax, &c., in certain Foreign Countries, and on the Working of Taxation of Site Values in certain Cities of the United States and in British Colonies, together with Extracts relative*

antipathy Lloyd George displayed toward the landlord class was evident early in his legal career as he defended poachers and trespassers in Wales. His attitudes toward the self-made man, the capitalist, were much more genial.<sup>24</sup> And yet, his concern that Georgist ideas might be compared to confiscation was clear. As he commented to his diary with regard to *Progress and Poverty*:

11 January 1884 I don't believe in his scheme – appropriation of rent is nothing but aimless plunder. The great object is to get control of the land itself into the hands of those whose interests are so vitally affected by it – and it strikes me that now most every argument applicable to such confiscation is also an argument for State appropriation of personal property. My own idea is the devolution to the State of deceased owners' properties, so that all alike may have an equal chance of starting life.<sup>25</sup>

Thus, when Lloyd George began to proclaim the need for wealthy landowners to be forced to contribute to the wider social interests of the nation, it was with a good deal of suspicion of the larger Georgist message. His 'People's Budget' called for spending and finance to cover both new social programs, such as old-age pensions, and weaponry to support the accelerating naval race with Germany. Lloyd George called the unearned acquisitions of land owners to account on terms that appeared quite modest to advocates for the taxation of land values. His 'People's Budget' called for a twenty percent tax on the unearned increment drawn from the sale of land (set on a baseline 1909 evaluation) and a half-penny on the pound tax on the capital value of undeveloped land and minerals (agricultural land not to be included).<sup>26</sup> The proposed budget exposed the raw ideological nerves drawn taut over the ideology of 'new' liberalism that had challenged the traditional emphasis on small government and minimal taxation of nineteenth-century Britain. Though eventually passed, and the valuation of land in Britain begun under the authority of a Valuation Department, the 'People's Budget' forced a

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*to Land Taxation and Land Valuation from Reports of Royal Commissions and Parliamentary Committees* (London: HMSO, 1909).

<sup>24</sup> Bentley Brinkerhoff Gilbert, *David Lloyd George: a political life. Vol. II: the organizer of victory, 1912-16* (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1992), 55-56.

<sup>25</sup> Gilbert, *David Lloyd George: a political life*, 55.

<sup>26</sup> Lawrence, *Henry George in the British Isles*, 137.

political crisis that narrowed the Liberal majority as the Government dissolved Parliament and took the budget before the people in a general election. The Liberals were returned, but with a slimmer majority.

Nonetheless, the political showdown over the ‘People’s Budget was one of the pivotal moments of twentieth-century British politics and land values taxation played a major role. Excitement among land tax supporters ran high during the parliamentary struggle and many might very well have misinterpreted the commitment of Lloyd George to Henry George’s philosophy.<sup>27</sup> As one anonymous observer noted, “The eternal principle of justice underlying the measure [the People’s Budget] appealed powerfully to the liberal spirit that still dominates the land of Cobden and Bright....That the Chancellor of the British Exchequer approached the question of land values taxation from the standpoint of Henry George...there is no doubt.”<sup>28</sup> Another observer argued that the clauses affecting land taxation offered a superior means of raising revenue than that envisioned by the debilitating ideas of tariff reformers. “The frontal attack on the Budget, vigorous and bitter though it has been, having only served to increase its popularity, more especially of the Land Clauses,....”<sup>29</sup>

Time did witness a reappraisal of Lloyd George’s actions. Joseph Dana Miller, perhaps with the perspective of writing nearly a decade later, concluded, “The Land Value Duties’...were warmly accepted by many sections of land reformers, but they were never considered by the advocates of the taxation of land values as either an instalment [sic.] of or equivalent for the

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<sup>27</sup> Publication efforts by Georgist supporters in and out of Parliament was greatly expanded. See Josiah C. Wedgwood, *Real Land Reform* (London: Land Values Publication Department, 1909); Frederick Verinder, *Free Trade and Land Values: a paper read at the International Free Trade Congress....* (London: Land Values Publication Department, 1910?); William R. Lester, *The Taxation of Land Values: What it is, and what it would accomplish*. Second Edition (London: “Land Values” Publication Department, 1910?); R.L. Outhwaite, *Labour Unrest: the Young Liberal Policy* (Dumfriesshire League of Young Liberals, 1911).

<sup>28</sup> From an anonymous preface in Max Hirsch, *Land Values Taxation in Practice: a record of the Progress in Legislation of the Principles of Land Values Taxation* [(Melbourne: Renwick, Pride, Nuttal Pty., Ltd.)?, 1910?], 2.

<sup>29</sup> Lewis H. Berens. “Talk Unemployment!” [Reprinted by permission from *The Westminster Review*, December, 1909] (London: “Land Values” Publication Department, 1909?), 1.

straight tax on land values, which had been demanded in their agitation both inside and outside Parliament.”<sup>30</sup> Recounting the land values movement of the pre-war years 50 years later (and nearly 40 years after Lloyd George abandoned the provisions of 1909), Georgist supporter Francis Neilson wrote, “It was soon realized by the Radicals in the House and in the country that the Chancellor of the Exchequer was not earnestly concerned in the land values section of the budget, and that his chief object was to find money for old age pensions and insurance for sickness.”<sup>31</sup>

After 1910, Georgist supporters were to find their boat uneasily attached to a Liberal Government steamer that seemed to be taking on water. Some pressed forward with a program known as the Land and Taxation Reform Memorial which urged that local rates be tied to land values, a national tax on land values be instituted, and the so-called “breakfast-table duties” on basic foodstuffs be revoked.<sup>32</sup> The repeal of the “breakfast-table” duties, the monetary loss of which Georgist supporters believed would be offset by the revenues collected from land values taxation, continued to be a critical intersection in the beliefs of land-value supporters and traditional Liberal doctrine.<sup>33</sup> The Government’s creation of the Departmental Committee on Local Taxation allowed land values supporters to continue to apply **pressure. Campaigners** seem to have been pleased that despite a lack of endorsement of land values taxation, when the Committee issued its final report in April of 1914, a substantial minority of members supported

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<sup>30</sup> Miller, *Single Tax Year Book*, 106. The argument that land values offered a fund which the community might legitimately appropriate was offered even more forcefully by two parliamentary supporters of land values taxation in C.H. Chomley and R.L. Outhwaite, *The Essential Reform: Land Values Taxation in Theory and Practice* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, Ltd., 1909), 9. “If such a fund exists it follows that appropriation of it by its rightful owner, the community, is not taxation in the sense that word usually conveys; it is not a more or less arbitrary levy on private property for public purposes. The fund to which we refer is the land value created by society, and when the State taxes this value it will be on the road to the abolition of all burdensome taxes and the establishment of economic justice.”

<sup>31</sup> Francis Neilson, “The Land Values Movement in Great Britain,” *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 18, no. 3 (April 1959), 235.

<sup>32</sup> Miller, *Single Tax Year Book*, 108.

<sup>33</sup> **See R.L.** Outhwaite before the House of Commons in “Debates in the House of Commons. Budget Resolutions. 28 April, 1913,” *Land Values*, June 1913, 44.

establishing local rates funded in part by land values taxation.<sup>34</sup> Times were difficult for the Liberal Government as a whole as between 1911 and 1912 -- a total of eight seats were lost in by-elections. Nonetheless, Edward Hemmerde, who pledged himself to vote for land-values taxation, won one by-election while Sidney Arnold, a supporter of land values taxation and R.L. Outhwaite, a committed Georgist, secured victory in two “miracle” three-cornered contests with Labour.<sup>35</sup>

Though a full Georgist program was no where in the works, the Liberal leadership continued to give signs to the taxation of land values movement indicating that it saw such reform efforts as critical to the question of relieving local rates. Asquith and Lloyd George denied Conservative accusations that they supported a ‘single tax,’ and argued they sought not to confiscate land, but to alleviate suffering.<sup>36</sup> In June of 1912, Lloyd George formed a Land Enquiry Committee to study issues including land valuation and housing.<sup>37</sup> The Committee recommended that, in addition to offering amelioration in the countryside through rent courts minimum wages and other efforts, local authorities be allowed to raise revenues from site values.<sup>38</sup> Land values supporters continued to be buoyed by Lloyd George’s desire to improve conditions in the countryside and to alleviate the pressures on local rates in urban areas. Nonetheless, the ‘land campaign’, as it was waged in the final two years before the outbreak of war, aroused conservative opposition and appears to have failed to garner significant support

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<sup>34</sup> “The Departmental Committee on Local Taxation and the Land Enquiry Committee: Survey of the Reports: the Recommendations for the Taxation of Land Values Fully Explained and Criticised: Reprint of a Statement Submitted by the Executive of the Land Values Parliamentary Group to the members of the Group,” *Land Values*, May 1914, i.

<sup>35</sup> Neilson, “The Land Values Movement in Great Britain,” 238-239.

<sup>36</sup> See Lawrence, *Henry George in the British Isles*, chap. 12.

<sup>37</sup> Ian Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and the Land*, 83. This committee did not have official connections to either the Liberal Party or the Government, but was charged simply with helping Lloyd George to formulate ideas and policy.

<sup>38</sup> United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, *The Departmental Committee on Local Taxation and the Land Enquiry Committee: Survey of the Reports* (London: Land Values Publication Department, 1914), 26-27.

outside the traditional base of land values supporters and municipal progressives. As a biographer of Lloyd George, Bentley Brinkerhoff Gilbert has written:

...it is clear that throughout its life as an active political project the land campaign was dogged both by ministerial and public unpopularity. In effect Lloyd George became a danger to the Liberals. Land reform was not the doctrine of the ministry, nor of the party, nor of a majority of Liberals in the country, although as has been pointed out it had its adherents among the radicals in the House of Commons.<sup>39</sup>

Conservative politicians argued the case against land values taxation through The Land Union, an organization dedicated to defending landowners against, “Fabians, Henry Georgites, Socialists, and others”, as well as publications such as Sir Thomas Whittaker’s *The Ownership, Tenure and Taxation of Land: some facts, fallacies and proposals relating thereto*.<sup>40</sup> They attacked any failings they witnessed in the valuation then underway to meet the terms of the 1909-1910 budget act, and accused Lloyd George of taking yet another step in the direction of full-fledged socialism. The process of land valuation was indeed only partially complete by June of 1912 and its opponents readily combined attacks on the efficiency of administration with attacks on the ‘Georgist’ underpinnings of the policy. Lloyd George and the Liberals were forced to defend the costs and time it took to move forward with the valuation of property before revenues could be collected. “I have always said that these Taxes would develop naturally, and that eventually they would become fruitful, but I never said that I was dependent upon them to meet the expenditure of 1909, 1910, or 1911,” Lloyd George declared in Commons.<sup>41</sup> In reporting on the annual meeting of the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, the anti-socialist London Municipal Society wrote in one of its publications:

<sup>39</sup> Bentley Brinkerhoff Gilbert, *David Lloyd George, a political life. Vol. II: The Organizer of Victory, 1912-1916* (London: B.T. Batsford, Ltd., 1992), 59.

<sup>40</sup> Lawrence, *Henry George in the British Isles*, 156. Whittaker accused land values advocates of having a “kaleidoscopic” propaganda. “More or less vaguely most of them skip gaily from phase to phase, and enunciate the most contradictory arguments with bewildering rapidity and inconsistency.” Sir Thomas P. Whittaker, *The Ownership, Tenure and Taxation of Land: Some Facts, Fallacies and Proposals Relating Thereto* (London: Macmillan, 1914), xxviii.

<sup>41</sup> “Debates in the House of Commons; Budget Resolutions; 28 April, 1913,” *Land Values*, June 1913, 38.

That the gospel taught is still the gospel of Henry George, of which the modern Mahomet is Mr. Lloyd George, is demonstrated in the Report, which refers (*inter alia*) to “the ever-fresh and stirring lectures by Henry George,” and to the fact that more than 750 students ‘under capable teachers have learned the truths so clearly stated in ‘Progress and Poverty.’”<sup>42</sup>

In March of 1913, the progressive publication *The Municipal Journal* lamented that even as the financial pressures upon local government increased, Lloyd George dragged his feet in offering a remedy.<sup>43</sup> Yet, many Georgists remained convinced that action would be forthcoming. A contributor to *Land Values* noted in August, 1913, “When the campaign commences in earnest, and if it is fought on radical lines, land reformers will have little trouble in carrying it to a successful conclusion.”<sup>44</sup> After a substantial wait, Lloyd George finally set forth governmental policy regarding land in a speech in October of 1913, but did not make mention of the taxation of land values at all. He made proposals that called for an end to the monopoly on land and pressed for the improvement of the position of tenant farmers.<sup>45</sup> In addition, there was little that pertained to urban areas. Lloyd George took political heat from both Georgist supporters and their opponents. In a contribution to *Land Values*, A.W. Madsen wrote that Lloyd George had neglected the agitation that had been mounted for equality of opportunity in land and that the pronouncement of October had essentially been “a policy largely of grandiloquent phrases and ineffective palliatives.”<sup>46</sup>

Georgists, though having taken heart that the brash verbal assaults Lloyd George had made upon Britain’s landowners might lead to the first steps in an effective transformation in the treatment of land values, now stood disappointed that he had failed to recognize the broad implications of Georgist philosophy. A contributor to *Land Values* concluded, “The Chancellor

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<sup>42</sup> *London Municipal Notes*, No. 89, September-October 1912, 330.

<sup>43</sup> *The Municipal Journal*, March 14, 1913, 335.

<sup>44</sup> F.C.R.D., “The Coming Land Campaign,” *Land Values*, August, 1913, 94.

<sup>45</sup> Lawrence, *Henry George in the British Isles*, 155.

<sup>46</sup> A.W. Madsen, “The Government and Their Land Policy,” *Land Values*, December 1913, 262.

of the Exchequer is attempting to deal with the land question piecemeal, and to conciliate those parties whom he thinks most aggrieved....The land question is a question of land monopoly, and consequently a land values question.”<sup>47</sup> In July, 1914, the same contributor concluded:

The Government have handled this question of taxing land values in a far too hesitating, dilatory, and evasive fashion. Mr. Lloyd George has condemned the present rating system, and he has more than once said that the Government were pledged to deal with the rating of site values, but there has never been the slightest indication of what precisely it was that they were going to do. The time is ripe, and over-ripe, for a straightforward pronouncement.”<sup>48</sup>

The outbreak of war in August of 1914 began four years of upheaval that would fundamentally change Britain. The political battles of the pre-war period were laid aside, a party truce was established, and the nation, in the eyes of many observers, avoided the crises that would likely have been brought by labor disputes, violent suffrage protests and the arming of militias in Ireland. The experience of war, however, brought changes scarcely even considered in the context of Victorian politics and society. Railways were taken over by the government, the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) forced labor disputes into arbitration, women entered the industrial workforce *en masse*, and the government’s budget reached a total of £2.7 billion, over 13 times that of the last peacetime budget in 1913-1914.<sup>49</sup> To pay for the war, the standard income tax rose from six percent in 1914 to 15 percent in 1915, to 25 percent in 1917 and, finally, to 30 percent between 1918 and 1921.<sup>50</sup> Georgists had suggested that the income tax amounted to a tax upon industry, but the immediate needs of wartime cemented them in managing government expenditure and debt -- liberal finances had been exploded.<sup>51</sup> The

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<sup>47</sup> F.C.R.D., “The Crisis,” *Land Values*, January 1914, 310.

<sup>48</sup> F.C.R.D., “The Real Liberating Policy,” *Land Values*, July 1914, 38.

<sup>49</sup> Walter L. Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today, 1830 to the Present*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001), 269.

<sup>50</sup> Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today, 1830 to the Present*, 269.

<sup>51</sup> For a discussion of the income tax of the immediate pre-war period, see Frederick Verinder, *Land, Industry, and Taxation* (London: T.C. and E.C. Jack, 1914), 12-23.

government covered approximately 44 percent of its expenditures by immediate taxation, but was forced to borrow the rest. The nation emerged from the war with a debt of £7 billion.<sup>52</sup>

Critically for Georgists, the nation had charted a new path on the road to the construction of a social welfare state. In 1914, Frederick Verinder, one of the foremost voices of Georgism in Britain, had argued that land values taxation would prepare the nation to tackle a host of social evils while maintaining the liberal traditions of Cobden.<sup>53</sup> Yet, the re-organization of British society to meet the needs of war had nearly wiped out the assumptions of liberal Britain. The government began paying monthly allowances to both the wives and children of men in the army -- allowances that assured some families a more reliable source of income than before 1914. In the case of London, less than half the number of children were malnourished after than before the war.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, difficulties that had existed in the first decade of the twentieth century, such as housing shortages in urban areas, were exacerbated by the conflict. Pay had gone up in many industries, but rents, along with prices, climbed in many industrial cities. The government established rent controls in 1915 and later extended its control of prices to other products. Organized labor acquiesced uneasily in the government's program of reducing work stoppages. Labor union membership more than doubled during the war, and a variety of frustrations meant that strife among workers would be ready to break out into the open after the war ended.

**Lessons** of increased government intervention and planning in efforts ranging from the railways to agricultural production had affected politicians across the spectrum. Though identifying himself as a Tory, William Cecil Dampier Whetham remarked in a 1917 work, "...the war has

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<sup>52</sup> Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today, 1830 to the Present*, 269.

<sup>53</sup> Verinder, *Land, Industry, and Taxation*, 10.

<sup>54</sup> Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today, 1830 to the Present*, 269.

led to a widespread recognition that the economic theory of laissez-faire, on which for a century the country has relied, is a dangerous guide in the present condition of the world.”<sup>55</sup>

Georgist philosophy had suggested free trade and the non-interference of government in the economy ought to be maintained in accord with the principles of nineteenth-century liberalism. Yet, the degree to which governing officials had now assumed a direct role in intervening in the capitalist functions of the nation suggested that the Georgist emphasis on the twin values of accessing the rental value in land and maintaining free trade had now been superseded. In the face of a national land valuation effort that was being completed only very slowly, Georgist supporters argued that the procedures implemented to establish a valuation of land in Britain, and begin the collection of land taxes, had become bogged down in complexity and hampered by both exemption and half-hearted efforts at collection on the part of the Government. Efficient completion of the valuation, based on the estimates of value offered by landowners themselves, would allow land taxes to begin to supplement the enormous costs of war. The United Committee argued, “The valuation and assessment created the maximum of friction and opposition, and after six years there is no prospect of the Duties bringing in any substantial revenue.”<sup>56</sup> It outlined what it believed was a simple mechanism by which the value of land was to be separated from that of improvements, and added, “Anyone looking at this proposal impartially can hardly fail to recognize its fairness and its urgency in these days of financial strain, when all sources of wealth are called on to contribute their fair share....In these

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<sup>55</sup> William Cecil Dampier Whetham, *The War and the Nation: a Study in Constructive Politics* (London: John Murray, 1917), v.

<sup>56</sup> United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, *The Next Step in Land Valuation and Taxation* (London: United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, 1916), 2.

days it is not only fair but urgent for economic reasons that all landowners should be taxed alike on the true value of the land they hold.”<sup>57</sup>

In the midst of the darkest days of the war – some 20,000 died on July 1, 1916 at the Somme – Lloyd George’s political fortunes had begun to rise.<sup>58</sup> Asquith appeared to many to lack the necessary capacities of a wartime prime minister and they turned instead to Lloyd George, whose management of munitions had overcome a dangerous shortage earlier in the war. Mounting political pressure forced Asquith’s resignation and in the aftermath Lloyd George became prime minister, establishing a smaller wartime cabinet that, with the support of many Conservatives, was charged with supervising the day to day demands of the war. The split with Asquith wrenched the Liberal Party apart. While during the war Asquith argued for support of Lloyd George, the Party, itself, was effectively turned against the new prime minister and those Liberals who had chosen to follow him. Lloyd George led Britain to victory, but it was one that would forever change the nation as over 700,000 were killed and another 1.7 million wounded.<sup>59</sup>

The cessation of hostilities brought a quick election for Britain as voters went to the polls on November 21, 1918 in the first parliamentary election in eight years. Lloyd George decided to exploit his wartime credentials by seeking the continuation of his wartime government. A coalition of all of the major parties had participated in his government during the war, but in the aftermath, Labourites and many Liberals organized against the government. With the support of some Liberals and a large number of Conservatives, Lloyd George issued ‘coupons’, or certifications of political loyalty to those who had supported the government. The election brought enfranchised women to the polls and a new governing coalition that, despite being composed largely of Conservatives, continued with Lloyd George as prime minister. Asquith’s

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<sup>57</sup> United Committee, *The Next Step in Land Valuation and Taxation*, 5-6.

<sup>58</sup> Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today*, 266.

<sup>59</sup> Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today*, 277.

Liberal followers were reduced to a total of 36 and, with a total of 57 seats in Parliament, the Labour Party made its debut as the official parliamentary opposition.<sup>60</sup>

While Lloyd George journeyed to Versailles to establish the framework of a postwar European order, Britons struggled at home to come to grips with a drastically altered social and economic environment. In June of 1918, the Labour Party published *Labour and the New Social Order*, a plan of social, economic, and political priorities that called for a new society founded upon four pillars including a “national minimum”, the “democratic control of industry”, a “revolution in national finance”, and the redistribution of national wealth for the “common good”.<sup>61</sup> Labour Party leaders and the text’s major author, Sidney Webb, envisaged an expansion of the government’s role in supervising public health, housing, and education, as well as implementing public works to ensure employment. They saw the democratic control of industry as **one means by** which the government would undertake some nationalization of major industries and emphasize efficiency within a mixed economy. The document emphasized the gradual attainment of a socialist state in which there would be “common ownership of the means of production.”<sup>62</sup> Labour eschewed immediate land nationalization and supported land values taxation only as one part of establishing wider social and economic justice. Control of industry and taxes levied upon capital were to be the primary components of Labour’s new policy.

Georgist supporters in Britain found themselves struggling as the Labour Party, with its emphasis on the control of capitalist forces, emerged as the primary voice of social and political reform. George had argued for land values taxation as an economic mechanism that would allow all a better chance to reap economic rewards that seemed to accrue to only the aristocratic elite. The prospect small holdings, now supported by those who wanted to offer returning soldiers a

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<sup>60</sup> Crowson, *The Conservative Party Since 1830*, 44.

<sup>61</sup> Brand, *The British Labour Party*, 56.

<sup>62</sup> Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today*, 279

piece of the countryside, might disperse the unearned increment that accrued to the owners of land, but it did not allow the community to recover the added value it had contributed. Land nationalization, which drew the support of those anxious to see the state take a direct role in shaping a new society, proved to be an anathema to Georgists. For some who had followed George, the attacks upon the landed as a class had sounded the most loudly in their ears. Such attention to a class-based conflict in the pre-war period now lost much of its force during the postwar period. The wealthy had been subject to heavy income taxation during the war and many estates now fell in to decline as landowners struggled to pay taxes in an economy that only very slowly began to recover from the destruction of war. Land ownership became more widespread among the less apparently privileged.<sup>63</sup> Between 1919 and 1921 Britain's large land-owning families sold approximately 10 million acres of land.<sup>64</sup> Georgists struggled to make their case that long-term solutions to the dilemmas of unemployment, housing, and agricultural production were rooted in land values taxation. Although the major parties recognized the need to revive production in the countryside, they focused much more specifically on solving the readily identifiable dilemmas of an industrial economy whose welfare seemed evermore disconnected from the fate of the land.

While some new supporters of land values taxation had been elected to Parliament, important prewar supporters including J. Dundas White and R.L. Outhwaite were defeated in 1918.<sup>65</sup> Georgist supporters now struggled to make themselves heard in a political environment in which Lloyd George's policies and actions were heavily influenced by his Conservative political counterparts. Moreover, the remnant of the Liberal Party had been marginalized

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<sup>63</sup> See Warren J. Samuels, "Why the Georgist Movement Has Not Succeeded," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 62, no. 3 (2003): 586.

<sup>64</sup> Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today*, 290.

<sup>65</sup> "The General Election," *Land Values*, January 1919, 2.

(Asquith had, for a time, lost his seat after the election of 1918), and the Labour Party, the natural platform for reform in the postwar period, espoused a socialist message that rejected the transformational nature of site values taxation. In December of 1918, the United Committee's monthly publication *Land Values* began to highlight the "silence" with which Lloyd George now approached the issue of land. It seemed to them the political truce enacted during the war had derailed the forces of land reform and allowed the privileges of landowners to become entrenched. The pronouncements of the election campaign had not been heartening. Lloyd George had announced that new landholdings for soldiers might be obtained through purchase "at the full value" and that "imperial preference" rather than free trade might offer the way forward out of Britain's economic difficulties.<sup>66</sup> As the editors concluded in an article entitled: "A Forgotten and Abandoned Land Campaign: 'Vested Interests' Now Secure":

...there is not a word about levying taxation, which is the first function of government, especially now with the need for enormous revenues. Why is that question burked? What is the connection between this significant silence, the prospect of Tariff Reform, and the safeguarding of the great monetary and monopolistic interests that have passed unscathed through the horrors of war? These questions are quietly put aside. They will demand an answer, and very soon, when it is seen that the Coalition Alliance is an absolute surrender to those "vested interests" of which Mr. George says he is no longer afraid.<sup>67</sup>

The United Committee made clear the straitened financial constraints within which it operated. It announced in March of 1919 that the costs of producing the journal *Land Values* had more than doubled over the last two years at a time when the income of the organization had been significantly reduced. Only a series of donations that had come in the form of "windfalls" had allowed its propaganda to be carried on. Thus, though noting that the circulation of the journal had actually increased over the past four years, the editor John Paul was forced to seek

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<sup>66</sup> "A Forgotten and Abandoned Land Campaign: 'vested interests' now secure," *Land Values*, December 1918: 226.

<sup>67</sup> "A Forgotten and Abandoned Land Campaign: 'vested interests' now secure," *Land Values*, 226.

contributions to a special fund to sustain its activities.<sup>68</sup> The name of *Land Values* would later be changed to *Land and Liberty* in June 1919 with the editors noting “that the former title conveyed to the uninitiated, to the man on the boundary line, that the Journal was more the mouthpiece of a real-estate agency than one standing for the appropriation of the communal value of land.”<sup>69</sup>

With Lloyd George now apparently lost to the Georgist cause, the editors of *Land Values*, soon to be *Land and Liberty*, could not point with much satisfaction to the efforts of Asquith either. In an article entitled “The Drifting Liberal Ship”, they criticized him for smothering the land issue in “ponderous phrases”.<sup>70</sup> When he did choose to say anything, they noted that he had been very careful not to commit himself to any proposal for the taxation of rural land as a means of breaking up large estates. They argued:

As long as he speaks in this uncertain way as leader of the Liberal Party, Liberal resolutions and the aims of the Liberal party as expounded by the pamphleteers of the Liberal Publication Department are only guile calculated to make traffic for votes. They are only shop-window goods never intended for public consumption.<sup>71</sup>

The government’s efforts to manage Britain’s postwar society and economy focused upon state-controlled administrative and economic projects that outstripped what had been contemplated by the pre-war Liberal government. Wartime leaders had promised to “make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in” and set up a Ministry of Reconstruction that was to both supervise the construction of government-aided housing and town planning.<sup>72</sup> Workers at first had little difficulty finding jobs, but inflation created both ongoing pressure to raise wages and an epidemic of strikes that hit the nation between 1919 and 1921. Whether booming or in decline, it was now accepted that the government would play a central role in grappling with the

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<sup>68</sup> “Our Manifesto: The £25,000 Campaign Fund,” *Land Values*, January 1919, 10.

<sup>69</sup> “Land and Liberty,” *Land and Liberty*, June 1919, 136.

<sup>70</sup> “The Drifting Liberal Ship,” *Land Values*, January 1919, 3.

<sup>71</sup> “The Drifting Liberal Ship,” *Land Values*, 3.

<sup>72</sup> Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today*, 288.

economic conditions of the nation. The Unemployment Insurance Act of 1920 extended prewar legislation to cover an additional 11 million workers -- its importance can not be overestimated.<sup>73</sup> Unemployment remained stubbornly high in the 1920s and the £500,000 spend yearly on unemployment benefits just before the war rose to approximately £53 million in 1921-1922 when an economic slump began in earnest.<sup>74</sup> It now became accepted that the out of work could seek unemployment insurance as a matter of "right."

Those who argued that the productive capacity of the land belonged to the people as a matter of right were not so lucky and struggled to be heard amidst the new emphasis on management of the capitalist economy. It was clear, however, that welfare measures could not mask the uncertainty that characterized Britain in the 1920s. As Paul wrote in *Land and Liberty* in March, 1920, "Peace falters along on crutches, and monopoly everywhere digs its fangs into the body politic; chaos keeps company with rising prices and industrial unrest holds the mirror up to any and every new venture of faith."<sup>75</sup> There was some hope with Asquith's by-election return to Parliament after being defeated in 1918, but Paul criticized his reluctance to see the connections between land values taxation and the wider economic problems Britain faced.<sup>76</sup>

Yet, rather than offering specific programs or plans of action to deal with economic difficulties, Georgist supporters continued to argue that a plan of site values taxation offered a broad and fundamental solution to dilemmas including a housing shortage and high unemployment. In a pamphlet entitled *The Restoration of Hope*, likely published just after the conclusion of war, Outhwaite reflected on the profound tragedy with which many now viewed the Great War and argued that the youth who had sacrificed themselves in battle now lived in a

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<sup>73</sup> Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain, 1900-1990* (London: Allen Lane, 1996), 106.

<sup>74</sup> Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today*, 290.

<sup>75</sup> John Paul, "The Paisley Programme," *Land Values*, March 1920, 354.

<sup>76</sup> Paul, "The Paisley Programme," *Land Values*, March 1920, 354-355.

world deprived of hope. Socialism, which promised to aid society, simply denoted “the subjection of society to the State.”<sup>77</sup> Denied happiness, Outhwaite wrote that man finds “he must pay tribute to the owners of the earth for permission to dwell upon it” and that as a result “disharmony is created in the natural order, and out of that disharmony all the evils which beset society arise.”<sup>78</sup> The battle between capital and labor witnessed in industrial society arose because of the private ownership of land, he wrote, noting, “The more closely the land is monopolized and withheld from full use, the greater the proportion of the dispossessed compelled to sell themselves in the slave mart called the Labour Market.”<sup>79</sup> The connections between land and industrial society was clear: “...the class war is extended from one between the owners of the earth and the dispossessed, to one between the dispossessed and the owners of the instruments of production, who buy them in the slave mart...”<sup>80</sup> For those peoples who sat amidst the ashes of war, Outhwaite proposed a ‘Declaration of Rights’ that declared, “...the equal Right to Life involves an Equal Right to the Earth.”<sup>81</sup>

Efforts to secure the rights of the people to the earth seemed to flag as the government pressed forward with a budget in 1920 that sought to end the Liberal land taxes of the prewar era. In the House of Commons in July of 1920, Austen Chamberlain, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pointed to a Memorandum prepared by the Deputy-Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue that concluded a number of important difficulties had emerged. They included difficulties in collecting land values duties at the same time the process of making valuations continued, difficulties of determining values without reference to specific transactions, and the complexity of the duties, themselves. Chamberlain concluded, “From top to bottom they are

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<sup>77</sup> R.L. Outhwaite, *The Restoration of Hope* (London: The Commonwealth Land Party, 19--?), 2.

<sup>78</sup> Outhwaite, *The Restoration of Hope*, 6.

<sup>79</sup> Outhwaite, *The Restoration of Hope*, 7.

<sup>80</sup> Outhwaite, *The Restoration of Hope*, 7.

<sup>81</sup> Outhwaite, *The Restoration of Hope*, 27.

unworkable. You cannot make them workable without an immense mass of new legislation. You have got to alter and change and alter again.”<sup>82</sup> Reaction among land tax supporters was one of **dismay, combined with a sense that they had been betrayed by Lloyd George**. A former Liberal land tax supporter Josiah Wedgwood, who had migrated to the Labour Party seeing within it the best hope of reform, chastised the Land Union which had appeared to mobilize its forces against the land duties and before whose power Lloyd George had caved.<sup>83</sup> Of broader significance, however, was the fact that Lloyd George was now beholden to the wider Conservative base of his own government. In the near future, the Lloyd George’s ‘betrayal’ on land duties would widen the existing split between Asquith’s Liberals and those of Lloyd George’s coalition.

In the eyes of many, Lloyd George seemed to have broken decisively with his Liberal past and acquiesced in the pressure mounted by Conservatives to end the taxes as the price of their continuing support for his government. The United Committee and the English League for the Taxation of Land Values (ELTV) staged a public meeting in Westminster in June 1920 that adopted a resolution protesting taxes which penalized production and interfered with trade, and that raised the cost of living. It condemned the Government for “not taking advantage of the Budget of the year to levy a direct tax on the value of all land in place of the unsound and ill-conceived land value duties now to be repealed, and in substitution for the heavy burdens imposed on the earnings of industry and the food of the people.”<sup>84</sup> A longtime Georgist supporter P. Wilson Raffan argued that land values taxation was greatly needed with both great

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<sup>82</sup> “Parliamentary Debates: the repeal of the land value duties: continuation of report of debate in the House of Commons, 14<sup>th</sup> July,” *Land and Liberty*, September 1920, 483.

<sup>83</sup> “Parliamentary Debates on the Repeal of the Land Value duties...”, *Land and Liberty*, September 1920, 485-486.

<sup>84</sup> “Demonstration of Protest Against the Budget,” *Land and Liberty*, July, 1920, 444.

demands on the national budget and high local rates.<sup>85</sup> By ending the land taxes of 1909, paying back money that had been submitted for the land duties, and ending land valuation, the Government was betraying the principle of land values taxation and making it even harder for a future government to pick up the pieces if it believed differently, he wrote.<sup>86</sup> In a September 1920 *Land Values* article, Paul suggested there was some hope of a further municipal movement for the rating of land values, but in a tone that reflected the ambivalence with which Georgist supporters viewed the success of their own movement in the 1920s, he said, “Reaction everywhere is in the saddle to-day, and riding for a fall. An economic oligarchy has taken the place of the political tyranny which the progressive forces but yesterday successfully assailed.”<sup>87</sup>

Supporters of Georgism thus felt keenly both the struggles of intellectual liberalism and the struggles of the Liberal Party in the interwar period. A philosophy predicated on supporting radical change in land to achieve social and economic justice, Georgism had nonetheless supported the potential of capitalism and rejected the state-centered reforms promoted by the Labour Party. In his work entitled *The New Liberalism*, the journalist and politician C.F.G. Masterman, who had been a staunch supporter of progressive liberalism in the prewar period and later served for a time in the Liberal government in 1914-1915, bemoaned the loss of Lloyd George as a political leader. Masterman attempted to shape a new social plan that would provide for state financing of social programs while avoiding the creation of a working class who were simply “servants of the state.”<sup>88</sup> Minimal social guarantees, he believed, should begin with a housing program, the reform of unemployment provisions and a revived effort at “bursting the

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<sup>85</sup> “Demonstration of Protest Against the Budget,” *Land and Liberty*, July, 1920, 444.

<sup>86</sup> “Demonstration of Protest Against the Budget,” *Land and Liberty*, 444.

<sup>87</sup> John Paul, “The End of a Chapter,” *Land and Liberty*, September 1920, 479-480.

<sup>88</sup> Edward David, “The New Liberalism of C.F.G. Masterman” in *Essays in Anti-Labour History*, ed. Kenneth D. Brown (London: Macmillan, 1974), 37.

land monopoly.”<sup>89</sup> He stated that the Liberal Party should emphasize the principle of state control over the land, recognizing that “the land values which had been created by the city’s energy and the nation’s security shall make a special contribution to the needs of the city and the nation.”<sup>90</sup>

For its part, the attention of the Labour Party was directed elsewhere. Labour Party historian Maurice Cowling writes that, “Like the pre-war Liberal party, the Labour movement in the early 1920s was a rag-bag of attitudes, purposes, programmes and intentions which were held together by a common language, a small number of common objectives and the Trades Union movement.”<sup>91</sup> Among the contingent of Labour Party supporters of land values taxation was Wedgwood, who Cowling describes as “a Single-Taxer and a raw and ruthless believer in the rights of the oppressed nations and the inadequacy of the upper classes among whom he lived.”<sup>92</sup> That there should have been some hope for land values taxation within Labour ranks might be inferred from Cowling’s conclusion that, “There was as much of Henry George, William Morris, Wells, Blatchford, Angell, Scott Holland, Lowes Dickinson, Hobson and Gore as there was of Marx.”<sup>93</sup> Yet, the Fabians, still amongst the intellectual heart of the Labour Party, had altered their position on a full program of land values taxation by 1921. “The attempt to put into force any such crude universal measure – which, it may be explained, is very far from being what is

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<sup>89</sup> C.F.G. Masterman, *The New Liberalism* (1920), as quoted in Edward David, “The New Liberalism of C.F.G. Masterman” in *Essays in Anti-Labour History*, ed. Kenneth D. Brown (London: Macmillan, 1974), 36.

<sup>90</sup> C.F.G. Masterman, *The New Liberalism* (1920) as quoted in David, “The New Liberalism of C.F.G. Masterman” in *Essays in Anti-Labour History*, 36.

<sup>91</sup> Maurice Cowling, *The Impact of Labour, 1920-1924: the beginnings of modern British politics* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 28.

<sup>92</sup> Cowling, *The Impact of Labour*, 28.

<sup>93</sup> Cowling, *The Impact of Labour*, 28.

contemplated by the Labor Party – would inevitably jeopardise the very substance of the nation,” they wrote.<sup>94</sup>

Lloyd George’s coalition government came to an end in 1922 and was succeeded by a Conservative government in which Labour continued as the official opposition and the Liberal Party remained divided. Bonar Law’s brief government was followed by that of Stanley Baldwin, who in 1923 moved his followers firmly toward a full program of tariff reform that sought to combat high unemployment by reversing course on policies of free trade that had prevailed in Britain since the mid nineteenth century. Lloyd George and Asquith came together once again in the election of 1923 to wage an electoral fight under a common Liberal banner calling for the protection of free trade – perhaps the most fundamental of Liberal principles. Labour stood against tariff reform as well, continuing to believe that an overall economic solution could only be found in socialism. Public uneasiness with tariff reform returned a Parliament with 258 Conservatives, 191 Labour representatives and 158 Liberals.<sup>95</sup> The outcome was a new government headed by the Labour leader Ramsay Macdonald, yet dependent upon the support of Liberals. In 1923, a Labour Party committee had **recommended** that the powers of the Land Valuation Department be reinstated and that a flat rate land values tax amounting to a penny on the pound be implemented and levied and collected by local authorities.<sup>96</sup> Subsequently, Labour’s Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Snowden faced pressure from the Party’s single-tax supporters to put land values taxation into the budget. The Labour government, however, proved to be short-lived and so, too, the immediate pressure on Snowden.

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<sup>94</sup> Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *A Constitution for a Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain* (London, 1920) and *The Consumers’ Cooperative Movement* (London, 1921): 421-422; as quoted in Peter D’A. Jones, “Henry George and British Socialism”, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, vol. 47, no. 4, (October, 1988), 478.

<sup>95</sup> Crowson, *The Conservative Party Since 1830*, 45.

<sup>96</sup> Michael Tichelar, “The Labour Party and Land Reform in the Inter-War Period,” *Rural History*, 13, 1 (2002): 93.

For many electors, Liberal support of a Labour government had helped to ensure that the party of the left could not introduce the radical socialism that seemed to threaten the fabric of capitalist and democratic Britain. Nonetheless, it did little to help the Liberal Party establish itself as a strong third contender in Britain's political arena. The fundamental conflict within British society now seemed to be that between capital and labor, and Liberals, for their part, seemed uncertain as to how this chasm could be spanned. Most believed that government had to play some role in ensuring trade and industry were managed fairly, but found socialism to be, at best, a form of utopianism. Into this mix, Lloyd George once again sought to return to land. As Liberals joined to defend the principle of free trade in 1923, he had created two committees to address the land question – one focusing upon urban land and the other upon rural areas.<sup>97</sup> The election of 1924 that brought the fall of the Labour government reduced Liberal participation in Parliament to a total of 50 seats from the 158 of 1923.<sup>98</sup> Any hopes that the Liberal Party could overturn the Labour Party's status as His Majesty's opposition were dashed.

Lloyd George returned to the land in an effort to rescue his political fortunes. The land committees of 1923 reported in 1925, and offered two different agendas for urban and rural land that helped to launch Lloyd George on a final land campaign which, despite the fact that it appeared to be a return to the pre-war radicalism, was ultimately to end in failure. The rural report, also known as the 'green' book, called for investing possession of all agricultural land in the hands of the state, which would then transfer individual holdings to tenant farmers.<sup>99</sup> Landlords would be compensated through a government annuity based upon the rents accruing to

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<sup>97</sup> Ashley Mitchell, *Memoirs of a Fallen Political Warrior* (London: Land and Liberty Press, 1974), 42.

<sup>98</sup> Crowson, *The Conservative Party Since 1830*, 45.

<sup>99</sup> *The Land and the Nation: Rural Report of the Liberal Land Committee, 1923-25* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925?), 299.

the state.<sup>100</sup> Among the two reports, site value rating was limited to the policies for non-agricultural land outlined in the ‘brown’ book. Under the proposals for urban land, local authorities were to be allowed the power to purchase land and to implement planning schemes.<sup>101</sup> Local rating authorities were to be required to assess the site values of land based upon market prices and to levy rates which would provide at least 10 percent of their total rating incomes.<sup>102</sup> Lloyd George focused most of his attention on the rural report in an effort to improve Liberal electoral fortunes, but between December 1925 and February 1926, was forced to retreat from the controversial proposals of the rural report after opposition arose within his own party.<sup>103</sup> While the hopes of some progressive Liberals such as Masterman seemed to have returned with the land campaign, Lloyd George was soon to face renewed struggle within the Liberal Party.<sup>104</sup>

Opposition arose from a number of quarters. Many “progressive” Liberals had already left the party by the mid-1920s, and among Liberals remaining, there was fear that Lloyd George’s proposals were far too similar to the nationalization of the Labour Party. Edward Hilton Young and Sir Alfred Mond, who had been uncomfortable with what seemed to be a lack of a firm stand against socialism within the Liberal Party, bolted for the Conservatives.<sup>105</sup> Other Liberals, followers of Asquith, were simply frustrated by having yet another set of policies seemingly forced upon them by Lloyd George. While there can be little doubt that antipathy toward Lloyd George colored the attitudes of Georgist supporters toward his land campaign of the late 1920s, it was the principle of compensation for landowners rather than an appropriation

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<sup>100</sup> *The Land and the Nation*, 300.

<sup>101</sup> *Towns and the Land: Urban Report of the Liberal Land Committee, 1923-25* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1925?), 259-260.

<sup>102</sup> *Towns and the Land*, 262.

<sup>103</sup> Trevor Wilson, *The Downfall of the Liberal Party, 1914-1935* (London: Collins, 1966), 324.

<sup>104</sup> Edward David, “The New Liberalism of C.F.G. Masterman, 1873-1927” in *Essays in Anti-Labour History*, ed. Kenneth D. Brown (London: Macmillan, 1974), 40.

<sup>105</sup> Ian Packer, *Lloyd George, Liberalism and the Land: the Land Issue and Party Politics in England, 1906-1914* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2001), 184.

of the economic rent that drove opposition among a number of them. *Land and Liberty* argued that some Liberal documents and pronouncements seemed committed to "...upholding the principle of land purchase and the belief that land-users need to be dragooned instead of liberated into efficiency."<sup>106</sup> Lloyd George's rhetoric also irritated the editors of *Land and Liberty* (they referred to his pronouncements as "platform pyrotechnics") since while justifying reform by arguing that it was through ancient tradition land had been held from the crown in return for service, he nonetheless offered compensation to landlords.<sup>107</sup> "Mr. Lloyd George juggles with the plea about those sound 'ancient doctrines,' and produces from his conjuror's hat his schemes of landlord endowment and compensation at the expense of the taxpayer."<sup>108</sup> Historian Michael Bentley has concluded that in 1926:

...the land policy was included in the party programme as a result of Lloyd George's bludgeoning and the support of young enthusiasts, but the contention involved in putting it there revealed the plight of a liberalism between millstones, or, as Churchill formulated the problem, 'between the devil and the deep L.G.'<sup>109</sup>

Rather than land, however, it was coal that triggered the most import conflict in Britain in 1926. The troubled British coal industry faced a crisis by 1925. Declining competitiveness had led to the closure of many pits and while the Miner's Federation stood firm in refusing any cut in pay or addition to the workday, mine owners turned to a government subsidy to keep going. Following the end of the government subsidy, miners went on strike at the beginning of May, 1926, an act that was soon followed by a general strike begun by the Trades Union Congress. The strike lasted a total of nine days and brought much of the nation to a near economic standstill. Yet, the TUC stopped short of a constitutional showdown with the government and

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<sup>106</sup> "The Main Challenge" *Land and Liberty*, January 1926, 1.

<sup>107</sup> "Platform Pyrotechnics" *Land and Liberty*, January 1926, 2.

<sup>108</sup> "Platform Pyrotechnics" *Land and Liberty*, 2.

<sup>109</sup> Michael Bentley, "The Liberal Response to Socialism" in *Essays in Anti-Labour History*, ed. Kenneth D. Brown (London: Macmillan, 1974), 64.

the strike ended with no bloodshed. Many in Britain breathed a sigh of relief that the nation had withstood the test of seemingly being held hostage to organized labor. On both sides of the conflict there was the understanding that henceforth labor's demands within the nation would be handled through parliamentary means. Writing in *Land and Liberty*, John Paul argued that although there had been a universal sympathy with the miners, the idea of a strike in the context of a labor market in which there were a million unemployed caused one to consider that, "there has been nothing like it since Don Quixote charged the two flocks of innocent sheep...."<sup>110</sup> Paul wrote that the general strike was indeed an attempt to force the government to bend to the wishes of labor, and that it was a "war" through which "...those responsible for it now know to their cost that not that way lies the approach to the celestial city."<sup>111</sup> It was, he said, "...a direct challenge to peaceful ends with nothing to commend it, except as a short cut to disaster all round, and thence to dictatorship."<sup>112</sup>

Following *Land and Liberty's* condemnation of its industrial strike policy, the Labour Party fared little better as the journal's editors criticized the Party's agricultural policy. In September of 1926, it reported on the recently published report entitled, "A Labour Policy on Agriculture" which, it argued, did little to strike at the roots of the agricultural dilemma.<sup>113</sup> The report proposed that agricultural land begin to be acquired by the state with the exception of land on which the owners lived and land in "semi-urban areas with a substantial site value."<sup>114</sup> Landowners would be compensated, with reduced compensation allowed to "inefficient landlords" who had failed to maintain their property.<sup>115</sup> *Land and Liberty* criticized this policy

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<sup>110</sup> John Paul, "The General Strike", *Land and Liberty*, June 1926, 130.

<sup>111</sup> Paul, "The General Strike", *Land and Liberty*, June 1926, 130.

<sup>112</sup> Paul, "The General Strike", *Land and Liberty*, 130.

<sup>113</sup> "Labour Agricultural Policy: the Report of a Committee", *Land and Liberty*, September 1926, 212.

<sup>114</sup> "Labour Agricultural Policy", *Land and Liberty*, 212.

<sup>115</sup> "Labour Agricultural Policy", *Land and Liberty*, 212.

which it believed would force the government to pay inflated prices and limit its capacity to address the problems of the countryside. Noting that agricultural laborers could hope for little beyond the modest protections of wages boards, *Land and Liberty* concluded:

The report deprives the community of the advantage of the relentless and universal pressure of the rating and taxation of land values in forcing land into its best use, that use being measured by the exact and scientific process of valuation of land-value. It substitutes for this the capricious partial and arbitrary direction of a medley of government officials, county agricultural committees and rent courts guided by sympathy and not by science.<sup>116</sup>

The ongoing struggle between Georgists and the Labour Party within Britain was highlighted by a pamphlet produced by the small, but Georgist-inspired Commonwealth Land Party (CLP) in 1927 entitled, *Labour Discusses Its "Agricultural Policy"*. The group had been founded as the Commonwealth League after the First World War by Outhwaite and J.W. Graham Peace, and sought recovery of the economic rent in land primarily on moral grounds. The sympathies of the CLP were evident in the introduction to the 1927 work written by Graham Peace, who said that the argument over economic rent resembled that in America over the question of slavery. He concluded, "The British Land Lords will get what the American Slave Lords got – Justice!"<sup>117</sup>

The pamphlet began by recording the events of a local Labour Party conference held in Norwich on October 2 in which the chairman, S.V. Pearson, identified the return of rent in land to the public coffers as an issue with which party leaders must deal.<sup>118</sup> Divisions between "restorationists" and "purchasers" at the conference were clear. Edward G. Gaff, a local Labour representative, argued that the current Labour policy of taking a small portion of the land through purchase (while leaving land in urban areas virtually untouched) would leave unsolved the real

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<sup>116</sup> "Labour Agricultural Policy", *Land and Liberty*, 212.

<sup>117</sup> Commonwealth Land Party, *Labour Discusses Its "Agricultural Policy"* (London: Commonwealth Land Party, 1927?), 2.

<sup>118</sup> Commonwealth Land Party, *Labour Discusses Its "Agricultural Policy"*, 5.

dilemma of unemployment which was related to land as the base of all employment.<sup>119</sup> There was strong opposition, however. One Labour councilor expressed confusion about what economic rent meant and suggested that confidence should reside in the body of policy already laid out by Labour Party experts.<sup>120</sup> Another expressed doubt at the total amount of rental value, while others distrusted the practicality of attempting to collect rent when recognition of the right of property in land had become entrenched.<sup>121</sup> The difficulty of confronting entrenched interests in land was raised in a number of debates regarding the Georgist position, and here the CLP readily reprinted the comments of one representative, now an opponent of a firm statement in favor of the capture of rental value, arguing that “robbery is robbery” no matter when the land was taken.<sup>122</sup> Ultimately, representatives at the October, 1926 meeting decided that no vote would be taken on two resolutions stating that economic rent in land ought to be paid to the people and put at the forefront of Labour Party policy. For its part, the CLP expressed suspicion of the attitude of Labour Party leaders toward the land question:

The questions as to the origin of the Conference are an evidence of the suspicion entertained by the “party-men” of anything that may not be “in the programme.” If it does not bear the stamp of the official “expert,” then it must be rejected, or at any rate, very carefully watched. Repeatedly we have been assured by members of the Labour Party that they agreed with our demand for immediate restoration – “but it is not in the programme.” Which is to say that these timid ones are willing to advocate what they know to be wrong just because their leaders have not approved that which they believe to be right. No party can succeed that way.<sup>123</sup>

And yet, that the Labour Party had political and technocratic “experts” to guide its activities speaks to the very organizational and technical weaknesses Georgists encountered in the interwar period. By the 1920s, the numbers of those who had known and worked with Henry

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<sup>119</sup> Commonwealth Land Party, *Labour Discusses Its “Agricultural Policy”*, 5.

<sup>120</sup> Commonwealth Land Party, *Labour Discusses Its “Agricultural Policy”*, 7.

<sup>121</sup> Commonwealth Land Party, *Labour Discusses Its “Agricultural Policy”*, 7-8.

<sup>122</sup> Commonwealth Land Party, *Labour Discusses Its “Agricultural Policy”*, 10.

<sup>123</sup> Commonwealth Land Party, *Labour Discusses Its “Agricultural Policy”*, 12.

George were dwindling, and aside from leadership within the United Committee and the CLP, as well as members of the Labour Party who continued to support land values taxation, prominent leadership was lacking. In fact, the pages of *Land and Liberty* over the next decade were to chronicle the obituaries of many of the early followers of Henry George.<sup>124</sup> In his 1926 work entitled *What is the Single Tax?*, published by New York's Vanguard Press, Louis F. Post offered an extended and thoughtful argument in favor of the recapture of rental values through land values taxation. Yet, as he remarked at the beginning of the work, "But to answer authoritatively the question, 'What is the Single Tax?' recourse must be had to the writings of Henry George. They offer the only authoritative reply."<sup>125</sup> Forty years later, no other expert had emerged. Post's work continued on to argue against a host of proposed remedies to social and economic disorder including labor unions, protective tariffs, communism and socialism, and then to mount the philosophical argument for the 'single tax'. Indeed, Post's position at the U.S. Department of Labor in the 1920s had solidified his credentials as a responsible manager, though he was identified as a radical by his opponents. Nonetheless, his arguments in favor of Georgism, however logical, contained none of the statistical or economic analysis that an increasingly technocratic British society confronting both the decline of a coal mining industry and the increasingly challenging problems of world trade likely expected.

During the late 1920s, the major organs of the Georgist movement in Britain, specifically the CLP and the United Committee, remained active in continuing to promote the fundamental policies and philosophies of Henry George, highlighting the industrial and economic dilemmas of the decade, and tracking movements for land values taxation both at the municipal level in Britain and in other nations. They continued to follow the pronouncements of the Liberal and

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<sup>124</sup> See "Ignatius Singer," *Land and Liberty*, July-August 1926, p. 126-127; "William James Young," *Land and Liberty*, October 1926, 235; "Louis F. Post", *Land and Liberty*, March 1928, 41.

<sup>125</sup> Louis F. Post, *What is the Single Tax?* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1926), 5.

Labour parties, and sought to give support to Georgist sympathizers within each. Supporters of international Georgist movements could point with some hope to the **comradeship** of the delegates who assembled in Copenhagen in July of 1926 to attend the “Third International Conference to Promote the Taxation of Land Values and Free Trade.”<sup>126</sup> A November 1926 conference in Glasgow, marked by the attendance of representatives from a variety of municipalities, found that a majority supported making a representation to the national government in favor of the taxation of land values. Few at the time, however, were willing to commit their respective municipalities to the plan.<sup>127</sup> The Glasgow City Council approved a resolution supporting a petition to the Government in favor of land values rating in March 1927, and the Sheffield City Council did likewise at an April 1927 meeting.<sup>128</sup> The difficulties of convincing the wider public of the ultimate fruitfulness of the Georgist message were on the minds of many. An address sent by the CLP to the Copenhagen Conference emphasized that if the Georgist message was presented simply as a problem of taxation instead of an issue of justice, there was likely to be confusion and a risk of failure. It argued that the Danish Conference ought to make no reference whatsoever to taxation and proposed their own “Declaration of Principles” that, following in the tradition of the Declaration of the Rights of Man, they believed would reinforce the natural right of human communities to the land.<sup>129</sup>

Plans to secure support for land values taxation in Parliament bore little fruit. A March 1927 effort to introduce an amendment supporting local valuation and site value rating into the

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<sup>126</sup> “Third International Conference to Promote the Taxation of Land Values and Free Trade, Copenhagen, 10<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1926”, *Land and Liberty*, September 1926, 187-211.

<sup>127</sup> “Municipal Conference on Land Value Taxation in the Glasgow City Chambers, 18<sup>th</sup> November,” *Land and Liberty*, December 1926, 279.

<sup>128</sup> “Glasgow City Council and Land Value Rating”, *Land and Liberty*, April 1927, 82; and “Sheffield City Council: Report on Rating of Land Values”, *Land and Liberty*, January-February 1928, 12.

<sup>129</sup> Commonwealth Land Party, *A Message to Georgists (assembled, Chicago, September 10<sup>th</sup>-12, 1928)* (London: Commonwealth Land Party, 1928), 15-22. Here, the CLP reprinted the message delivered to the Danish conference in 1926.

reply to the King's speech failed by a vote of 88 to 244.<sup>130</sup> In December 1927, *Land and Liberty* was able to list a total of 59 members in the recently re-organized 'parliamentary land-values group.' It consisted of 46 Labourites, 9 Liberals, 3 "Co-operative", and 1 "Independent."<sup>131</sup>

These members would have found their greatest hope by the late 1920s to be Philip Snowden who, despite a controversial political career due to his opposition to the First World War, espoused a set of political and financial principles rooted in radical liberalism. He had been Chancellor of the Exchequer in the first Labour government and now had made it clear that he believed the rating of land values would "...relieve industry and agriculture, and liberate municipal enterprise."<sup>132</sup> *Land and Liberty* noted that the Labour Party in its 1928 policy statement entitled *Labour and the Nation* had introduced a manifesto declaring support for the use of a tax on land to recover part of the unearned income in economic rent accruing to landowners.<sup>133</sup> The Liberals, by contrast, earned the reprove of *Land and Liberty* which in assessing their platform before the 1929 election found that plans for land reform involved purchase. "They have no plans for dealing with the land monopoly that holds up in advance all enterprise whether public or private," it concluded.<sup>134</sup> Nonetheless, the election of 1929 brought dramatic increases in the vote for both the Labour and Liberal parties, with the Labour Party increasing its total vote from approximately 5.5 million in 1924 to nearly 8.5 million and increasing its representation from 151 seats to 287.<sup>135</sup> Though increasing its total vote from just under three million to approximately 5.3 million with a set of policies calling for specific

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<sup>130</sup> "Parliamentary Debate: Land Value and Local Taxation", *Land and Liberty*, March 1927, 63-68.

<sup>131</sup> "Land Values Parliamentary Group", *Land and Liberty*, December 1927, 227.

<sup>132</sup> Philip Snowden, quoted in *Reynold's Illustrated News*, August 29, 1928; quoted in Josiah C. Wedgwood, *The Land Question: Taxation and Rating of Land Values* (London: The Labour Party, 1929), 3.

<sup>133</sup> *Labour and the Nation* (1928), as quoted in Josiah C. Wedgwood, *The Land Question: Taxation and Rating of Land Values* (London: The Labour Party, 1929), 2.

<sup>134</sup> A.W. Madsen, "The Issue at the Election," *Land and Liberty*, May 1929, 99.

<sup>135</sup> Crowson, *The Conservative Party Since 1830*, 45.

solutions to Britain's problems, the Liberal Party increased its representation from only 50 seats to 59.<sup>136</sup> With 287 seats to the Conservatives' 260, Labour formed the new government.<sup>137</sup>

Though dependent upon a supportive Liberal Party, Labour had now emerged as the largest party in Parliament and Ramsay MacDonald took the post of prime minister. The party was not able to enjoy its victory for long, however, as by late 1929 the nation was beset by the same economic downturn that had gripped the United States. The consequences were drastic. The value of British exports was halved between 1929 and 1932 and three million tons of its shipping were left unused. Industrial production declined and unemployment skyrocketed from approximately one million in 1929 to 2.5 million by the end of 1930. Capitalism appeared to be in crisis, but the response of the Labour government, mirroring the early response of the U.S. government, was modest at best and included a grant to assist the Unemployment Insurance Fund, a housing bill, and some public works projects.<sup>138</sup> *Land and Liberty* followed the crisis and derided policies which it believed failed to find work for the unemployed while allowing landowners continued rewards. The Labour government was still committed to the orthodox policy of balancing the budget, and the editors hoped that Snowden at the Exchequer would support legislation for land values taxation. "There is the prospect of a tax on land values, and even the speculative landowner knows that this is no mere revenue-producing instrument. It will break down the monopoly, and by promoting industry will render unnecessary the humiliating public charity that takes the poverty and helplessness of working people for granted."<sup>139</sup> By early 1930, there was both new speculation that land values taxation would be a part of

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<sup>136</sup> Crowson, *The Conservative Party Since 1830*, 45.

<sup>137</sup> Crowson, *The Conservative Party Since 1830*, 45.

<sup>138</sup> Brand, *The British Labour Party*, 152.

<sup>139</sup> "Increased Expenditure on National Insurance, etc.," *Land and Liberty*, January 1930, 1.

Snowden's next budget and interest generated among municipal representatives meeting at a national conference in Manchester in support of local land values rating.<sup>140</sup>

Land values tax legislation was absent from the Finance Bill which Snowden introduced into Parliament in early 1930. Nonetheless, toward the conclusion of his Budget speech he stated that the Government intended to introduce a separate valuation bill that would begin the process of enacting land values taxation.<sup>141</sup> Josiah Wedgwood responded although he was supportive of the Chancellor's promises, he worried that a separate valuation bill unconnected with the Finance Bill would be blocked by the House of Lords.<sup>142</sup> Lloyd George also expressed his regret that specific land legislation had not been included in the budget bill. Snowden, citing the difficulties of Lloyd George's own finance bill of 1909, stated that it was important the Finance Bill be passed within a limited period of time and that valuation would have to wait for a separate bill.<sup>143</sup> An initial land valuation bill was indeed introduced into the Commons, but was not proceeded with. Subsequently, Snowden published it in a draft version prior to what he said would be its re-introduction into Commons, and appears to have gained the support of Georgist voices in *Land and Liberty*.<sup>144</sup> Though noting that there were some difficulties such as regarded both the exclusion of minerals and the inclusion of some improvements in land values, *Land and Liberty* looked to the bill with optimism:

We may hope that the introduction of this Bill will mark a new phase in post-war politics. So many years have been spent in evolving hasty improvisations for dealing with symptoms while leaving causes untouched, that we rejoice to see what appears to be the first step towards dealing with the land question in a serious and constructive spirit. It is

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<sup>140</sup> See "The Prospects of a Budget tax on Land Values," *Land and Liberty*, February, 1930, 1, and "National Conference to Promote the taxation and Rating of Land Values," *Land and Liberty*, March, 1930, 57.

<sup>141</sup> "Parliamentary Debates: a Separate Bill for Land Valuation," *Land and Liberty*, April-May, 1930, 84.

<sup>142</sup> "Parliamentary Debates: a Separate Bill for Land Valuation," *Land and Liberty*, 84.

<sup>143</sup> "Parliamentary Debates: a Separate Bill for Land Valuation," *Land and Liberty*, 84-85.

<sup>144</sup> "The Land Valuation Bill: Survey of its Provisions and Certain Recommendations," *Land and Liberty*, September 1930, 169

long overdue. Unemployment has already risen to over the two million mark, and we tremble to think of what figure it will have attained ere the winter is passed.<sup>145</sup>

Snowden did include both valuation and taxation of land in his budget of 1931. The valuation process meant that the tax would be charged for the first time in 1933-34 and first payable in July, 1934.<sup>146</sup> In an article in *Land and Liberty*, A.W. Madsen remarked upon some of the continuing difficulties of Snowden's proposal, but concluded that:

The financial, social and economic effects of the tax, its justification as a proper source of revenue, the claim that land value is for public use and not for private appropriation, the proof in the making that here is to be found the solution of the unemployment problem – these are the questions that the Budget of 1931 raises for settlement.<sup>147</sup>

The Finance Bill passed the House of Commons on its third reading by a vote of 274 to 222 and, classed as a “Money Bill”, became law without the interference of the House of Lords.<sup>148</sup> However, the affairs of the Labour Government were soon thrown into crisis. Governmental income had dropped and expenditure risen since the 1929 market crash. Estimates of the national debt ranged from £100 and £170 million and Labour ministers, many of whom considered themselves committed to protecting the interests of Britain's workers, split over the need to make substantial cuts in unemployment benefits to bring the budget into balance.<sup>149</sup> The unresolved crisis led Ramsay MacDonald to submit his resignation to the King. Yet, talks with other parties soon convinced the King that MacDonald ought to lead a National government that would be composed of representatives of all three parties. MacDonald agreed, but soon found that he and the Labour politicians who followed him into the National government were expelled and branded as traitors by the rest of the Labour Party. Although

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<sup>145</sup> F.C.R.D., “The Land Valuation Bill and After,” *Land and Liberty*, November 1930, 218.

<sup>146</sup> A.W. Madsen, “Mr. Snowden's Budget,” *Land and Liberty*, May-June 1931, 70.

<sup>147</sup> A.W. Madsen, “Mr. Snowden's Budget,” *Land and Liberty*, 71.

<sup>148</sup> “The Passing of the Finance Bill,” *Land and Liberty*, July-August, 1931, 105.

<sup>149</sup> John Ramsden, ed. *The Oxford Companion to Twentieth-Century British Politics* (Oxford: Oxford U.P, 2002), 606.

Snowden brought his commitment to the valuation and taxation of land into the new National government, the implementation of both was now to be under significant threat as the former Labour leaders worked with their new allies.

The early 1930s were to see Britain in the midst of an economic crisis which would demand unorthodox economic solutions that betrayed the tenets of both free trade and land values taxation that Georgist groups had done so much to champion. Alienated by his own party and at the head of a new coalition government, MacDonald took Britain off the gold standard and increased taxes while cutting government salaries and unemployment assistance by 10 percent. A “means test” was introduced to reduce the number of unemployed who might be able to find assistance elsewhere. The new government called an election in the fall of 1931 and received support for what MacDonald termed a “doctor’s mandate” to fix the problems of the depression in the form of over 500 seats.<sup>150</sup> While the candidates supporting the National government received overwhelming support, the rump Labour party became the official opposition with just 61 seats.<sup>151</sup>

Britain retreated from its historic commitment to free trade. While some inroads had been made in the philosophy of free trade, first largely committed to in the mid-1840s, most British imports remained free of taxation through the 1920s. The Import Duties Act created a series of tariffs ranging from 10 to over 33% on a variety of imports while establishing privileged trading relationships amongst Britain’s Commonwealth areas.<sup>152</sup> As *Land and Liberty* noted in its March-April, 1932 issue, “In nine days of Parliamentary time, the system of Free Trade that has obtained in this country for 80 years has been overthrown.”<sup>153</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Crowson, *The Conservative Party Since 1830*, 46.

<sup>151</sup> Crowson, *The Conservative Party Since 1830*, 46.

<sup>152</sup> Arnstein, *Britain Yesterday and Today*, 313.

<sup>153</sup> “Principal Contents,” *Land and Liberty*, March-April 1932, 29.

The new ‘National’ majority in the Commons was dominated by Conservatives and it was not long before the process of land valuation was ended. Neville Chamberlain, now Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced the suspension of land valuation in December of 1931 **citing the expense** of the implementation of land **values duties – expenses estimated** at between £1 million and £1.5 million – during an era when economy was critical.<sup>154</sup> In his response as a member of the Labour opposition, Clement Attlee stated:

We know perfectly well that the Conservative Party hate and loathe the Land Duties, and have been clamouring to get rid of them, and with a Conservative or Coalition Government with a majority of Conservatives returned, even if the pound were looking at its best and the country’s finances were flourishing, they would still have objected to this and have made their Minister toe the line.<sup>155</sup>

The collapse of land valuation at the end of 1931 corresponded with a decline in the intensity with which Georgists pursued their goal of national legislation to enact land values taxation. The United Committee, the sponsors of *Land and Liberty*, had begun to publish the journal bi-monthly rather than monthly in the early 1930s. Noting in its January-February 1932 issue that the 25<sup>th</sup> year of the journal was approaching, John Paul remarked that the Committee’s call for financing, “. . .is urgent and is addressed not only to our people at home, but to the many friends of *Land and Liberty* across the seas.<sup>156</sup> Disillusioned with the nation’s turn toward protectionism, *Land and Liberty* was forced to grapple with the increasing emphasis on nationalization by the opposition Labour Party as the solution to land questions. In its agricultural policy statement published in 1932, the Labour Party supported enabling legislation to allow the **state, with an appropriate form of compensation, to acquire land**. A national Commission would take charge of the land and ensure that agricultural development proceeded

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<sup>154</sup> “Scrapping the Land Value Tax: The Pro-Landlord Policy of the National Government,” *Land and Liberty*, November-December 1931, 178.

<sup>155</sup> “Scrapping the Land Value Tax,” *Land and Liberty*, 178.

<sup>156</sup> John Paul, “The United Committee and its Work,” *Land and Liberty*, January-February 1932, 7.

in an orderly manner. The payment of notes issued upon the takeover of land would be paid for by the value of the redeemed land. As a final component of the policy, a national wages board would seek to control agricultural wage rates.<sup>157</sup>

John Paul, the editorial heart of *Land and Liberty*, died in 1933 and it became clear that Conservatives would soon convince the government to abandon the land values movement altogether. By 1934, the journal had slimmed down and contained less erudite and original material. It simply printed the basic reports of affiliated Georgist groups and periodically re-published a selection of Henry George's work. Snowden continued to support land values taxation, remarking in July of 1934 that the proposal to repeal land valuation and land taxation was "an act of deliberate party deception, of deliberate sharp practice, the latest of the many acts which show the true character of this Government and exposed the hypocrisy of its claim to be a National Government."<sup>158</sup> Nonetheless, the Labour Party had failed to mention land values taxation in its most recent policy statement entitled, *For Socialism and Peace*.<sup>159</sup> The discrepancies between the remaining support given the land values movement by politicians with traditionally Liberal finance positions and Labour Party supporters committed to socialism was demonstrated in Hugh Dalton's 1935 work *Practical Socialism for Britain* in which he argued for the socialization of land through gradual government purchase. A primary aim of this purchase, he believed, was to begin to recoup the unearned increment for present generations and to move to the more efficient control of land use. Dalton appeared to respect the old Georgist call of the nineteenth century, but argued that a continuing commitment to the simple collection of the unearned increment would distract from the wider aims of socialism. He wrote:

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<sup>157</sup> The Labour Party, *The Land and the National Planning of Agriculture* (London: The Labour Party, 1932),

<sup>158</sup> "The Repeal of the Land-Value Tax," *Land and Liberty*, August 1934, 97.

<sup>159</sup> "The Labour Party's Programme" *Land and Liberty*, August 1934, 97.

Progressive nineteenth-century opinion, shocked by the spectacle of great unearned increments, took a wrong turning. The agitation for the taxation of privately-owned land values followed a false scent. It led away from public ownership and made even some Socialists forget Socialism. For every dozen speeches made by Lord Snowden, for example, on the taxation of land values, I doubt if he made one on public ownership. Henry George, the Land Taxer, had a greater influence, unfortunately, than Arthur Russell Wallace, the Land Nationaliser, a stronger and clearer thinker, but a less eloquent evangelist.<sup>160</sup>

Britain's political left had now nearly capped the old fire of the Georgist movement.

There was little to galvanize what appeared to be a diminishing land values movement until 1936 when the London County Council (LCC) sought power to begin rating land values in an attempt to restrain the burden of rates upon occupiers. Municipal conferences, many covered by *Land and Liberty*, had pressed for land values rating during the 1920s and 1930s, but there was little legislative movement at the national level. However, in 1934, the Labour Party had gained a majority on the LCC after nearly three decades in which the more conservative-minded Municipal Reformers had dominated the council.<sup>161</sup> In July of 1936, the LCC debated the rating of land values and a letter was sent to the Minister of Health with notification that there was a majority of support on the LCC for enabling legislation.<sup>162</sup> Nonetheless, in reply to a question in Commons in January, 1937, the Minister stated that he did not envision the introduction of any legislation for land values rating.<sup>163</sup> Further, an effort to introduce a private member's bill calling for the rating of land values failed to receive a second reading in November of the same year.<sup>164</sup>

In July of 1938, the LCC decided "that legislation be promoted in the Session of Parliament 1938-39 to provide for the rating of site values; and that the costs and expenses of

<sup>160</sup> Hugh Dalton, *Practical Socialism for Britain* (London: Routledge and Sons, 1935), 152.

<sup>161</sup> Sir Gwilym Gibbon and Reginald W. Bell, *History of the London County Council, 1889-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1939), 115.

<sup>162</sup> "The London County Council: Government Refusal to Introduce Land Values Legislation", *Land and Liberty*, March 1937, 42.

<sup>163</sup> "The London County Council", *Land and Liberty*, 42.

<sup>164</sup> *Land and Liberty*, December 1937, 177.

promoting such legislation be defrayed out of the County fund.”<sup>165</sup> Herbert Morrison, a Labour M.P. and leader of the LCC argued that landowners were gaining from the natural increases in the value of their land and that the ability of **landlords, who left areas undeveloped**, to benefit from their holdings when the community sought to buy land for public improvement meant that local authorities were suffering.<sup>166</sup> There was opposition to the movement as *The Ratepayer*, the organ of London’s Municipal Reformers argued, “The Rating of Site Values, now advocated by the Socialist majority...is designed by them to serve as an instrument for the spoliation of a particular class, the disregard of existing contracts and the overthrow of the existing social and economic fabric.”<sup>167</sup> Moreover, it argued, “Past experience has shown that it is practically impossible to impose additional burdens on (so-called) site values without damaging the community as a whole.”<sup>168</sup> In **the** growing metropolis that was London, it stated, “Additional burdens on land would have a serious effect on the maintenance of open spaces, garden squares and sports grounds.”<sup>169</sup>

The LCC approved a draft bill in November 1938 that was delivered to Parliament and given the title London Rating (Site Values) Bill. It provided for a rate of two shillings on the pound on the annual site value of land in the administrative county of London. Money raised through the levy would be delivered to the general county account. In the debate over the draft bill, one Municipal Reformer identified the bill as “the first step towards the confiscation of rent.”<sup>170</sup> Eventually, what began as two shillings on the pound would be become expropriation,

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<sup>165</sup> “The London County Council: Promotion of a Land Value Rating Bill,” *Land and Liberty*, August 1939, 118.

<sup>166</sup> Herbert Morrison, “L.C.C. Bill for Site Value Rating (Statement Issued to the Press),” *Land and Liberty*, October 1938, 154.

<sup>167</sup> “Rating and Taxation of Site Values: Fallacies Exposed,” *The Ratepayer*, August 1938, 280.

<sup>168</sup> “Rating and Taxation of Site Values: Fallacies Exposed,” *The Ratepayer*, 278.

<sup>169</sup> “Rating and Taxation of Site Values: Fallacies Exposed,” *The Ratepayer*, 278.

<sup>170</sup> “Rating of Site Values, Proposed Bill,” *The Ratepayer*, December 1938, 392.

he said.<sup>171</sup> Nonetheless, the course of the LCC bill as a private bill within Parliament drew the interest of Georgist supporters including *Land and Liberty* which recovered something of the vitality in its articles that had marked the early 1930s when interest swirled around Snowden's finance bill. However, as a private bill, the LCC initiative was rejected by the Speaker of the House of Commons because it represented broad questions of public policy and thus, in his view, ought to be introduced as a public bill.<sup>172</sup> A subsequent attempt to introduce the bill was made under the "ten minutes rule" but voted down in Commons by a margin of 229 votes to 135.<sup>173</sup> While Morrison argued that the provisions of the bill would allow rates to be lowered on ratepayers across London, H.G. Williams argued that legislation would ultimately undermine the already suffering building trades.<sup>174</sup>

The outbreak of the Second World War introduced yet another set of substantive changes to Britain's social and political environment that fundamentally re-shaped attitudes toward issues of land. After 1945, the Labour Party's hefty majority allowed it to undertake efforts at nationalization in some industries and to establish a web of social welfare services. Though new mechanisms for town and land-use planning were put in place, references to Henry George's philosophy as a transformational measure were quite limited. Nonetheless, study of Georgist influences in the early twentieth century offers important insight into the changing nature of British liberalism well into the 1930s. George's commitment to preserving individual initiative while returning rights in land to the people offered important intellectual fuel for Liberals who were adjusting themselves to the strained politics **of the turn of the century** when social reform and labor organization posed a challenge to the old Liberal tenets of free trade and minimal

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<sup>171</sup> "Rating of Site Values, Proposed Bill," *The Ratepayer*, December 1938, 392.

<sup>172</sup> "London Rating (Site Values) Bill: Mr. Speaker's Ruling," *Land and Liberty*, March 1939, 42-43.

<sup>173</sup> "London Rating (Site Values) Bill, The L.C.C.'s Proposals Disallowed," *Land and Liberty*, March 1939, 58.

<sup>174</sup> "London Rating (Site Values) Bill, The L.C.C.'s Proposals Disallowed," *Land and Liberty*, March 1939, 56, 58.

government. Georgist thought called out to many on the left and offered a unifying message that was able to support social and economic justice while eschewing socialist impulses that many believed would deprive British business and industry of the gains that had been made through competition. The degree to which reform legislation ought to be infused with Georgist principles as opposed to economic socialism generated splits among those influenced by George, as did the question of whether Georgist principles could, or even should, be fulfilled by progressive legislation. Nonetheless, Lloyd George incorporated specific principles of land values taxation into the wider aims of progressive liberalism after 1908, where they came to form a critical, though much-debated part of the new Liberal agenda.

Georgist thought, as well as the fates of intellectual and political liberalism, were drastically affected by the **First World War**. Simple political calculation was indeed a part of the story. In the interests of maintaining a coalition government, Lloyd George sacrificed the few concrete steps that had been taken to develop policy founded on the principles of Georgism. Yet, Georgism had been joined to both philosophical and political liberalism before the war and at a fundamental level suffered as the voice of liberalism faded. The Liberal Party proved unable to offer an effective message to an electorate split between a Labour Party that offered a programmatic solution to taming the injustices of capitalism and a Conservative Party that took on the mantle of protection of capital and property. The Labour Party accepted the justice implicit in higher taxes on unearned increments, but although a number of old land tax supporters with backgrounds in radical liberalism migrated to the Labour Party in the belief that it represented the best overall hope for reform, Labour policy continued to emphasize controlling capital rather than looking toward the overall reform of land tenure. Moreover, the Labour **Party** retreated in the face of accusations that a recapture of rental value meant confiscation. The

eventual **acknowledgement** by most party officials that land reform would only be achieved when compensation could be offered to **landowners significantly** diminished the impact of Georgism.

In the midst of interwar politics, Georgism offered few policy choices to an electorate that came face to face with the very real dilemmas of unemployment, housing shortages, and floundering industry. Land value tax proponents promised an economy reinvigorated, but its proponents were wedded to a belief that the nation would fare best with a minimum of Government interference. As such, they defended a doctrine that was most attuned to the reforming impulses of late nineteenth-century liberalism and found itself out of step with a populace demanding immediate policy solutions to economic dilemmas. The socialism of the Labour Party proved itself much more adept in responding to the disruption and despair of the interwar period and translating theory into **a more programmatic** response in which government would take control of the industrial base.<sup>175</sup> There **may** have been warning when the British Marxist, Henry M. Hyndman said shortly after George's death that, "He has died in a chivalrous attempt to accomplish the impossible without even organizing his forces for the struggle."<sup>176</sup> Moreover, T.H. Bonaparte writes that while in 1917 there were likely many more supporters of

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<sup>175</sup> For a further discussion of the apparent inability of Georgism to move beyond the vision of late nineteenth century liberalism, see Mark A. Sullivan, "Why the Georgist Movement Has Not Succeeded: A Personal Response to the Question Raised by Warren J. Samuels", *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, vol. 62, no. 3 (July 2003): 607-623. The inability of many organized political, social, and economic groups to accommodate themselves to the complexities of the twentieth century has been noted in by N. Soldon in his work on the Liberty and Property Defence League, an ideological opponent of Georgism in the late nineteenth century. He writes, "If the league failed to achieve its purpose, this was because its ideals no longer answered the needs of the big battalions and the problems of the times. Industrial units and political units all grew in size and complexity – planning, organisation, and regulation became essential. It was no accident that the league's emphasis on freedom echoed the shouts of the anarchists, equally alienated by the growing size, organisation and impersonal qualities of an industrial society." N. Soldon, "Laissez-Faire ad Dogma: The Liberty and Property Defence League, 1882-1914," in Kenneth D. Brown, ed., *Essays in Anti-Labour History: Responses to the Rise of Labour in Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1974), 233.

<sup>176</sup> Edward J. Rose, Henry George (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1968), 153; as cited in T.H. Bonaparte, "Henry George's Impact at Home and Abroad: He Won the Workers of Marx's Adopted Country But Through Leninism Marxism Has Won Half the World", *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 46, no. 1 (January 1987), 118.

Georgism worldwide than of Marxism, that a worldwide movement did not emerge “may be attributed in large measure to a singular inattention to political action on the part of the Georgists.”<sup>177</sup> The specter of a privileged elite that maintained its social and economic position by exploiting the ownership of land that had come as a result of the accident of birth was diminished in the eyes of many reformers in the interwar period. The potential of private ownership to restrict economic growth through its monopoly of land might well continue, but the prestige and real wealth of the aristocracy had been reduced in the eyes of many as a result of taxation and economic and human losses.

Study of the decline of effective Georgist political influence in the interwar period is not only essential for understanding the losses of a social, political, and economic movement that peaked between 1912 and 1913, but also for understanding the altered environment within which a variety of political and economic groups operated after 1918. Central to this study is the relationship of Georgism to intellectual and political liberalism, with which it had been bound in the prewar period, and along with which it would suffer in the interwar period.

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<sup>177</sup> T.H. Bonaparte, “Henry George’s Impact at Home and Abroad: He Won the Workers of Marx’s Adopted Country But Through Leninism Marxism Has Won Half the World”, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 46, no. 1 (January 1987), 118.