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## **Dialectics and the Millennium: emergence of the Synthesis**

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### I

THE WORLD has been, for most of this century, divided into two camps with sharply differing creeds (or differing 'certainties', an alternative choice of word to be justified in what follows): the communists as the 'evil empire', and the capitalists as 'exploiters'. But now, suddenly, in a matter of only a few months, events have taken place around a world-growing-smaller which few could have imagined, and which even those few would not have guessed could happen so soon. The warring certainties are dissolving, their ability to satisfy even their advocates is collapsing and only the diehards in both camps are left clinging to the old certainties. Everything still intact seems so unfamiliar. 'What in the world,' one is entitled to ask, 'is happening?'

There is an elemental answer: history is giving birth.

History, which some first thought might be 'ending', is instead bearing us a future. Something new is surely coming for human society. It would be rash to insist on foretelling exactly, in minute detail, what to expect, or even to know if the birth will be easy or will be difficult. But there is good reason to sense, and this book insists, that what is emerging from the present chaos is an idea long in coming: a well-seasoned concept of how the human race can live at peace and with justice on an earth made even smaller by our growing population and our burgeoning technology. There are long fore-shadows of a synthesis soon to emerge out of the two ageing certainties — out of the tension between the reasoned idea of individual freedom and the revolution spawned by indignation over capitalism's failure to nourish both rich and poor alike.

All this is happening in the closing decade of another thousand years on our calendar — another millennium. That word is so freighted with meaning that to use it is to risk dismissal in the minds of some. There is, however, an essential core to the word in its generic (as opposed to its narrower eschatologic) sense which makes it almost obligatory in considering something so fundamental as historical evolution. I am not suggesting, nor are the other authors of this book, a vision of the future rooted in any particular religious system of beliefs, although that seems to be the starting point for the concept of the millennium. We do insist, however, upon a level of historical consequence which the word implies, and I will argue that it is appropriate, after first laying an adequate foundation.

History does give birth to new concepts, although not often enough to make the process seem familiar to people in their everyday lives who may be living through such an epoch. Such sea changes are separated by long stretches of flattened time. Evolution, slow though it be, is the only ground for hope for a species as troubled as ours. One of the more recent realisations is the process by which history does give birth. The gestation period in cultural evolution, when measured against the life span of any single individual among the concurrent five and a half billion of us, is so long, skipping some entire lifetimes and being lost against the busy background for others, that revelation when it emerges comes as a surprise. It was as recent as the early years of the last century that the philosopher George Hegel first saw the process of evolutionary birth clearly enough to give it a name: dialectics. Thesis, antithesis and synthesis — the continuity I am suggesting here. Initially, for Hegel, this was just his own method for reasoning. Hegel was struck by the inevitability of contrast, the clash between opposites, and arising out of them a synthesis which contains within it the essence of both. Only out of that personal view of individual thought, quite logically, did the concept grow in his mind into the architectonics of historical evolution.

The idea that history is once again giving birth was a working hypothesis for the present authors well before the social avalanche of the last few months of 1989. The confluence of a wide variety of trends and events suggested the possibility of a millenarian change of direction that could take the form of a new social contract to guide

mankind through the 21st Century. That new philosophy is encapsulated in the works of an American social reformer, Henry George, whose radical proposals are based on nothing less than the transformation of both social relationships and the way mankind relates to his natural habitat.

John Locke, Adam Smith and others gave us the thesis during what Paine called the Age of Reason. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, feigning cold rationality to mask seething anger at the plight of poor people whom 'capitalism' had apparently excluded from the new riches, called for revolution: the antithesis which has scarred so much of the 20th Century. Henry George's realisation about how mankind must live on a God-given planet, although it has roots that go back a millennium or more, is only now at long last timely as the wedding of reason and revolution. George painstakingly probed history's first full manifestation of individual liberty as the founding fathers had laid it down, and as we have come to know it. Perplexed at the riddle of how some were excluded from the fruits of a new social contract that for others was working so well, he was able to identify the one great imperfection, the snag on which freedom catches: the idea that any individual can monopolise even a part of the earth we share.

The burden of this opening effort is as follows. In section II, I review discoveries made since Hegel's initial revelation about the process by which history gives birth. In sections III and IV, I examine the proposition that Henry George's prospectus is the synthesis to which the world is tending, tracking the continuity through two unmet provisions — or 'provisos' — which were spelled out in the original thesis but never resolved. Finally, in section V, we face up to the challenge of the word millennium and place the studies that follow in the context of the overall proposition that history is moving on to a qualitatively new social framework.

## II

George Hegel's dialectics — the first formal analysis of the manner in which history gives birth — grew out of his belief that all ideas worth talking about are relationships, and that the most universal of all such relationships is contrast or opposition. History

is being made only at those times when contrasting ideas are at war. It is in that sense that we might be able to justify the suggestion that, with the collapse of socialism, history has come to an end. The suggestion that the collapse of socialism has left the world without a struggle is a superficial one; it misses a major point. It is not the struggle of opposing philosophies that leads to transition from thesis to antithesis to synthesis, but the collapse of belief in the certainty that happens to be predominant at the time which creates the vacuum of uncertainty. Succession — what comes next — has more to do with continuity of thought than with struggle.

Hegel's writings have been called 'masterpieces of obscurity', and his dialectics have been both debated and adapted for other purposes. The concept has persisted, however, and a more recent American student of philosophy with a unique ability to simplify and qualify, Will Durant, has some things to say about Hegel and his dialectics that will help us here.<sup>1</sup>

The movement of evolution is a continuous development of oppositions, and their merging and reconciliation. Schilling was right — there is an underlying 'identity of opposites'; and Fichte was right — thesis, antithesis and synthesis constitute the formula and secret of all development and all reality.

History is a dialectical movement, almost a series of revolutions in which people after people, genius after genius, become the instrument of the Absolute. Great men are not so much begetters, as midwives, of the future.

Just as dialectics was the work of Hegel and Schilling and Fichte, working together, talking together, so some of the essential elements of Henry George's realisation, to which he was originally drawn out of his life's experience, were already familiar to a long list of other reasoners: the French physiocrats, Tiberius Gracchus, and a Spartan king named Agis, to suggest a few. He was surprised to learn he had predecessors some years after having drawn *Progress and Poverty*<sup>2</sup> out of his own heart and head, and in *The Science of Political Economy*<sup>3</sup> he credits the physiocrats and others.

Such is the way with cultural evolution — it is a shared process, a social development in which individuals may play a role, but are never enough in themselves — and it is the way with our understanding of the manner in which history gives birth, a process Hegel

first suggested but which others have helped us to understand more clearly since. There are two important aspects of it that we will do little more at this point than to name, planting them in the reader's awareness until such time as their significance emerges: continuity and fallibilism.

Continuity in particular is a key element because it is a necessary ground for the concept of order, whether in space or in time. If it were not for continuity there would be chance, history in random sequence. There is clearly a continuity of time from past through the present to the future; but is there continuity in social events? If not, the idea of dialectical history falls apart.

Fallibilism is linked to Durant's observation above, that great men are the midwives, not the seers, of the future. Men, even the great men, are not themselves the Absolute, but simply the instruments. Their ideas are not perfect revelation, but concepts built up gradually, those of current thinkers standing on the shoulders of thinkers who came before them.

One philosopher who dealt scrupulously with both concepts was Charles Sanders Peirce, who was born, as was Henry George, in the year 1839. There have been intriguing hints of chronological mystery down through the course of human events, concurrent phenomena which seem to suggest something about determination (maybe even continuity) which we have yet to understand. The discovery almost simultaneously by Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace of natural selection in evolution is one example. Another is the haunting deaths of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson within hours of each other (although miles apart) on the Fourth of July just exactly half a century after the Fourth of July they had earlier shared. They do, at least, suggest order and pattern in the course of human events; as does the fact that two of America's most fertile minds — two thinkers whose realisations are still coming to public awareness — were born within only eight days of each other, one (George) at Philadelphia on September 2, 1839, the other (Peirce) at another 'cradle' of American liberty in Massachusetts on September 10 of that same year. Peirce was born not at Boston, but just across the Charles River in Cambridge, where General Washington had earlier made his headquarters in his fight with the British redcoats. A seldom remembered logician, philosopher and physicist, Peirce must nevertheless

be credited with the most familiar philosophical structure in this century: pragmatism. George Gilder is one who has called him 'America's greatest philosopher.'

In his writings, Peirce clarified the process of how history gives birth. The only readily available collection of his work is *Chance, Love and Logic*<sup>4</sup>, which amounts to a midwife's manual on the mechanics of evolutionary birth.

It is doubt and uncertainty, and nothing else, says Peirce, that trigger thought; and it is thought that leads ultimately to new belief. Or more exactly, in words from a seminal essay of 1878<sup>5</sup> called 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear': 'The action of thought is excited by the irritation of doubt, and ceases when belief is attained; so that the production of belief is the sole function of thought.' Belief, in turn, creates habit, and thus determines the regularity that continues unbroken until doubt once again arises.

Pragmatism began, it can be clearly established, with a definition of belief that Peirce and others received from the Scottish educator, Alexander Bain. A belief, he said flatly, 'is that upon which a man is prepared to act.'<sup>6</sup> So the emergence of a widely shared, or popularly held, belief is as near as we can come to the birth of a social idea. And it arises only out of the kind of doubt or uncertainty in which our world suddenly finds itself in the dying years of the 20th Century. We maintain and continue to carry out habitual behavior so long as creeds or 'certainties' remain intact, shedding them and searching with all our rational powers for new beliefs only with the onset of doubt.

Where, though, does doubt come from? Any man able single-handedly to bring about in society full and authentic doubt (for there are such things as false or simulated doubt) would, of course, wield a powerful political tool; but the great mass of people is not easily herded into uncertainty. We all cling to belief with tenacity, as the two camps have done through most of this century. 'You can fool some of the people all of the time, and you can fool all of the people some of the time,' but in historical fact it is social experience that leads to the kind of wholesale uncertainty in which the world is now caught up. 'Genuine doubt arises only in response to an experiential challenge or obstacle,' according to Thomas S. Knight in a clarification of his thinking to be found in a biography of Peirce.<sup>7</sup>

There is another important element in pragmatism — or, more specifically, in pragmaticism — that should be noted in this recitation of the generalities. While it was Peirce who originated this now-popular way of thinking, it was the product of many minds, some of them better known than Peirce: William James, for instance, and John Dewey. It was some of the others who put the word deeply enough into the popular vocabulary so that now it does not seem unusual to hear one say, 'we are all pragmatists now,' or 'let us be pragmatic about this.' While the originators all agreed that a true statement is one that produces satisfactory results, they differed on the question of 'satisfactory results for whom?' Peirce insisted the satisfaction could not be restricted to one individual, and as biographer Knight has put it, 'For a proposition to be true, its results must be considered satisfactory by the whole community of competent observers.'<sup>8</sup> Knight explains:

When Peirce concluded in his (essay) 'Fixation of Belief' that truth is a stable set of beliefs or a state of satisfaction, he did not mean the satisfaction of one person but 'the satisfaction which would ultimately be found if the inquiry were pushed to its ultimate and indefeasible issue.' This qualification distinguished his theory of truth from that of James, F. S. C. Schiller and others who, under the name 'Pragmatism', held a true proposition to be one that results in satisfying conduct for desirable results for the individual.

Peirce was patient about this misuse of his term for a while, but when it began to appear in literary journals with the individualistic slant he came up with a new term: Pragmaticism. It is just this social transition, this broader understanding of the process — belief, habit, regularity, emerging dissatisfaction, uncertainty, irritation, thought and back once again to full, social belief and freshly taken habit — that we are here likening to historical birth.

Is the astonishing avalanche of current events which assumed an almost daily manifestation in the second half of 1989, an example of uncertainty? In mid-August of that year, *The Economist* carried on its cover an illustration suggesting a vast, smouldering wasteland and the headline: 'The century that purged itself.'

'The triumph of the twentieth century,' explained the magazine in its lead editorial, 'is that it has purged itself of certainty.' If that conclusion were legitimate then, how much more so is it now that

socialism has collapsed in eastern Europe and the capitalist West is staggering under budgetary deficits, increasing homelessness, banking failures, the bankruptcy of prestigious investment firms already weakened by malpractice, and growing unemployment? The uncertainty that will lead beyond thesis and antithesis to a synthesis is not a breakdown of belief in just one or the other creed, but in both.

This has indeed been, as *The Economist* editorial claimed, a century of uncertainty. It has been marked not by one certainty, but by two. Nations have been torn internally, as well as externally, by the 'conflict of visions' that Thomas Sowell has described.<sup>9</sup> The vast majority of people have been so captivated by one certainty or the other for so many years that there has been all too little critical thought. Belief is resilient. It lasts longer than it ought to because we hold onto it tightly as a bandage against the irritation of doubt. It closes its eyes to uncertainty as long as there is the vestige of an excuse, even longer, even to the extent of misrepresenting to itself. Cerebration on behalf of existing certainty is not to be mistaken for authentic thought.

### III

The focus of our enquiry is summed up by this proposition: *Henry George is our contemporary synthesis in the course of human events.* The words are chosen carefully. The closing phrase is taken from Philadelphia history, having been used there so many years earlier, when the thesis of this structure was being put in place in the United States. It was prefaced in that case by a critical conjunction: 'When in the course of human events'. The phrase is important for several reasons, not the least of them being to establish continuity. Henry George is most apt to be remembered as the advocate of the 'single tax', which one recent writer (apparently trying to be friendly) has described as the 'confiscatory and unworkable single-tax panacea.' Others speak of it as his 'remedy.' George's full fiscal remedy is, in fact, relatively simple and concise, but slightly longer: 'We must abolish all taxation save that upon land values.' But it is not George's alleged 'remedy', the single-tax, that is here presented as the synthesis and historical progeny. It is his full realisation about the course of human events. That is the sense in which continuity can be seen.



Steven Cord highlighted the issue with this account: 'When William Lloyd Garrison (the younger), an avid supporter, told George that he did not believe the single tax to be a panacea, George replied, "Neither do I: but I believe freedom is, and the single tax is but the tap-root of freedom".<sup>10</sup> Thus, it is as a new phase, on a higher altitude of achievement in the continuing march toward individual freedom, that George's realisation must be seen.

A key word in our exploratory proposition is 'contemporary'. It is only as a logical and relevant realisation in the here and now that Henry George's ideas can be seen as a synthesis that may properly arise out of the current disenchantment with both Reason and Revolution. George can be seen as 'contemporary' only over a long stretch of time. The important ideas in history always overlap. Hegel's dialectics are not entirely neat.

It could accurately be said that George's realisation, here being claimed as the contemporary synthesis growing out of Reason and Revolution, is 'the beginning of now.' This raises another critical question: 'How long is "now"?' It may seem an esoteric question, but it is critical in this matter of pragmatism, continuity and historical birth because 'now' in the broad social sense under consideration is something in the nature of a consensus. *Now*, strictly speaking, is a point in time — a point often called the present — from which index the long stretches of time past and future are measured. But for thinking people it has its own fourth dimension. Philosophers have insisted upon it. If the present were without dimension, if it were literally 'now' and nothing else, then it would be reduced to what Jonathan Edwards said of that empty abstract, 'nothing': that which 'the sleeping rocks do dream of.' But we are conscious and we observe, holding a present sensation in temporary memory while a new one comes along with which it can be compared; and on the basis of that comparison we predict yet another sensation still to come.

Charles Peirce, who realised thought 'cannot be immediately present to us, but must cover some portion of the past or future'<sup>11</sup> illustrated this insight in his essay, 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear.'

In a piece of music there are separate notes, and there is the air. A single tone may be prolonged for an hour or a day, and it exists as perfectly in each second of that time as in the whole taken together; so that, as long as it is sounding, it might be present to a sense from which everything in the

past was as completely absent as the future itself. But it is different with the air, the performance of which occupies a certain time, during the portions of which only portions of it are played. It consists in an orderliness in the succession of sounds which strike the ear at different times; and to perceive it there must be some continuity of consciousness which makes the events of a lapse of time present to us. We certainly only perceive the air by hearing the separate notes; yet we cannot be said to directly hear it, for we hear only what is present at the instant. These two sorts of objects, what we are *immediately* conscious of and what we are *mediately* conscious of, are found in all consciousness.<sup>12</sup>

'Now,' as the word is being used here, be it agreed, is that range of experience of which society as a whole (for we are talking pragmatism, as opposed to pragmatism) is aware at any given point in time. Now is all the time of which history is conscious at any moment.

In the individualistic sense of the word — in ordinary pragmatism — Henry George's realisation about how our world works may or may not be new. That depends upon the point in time at which the individual becomes aware of it. It is in the broader sense of pragmatism that his full realisation marks the beginning of now, linked to the closing decade of the 20th Century along a continuity which has been built up gradually by a team of thinking 'midwives of the future' (using Will Durant's term). The concept precedes George. It was a refinement of ideas alive and kicking with the French physiocrats, who are said to have founded the science of economics more than a century before George wrote *Progress and Poverty*. They, too, were trying to find the way out of poverty and misery, but at a time when Louis XV had nothing more profound to say on behalf of his people than '*Après moi le déluge.*' They elaborated something similar to the remedy that George later discovered on his own, and their successor, Jacques Turgot, as finance minister to Louis XVI, saw the need for a tax on land values and urged that such a tax be put into effect. He did so as early as the year 1776 — at another of those times in the course of human events when history was giving birth. But it was not original even then. History was not ready for Turgot, any more than it was ready for George in his day, or than it had been for Tiberius Gracchus ever so much earlier.

The previous glimpses of George's full realisation are more fleeting, less exact, couched in simpler terms than the jargon of economic

science, and therefore not ready for historical birth. It has to do with fallibilism: the fact that no man, even any great man, can see ahead absolutely. Henry George was standing on the shoulders of these earlier thinkers, whether or not he was fully aware of their contribution. There is a common element in their several 'realisations', however; and it is for this reason that we must be concerned with the relationships not just between individual people, but between all individuals in society and our shared planet. Locke and Smith saw economics from the standpoint of the free individual. Marx saw it from that of society. George, like François Quesnay before him, saw what Tiberius Gracchus had been concerned about so much earlier when he described the plight of the poor in this way.<sup>13</sup>

The wild beasts of Italy have their caves to retire to, but the brave men who spill their blood in her cause have nothing left but air and light. Without houses, without any settled habitations, they wander from place to place with their wives and children . . . The private soldiers fight and die, to advance the wealth and luxury of the great; and they are called the masters of the world, while they have not a foot of ground in their possession.

What, though, is it that might justify our claim that history may at long last be ready for what Henry George had seen ahead? What leads us to conclude that George's awareness is the beginning of now? A phrase employed by Nicolaus Tideman in a paper he delivered at a seminar at Dartmouth College in 1987 first suggested it to this writer. Tideman was one of several scholars addressing the problem of land takings, about which there had been some surprising legal rulings which appeared to favor the collective rights of the community against the proprietorial claims of the individual. Those rulings, he argued, could not be understood except in terms of a 'not yet acknowledged idea' that seemed to be catching hold.

By the time Tideman had reshaped the paper to fit the *Columbia Law Review*,<sup>14</sup> he had worked it out this way: 'We are on the verge of understanding that land and natural resources are the common heritage of humanity and must be managed in a way that provides equal benefits for all persons in all generations.' Tideman saw it as the only logical explanation for the turn of events in the judicial system of the United States — a new appreciation of rights (as between individuals) and duties (towards the planet) that spills into a

wide variety of new concerns, which also encompassed a number of additional developments. How else can we explain the proliferation within the past two decades of local planning boards? How else are we to understand the emergence of new political groupings known as the Greens? And what about the new sympathy for aborigines around the world, whose primordial relationship with nature is now the subject of a new appreciation, which finds its healthy expression in the collective desire to preserve the time-honoured traditions that served the evolution of the human species so well?

It is not surprising that both thesis and antithesis, originating as they did out of the Enlightenment, should have been concerned primarily with mankind, and to have overlooked the planet. From Condorcet's deep concern with *The Progress of the Human Spirit*<sup>15</sup> all the way to the more recent popular self-assuring slogan, 'Every day in every way I grow better and better,' there were straws in the prevailing wind of those earlier days. Thinkers up until the beginning of now were not faced with a crowded and polluted planet, except perhaps in their imagination. They had no ready reminders that the fixed size of our shared earth was a factor. Man, we were in those earlier days just discovering, could do hitherto undreamed of things, and did. But those accomplishments in turn have brought us back to a less euphoric awareness. Still — there has been no change — it is through our senses that we drink in data, and in particular through the gift of sight. Images impel. A picture is worth a thousand words. Having reached all the way up to where we can look at our small earth, and watch its diaphanous atmosphere swirling — the only place, anywhere, we can exist — man is astonished . . . and chastened. The word *Hubris* comes back into fashion.

#### IV

Reason, mankind's power to think, is fallible. The Age of Reason gave us a thesis with flaws. The Marxist Revolution, as the antithesis, grew out of those faults. It drew emotional strength from man's powerful sense of indignation at injustice. The outrage was generated by faults in the original thesis which led to the failure of the capitalist system to provide for all people the wealth and prosperity it was able to provide for some. Its authors, Marx and others, devised

a program of opposition which did not, alas, rest on a firmer foundation of reason — as the systemic collapse of socialism has so conclusively demonstrated. Consumed by anger, they urged not incremental reforms but outright rejection. Dialectically, it would seem, it could not have been otherwise!

Reason's limitation, its fallibility and its power to mislead, has been known all through the dialectical process with which we are here concerned. It was explicitly recognised by the 'founding fathers' when they wrote America's constitution, the delegates having been reminded by John Dickinson of Delaware on Monday, August 23, 1787, that 'Experience must be our only guide. Reason may mislead us.'<sup>16</sup> His was practical advice. The constitutional authors had to devise something that was not necessarily perfect, but which provided the best frame of government on which they could agree. Experience was the practical guide. Virtually all the delegates had labored on their own state constitutions before assembling in Philadelphia; and they were led by that earlier experience. But in the long haul mankind has no choice but to return to reason; for it is the only creative process capable of delivering new solutions when, say, the advance of technology changes the economic facts of life. Reason, while fallible, can be shared and enhanced. Today's thinkers can stand on the shoulders of their predecessors. Faults in theory, given time, have a way of revealing themselves in practice, raising doubts and uncertainties, which provoke thought and new beliefs.

The central question now before us, as the collapse of certainty drives us to think, is this: where did Reason go wrong? It is an exploration of that problem that will provide us with the signposts that will make continuity possible.

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The fatal faults in two seminal documents link Locke and Smith to Marx and Engels and thence to George. One is to be found in John Locke's *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, which was as nearly as any single document the blueprint on which the thesis was built. The other is to be found in Adam Smith's *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, which continues to be an owner's manual for the western world. While neither of these is a 'fault' in the narrow sense, each of them articulated a provision which, because it

was left unresolved, served to undermine the emergent mode of production and distort the appropriate system of property rights.

Locke's *Second Treatise* was almost as familiar to the founding fathers as the Bible. Each had his copy and knew it well. The *Second Treatise* grew out of the public dialogue of Locke's day, an exchange of views which hypothesised the free individual and which identified the role of property as a crucial element of that freedom.

Locke's thinking started with a 'state of nature,' which was made to seem real by the discovery of an apparently unsettled continent ready to be explored across the ocean to the west. His thesis boils down to the idea that a social contract is necessary to harmonise relations among individuals rising out of that state of nature. 'The great and chief end, therefore, of men's uniting into commonwealths, and putting themselves under government, is the preservation of their property;<sup>17</sup> with life and one's whole self being a part of one's property. Only through the guarantee of property rights could the individual really be free.

So the dialectic which followed can be reduced to this. Individual liberty entails property rights. These rights made possible a level of prosperity which had never existed before. But this liberty (as written into the contract) was not available to everyone. Some were condemned to lifelong poverty. Marx's antithesis turned on the argument that the whole concept was wrong. There could be no such thing as property, because some people abuse it (or use it to abuse) and anyway the individual was subordinate to society.

Henry George resolved these contradictions with a sophisticated solution which, because of its uniqueness in the history of ideas, justifies our claim to represent it as a synthesis. George realised that there were two kinds of property (beyond one's self), and thus two kinds of property rights. In his view the distinction was essential if we are to secure either one. It was through this deeper appreciation of property rights that the appropriate reforms could be formulated and implemented.

The flaw in Locke's reasoning, the root of so much trouble, is to be found in the section headed 'Of Property.' There, he readily concedes that God 'hath given the world to men in common.' God did not give us the world merely to admire. He gave it to us to use, including all the 'fruit or venison' and other such goods as were to be

found there. In the course of taking them, a person mixed his labor with them and made those goods his property. George agreed with Locke: the foundation of an individual's property rights was the fact that 'every man has a "property" in his own "person"', so that anything a man has 'removed from the common state,' anything with which he has 'mixed his own labour', rightfully belongs to him. The duty of government is to secure that right.

Locke's first examples were acorns and apples, deer and the hare, all of which once captured and held over time may spoil. That was the first fact of life that gave rise to a qualification, or provision: the first of what have been called Locke's two provisos. He held that a man could mix his labor with these things and make them his own, provided he did not claim so many that they would spoil.

Locke understood, and George reminds us in the synthesis, that such improvements as one can make by mixing labor with the natural thing are only one kind of property: 'The chief matter of property being now not the fruits of the earth and the beasts that subsist on it, but the earth itself.'

The earth does not spoil, but it has another little problem. It is limited: fixed in quantity. As Will Rogers has put it: they aren't making land any more. Locke had no quick answer for that one. He was just as sure the earth was there to be used as was the hare and the apple, so it was not acceptable even in a state of nature for vacant land to be left idle while people had unmet needs. At this point he developed the second proviso: it was all right for the individual in a state of nature to mix his labor with land and so call it his own, '*since there was still enough and as good left, and more than the yet unprovided could use.*'

There is the rub. Locke's reason began to mislead him because he failed to think through the problem. The fact that there is not 'enough and as good' of the earth and its fulness for the unprovided is what creates the proletariat. It was the dilemma which troubled Tiberius Gracchus, the one which angered Marx. In the 1930s it is what led to so many unemployed people that a welfare state had to be created in the United States, 'the land of the free.' These days, it has led to the homeless, the street people, food stamps.

Locke (writing in secret, because there was civil strife and he could not be sure of the outcome) moved on within a few pages in the

*Second Treatise*, inching his way down the course of human events, to the invention of money. Money took care of the first proviso: spoilage. The individual who was better able than others to pick up acorns and catch the hares could do so and sell them to someone else for money before they spoiled. Locke did not explain how money could be used to resolve the problem with the second proviso. Even in his day there was no longer 'enough and as good' left for the unprovided. With an expanding population the crisis would inevitably intensify. That is the heart of our problem today. Unused land, being scarce, is available only at a premium which few can afford.

Locke failed to think through the inexorable course of history to the situation in which an expanding population and the favored system of land tenure would leave an army of people unprovided with 'enough and as good'. The ancient word, proletariat, came once again into common usage. The failure of Locke's followers, down through the years, to heed the plight of the unfree (who did not own property), served to deepen the economic trauma in which progress and poverty were handmaidens. Grinding poverty, which the industrial revolution intensified. Enter Marx and those who shared his indignation. It was the visible injustice which drove them and fuelled the antithesis which captured half the world until the last months of 1989. Hungry, compassionate people struggled to make socialism work, because there had to be an answer, and, until experience became 'our only guide', the possibility remained as the dream of so many that socialism might be the viable answer.

The truth with which we are faced now is that socialism has not worked: attention has shifted back to the thesis. But doubt and uncertainty also surround the founders' prototype model of free enterprise, giving rise once again to genuine thought. It is the contention in this book that doubt will drive us, in our restless search for the relief and comfort of new belief, to take yet another look at Locke's unresolved second proviso.

It is not an intellectually unexplored region. Locke's failure to think his concept through has been the subject of persistent study and endless debate. It has been dismissed and explained away in a tortuous manner which confirms Mr Dickinson's warning that reason can mislead. But the 'unprovided' do not go away. Poverty persists and deepens. The gap between the haves and have nots



widens, and the vast sums of money being spent by fiat to keep the two halves together threatens to break the back of free enterprise. The United States wrestles with a budget deficit in which the most unresolvable ingredient is 'entitlements', which are nothing more than the value of the denial of opportunity inflicted on the many citizens who are 'unprovided' with the proprietorial rights of access to the resources of life.

Karen I. Vaughn is the author of a bibliographical essay on Locke's *Second Treatise*,<sup>18</sup> in which she exhaustively reviews the topic with which we are dealing here: property, and Locke's theory of it. She discusses the book-length ideas of at least three other scholars who have dealt with Locke and property. And she nails down the significance of property, calling it 'the linchpin of Locke's political thought.'

'The very reason, then, that men form societies and governments,' she concludes from all these sources, 'is to protect their property which Locke takes to include life, liberty and estate.' Vaughn notes that it was the invention of money that provided Locke with a resolution to his first proviso, but she points out the ironic fact that money, far from resolving the first proviso, in fact made it worse.

However, the cost to mankind of the use of money is the increasing dissension brought about by increasing resource scarcity and great inequality of income. Although by using money, men tacitly consent to the unequal distribution of wealth and hence should have no cause for complaint, in fact 'men are no great respectors of equity and justice' and the enjoyment of property becomes less and less secure.

Vaughn unfortunately pays almost as little attention to the second proviso as did the historical midwife whom she had set out to study. 'Locke does not stress this limitation, but puts most of the force of the limitation on' that other class of property which is the province of the first proviso: improvements. She pays scant attention, moreover, to the fact which Locke noted: that there are two great classes of property, oftentimes designated indiscriminately by the same unqualified word. She sees the difference in the ways the word property may be used, but then faults C. B. MacPherson for taking 'a very narrow view of the meaning of property,' a narrowness which, if historic errors are to be corrected, economists will eventually have to adopt. MacPherson, she points out, 'consistently interprets (Locke)

to mean solely estate, and landed estate at that.' Since it is land, not personal property or any improvements to land, which is at the heart of the second proviso, there is reason to wish Vaughn had been more tolerant of MacPherson for his discrimination.

James Madison, often called the Father of the American Constitution, is another historical midwife who clearly saw the significance of the dilemma foreshadowed in the unresolved second Lockean proviso: the fact that, with the passage of time, more and more people would be marooned on the face of Earth without 'enough and as good'. He said little about it during the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia, there being so many other fine points to be debated. He did take the floor to talk about it on Tuesday, August 7, 1787, when the issue was suffrage. Recording his comments in his *Notes*, referring to himself in the third person, Madison set out his concerns.<sup>19</sup>

Whether the Constitutional qualification (for voting) ought to be a freehold, would with him depend on the probable reception such a change would meet with in the States where the right is now exercised by every description of people. In several of the States a freehold was now the qualification. Viewing the subject in its merits alone, the freeholders of the Country would be the safest depositories of Republican liberty. In future times a great majority of the people will not only be without landed, but any other sort of property. These will either combine under the influence of their common situation, in which case the rights of property and the public liberty will not be secure in their hands: or, which is more probable, they will become the tools of opulence and ambition, in which case there will be equal danger on another side.

All too few of the delegates at Philadelphia had the inclination to be concerned with the Lockean proviso. Many of them were land speculators and proud of it. There was surely 'enough' land left on the continent, certainly land that was 'as good' as anything which had yet been claimed, probably some that was even better. But Madison, adopting a longer time horizon, correctly calculated the outcome. The 'free' land would eventually be appropriated by new owners. Some people would be left without land — the proletariat — which threatened the 'more perfect Union' which the delegates were trying to establish.

This struggle between those who owned land and those who did

not is one of the great threads that bind the continuity of American history. Jefferson wanted land ownership to be the basis of society, but he saw that government would then have a responsibility to see that every family owned land. Where vacant land and property existed together, he knew, the natural right of all men to own land was out of adjustment. The Louisiana Purchase helped, as did the gradual opening up of the continent, but even in their presidencies Madison and Jefferson both knew that the amount of free land was finite. Horace Greeley's advice to 'go west, young man,' George Evans's claims in the *Workingman's Advocate* that land monopoly was the root cause of poverty and inequality, George Washington Julian's fight for the Homestead Act, the railroad grants, the post-Civil War calls for 'forty acres and a mule,' and Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, the early statements of which were based in no small part on the writings of Henry George: all these elements are facets of the ongoing struggle Madison foresaw.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, in 1829, when Madison was back home at Montpelier, and his home state of Virginia was examining once again its own Constitution, the ageing statesman wrote some notes which take up nine pages of the *Letters of Madison* published in 1865.<sup>21</sup>

'The United States have not reached the stage of society in which conflicting feelings of the class with, and the class without property, have the operation natural to them in countries fully peopled,' he realised, as the young country continued to expand westward. The continent had not yet been filled up. But it must inevitably happen.

And whenever the majority shall be without landed or other equivalent property, and without the means or hopes of acquiring it, what is to secure the rights of property against the danger of an equality and universality of suffrage, vesting complete power over property in hands without a share in it; not to speak of danger in the meantime from a dependence of an increasing number on the wealth of a few?

Madison was deeply concerned about that ultimate cleavage between the propertied and propertyless — the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. He wondered, first of all, when it might be expected to happen. His arithmetic led him to believe that by the year 1929 there would be some 192,000,000 people in the United States, by which time the continent would have been filled up. He missed his target by a few years, as it turned out; it was not until the sixties that the

population topped 190,000,000 although it was in the year 1929 that another, closely related, event took place. It was well before that year that others in America began to be worried about the danger Madison had foreseen. Frederick Jackson Turner was a little-known professor of history from Wisconsin in 1893 when he made a speech at the Columbian Exposition at Chicago that eventually made him famous. Turner's frontier thesis, explaining the American character in terms of the availability of free land (so long as there continued to be 'enough and as good' left to be had) became a dominant idea among American historians for some years.

Turner said that the continent had already been filled up. He had been studying the federal census for 1890 and had noted that, for the first time, the Census Bureau had seen fit to omit the 'frontier' as a category. It did not exist any more, as far as the census takers were concerned; and that troubled Turner, because he felt sure the American character would change. (Hasn't it?) Franklin D. Roosevelt thought it might present a problem too, and in 1932, when speaking to the Commonwealth Club (before his long tenure in office began) he said, 'Our last frontier has long since been reached. There is no safety valve in the form of a Western Prairie . . .' George Gilder was still saying it only a few years ago when he published a best-seller, *Wealth and Poverty*. He writes, two pages from the end of the book, 'It is said we must abandon economic freedom because the frontier is closed.'

But it was not just property rights that were coming into the picture as more and more thinkers came to be concerned, but the right to liberty itself. Turner, having deliberated about it for years, was specific about the threat to liberty after World War I, when he was asked to deliver a series of six lectures on liberty at Harvard University. He said flatly that, once the continent had been filled up and all the free land was gone, there would no longer be any hope of the unrestrained economic liberty with which Madison had been familiar. In its place, he predicted, must come an 'adjusted liberty' as government controls were extended in the interests of society as a whole.

In 1936 the public domain was officially closed. I do not believe it to be a coincidence that, about then, the 'welfare state' was being brought into existence.

This brings us back to the present, and to the closing years of a century which is said to have 'purged itself of certainty.' An avalanche of astonishing events may once again be triggering thought. What will contemporary thinkers find if they go back to Locke and his second proviso: Enough (land) and as good?

The word 'enough' is a challenge, of course, but the words 'as good' would have seemed in Locke's day even harder to resolve. Who knows exactly how good one tract of land is, to say nothing of whether or not another tract of land may be 'as good?' Surprisingly, perhaps, an open-minded thinker will find, if he goes at the questions in these days when history is ready for a new beginning, that the market knows the answer. It fixes them in terms of money:land values. So money, ironically, can do for poverty — destitution, and the second proviso — what it has already done for spoilage and the first. It is not through confiscation and redistribution, which are features of the welfare state, that money will resolve the second proviso, however, but by means of the remedy articulated by Henry George in 1879: what was then called the 'single tax', but is now called land value taxation. This is the fiscal representation of the synthesis for which the public dialogue is ready.

'It is not necessary to confiscate land,' said George. 'It is necessary only to confiscate rent,' which can be collected in units of money, assessed with precision by the invisible hand of the market. The earth is ours to use, as Locke insisted, but not just by the few. Everyone must have access to its fullness which, as it turns out, is metered in what economists call economic rent. Let society share economic rent, instead of leaving it in the hands of the few, and there need no longer be any who are poor.

The market decides exactly how good any particular tract of land is, and the extent to which it is worse, better than or as good as another. David Ricardo helped us to understand the process. This measure of value enables us to resolve the second proviso. Economic rent, left uncollected by society — which has the only clear title to it, since the earth belongs morally to us all — shows up as the price at which land is traded. It is this price that leads to trouble. Economic rent is land's value in productive terms, but left uncollected as price, it creates new temptation. The uncollected price of land fattens as it accumulates an outer husk of speculative value — the possibility of

resale, at a premium, to someone who may need it and be willing to pay not just for its productive value but for the privilege as well.

George's synthesis integrates with Locke's thesis at this point. It nurtures reason by eliminating a central defect. It matches up with Marx's antithesis by eliminating poverty, and thus the destructive roots of indignation and envy. The continuity is indisputable, and must eventually be appreciated. No one can be sure how long comprehension will take; nor is there any way to be sure whether the birth will be easy or difficult. But as with any birth, it is unavoidable.

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The unmet provision in Adam Smith's reasoning, which is the integral part of the framework of this continuity, is to be found in his discussion of 'Systems of Political Economy.'<sup>22</sup> It is not as famous as the Lockean proviso, but its implications are far reaching, and have left their mark. After making the point that no political system needs to be perfect in order to function, Smith offers these observations.

In the political body ... the wisdom of nature has fortunately made ample provision for remedying many of the bad effects of the folly and injustice of man; in the same manner as it has done in the natural body, for remedying those of his sloth and intemperance.

It is thus that every system which endeavors, either, by extraordinary encouragements; to draw towards a particular species of industry a greater share of the capital of society than what would naturally go to it; or, by extraordinary restraints, to force from a particular species of industry some share of the capital which would otherwise be employed in it; it is in reality subversive of the great purpose which it means to promote. It retards, instead of accelerating, the progress of the society towards real wealth and greatness; and diminishes, instead of increasing, the real value of the annual produce of its land and labor.

All systems of preference or of restraint, therefore, being thus completely taken away, the obvious and simple system of natural liberty establishes itself of its own accord. Every man, *as long as he does not violate the laws of justice*, is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest in his own way, and to bring both his industry and capital into competition with those of any other man, or order of men.

Smith calls for a balance between self interest and the laws of justice which is not easy to strike. One facet of human nature that has

evidenced itself through history, which can be traced back long before the Enlightenment or even Christianity — one particular ‘folly and injustice of man’ for which the wisdom of nature has not provided protection — is greed. It is widely accepted that man is a predatory animal, uniquely capable of turning against and even killing the weaker of his own kind. And there is inescapable evidence in all history to show that men — or some men, at least — are unable to prevent their drive to satisfy self interest from spilling over into greed. The Calvinists who first settled the bleak northeastern coast of what has become the United States were convinced that ‘unregenerate man is half beast and half devil,’ and their earliest social contracts included guarantees protecting one against another. America’s first written constitution, in fact, the temporary social contract written in New Hampshire to guide that colony through the War of Revolution, included in its statement of purpose a phrase that grew directly out of that Calvinist creed: the need to protect people in a state of nature ‘from the Machinations and evil Designs of wicked men.’<sup>23</sup> The ‘liberty’ we so highly treasure is really a freedom from each other — freedom from coercive behavior, one manifestation of which is greed.

As society has evolved, and as mankind has become better acquainted with itself, there have been discovered all manner of ways in which ‘self interest’ impels the discovery of tools and advantages by which to exploit others. One of the worst has been the State, which Franz Oppenheimer has defined as an institution ‘forced on a defeated group by a conquering group, with a view only to systematising the domination of the conquered by the conquerors, and safeguarding itself against insurrection from within and attack from without. This domination had no other final purpose than the economic exploitation of the conquered group by the victorious group.’<sup>24</sup> Albert Jay Nock, like Oppenheimer, differentiates between the ‘*economic* means’ of satisfying our self interests (which he defines as the production and exchange of wealth) and the ‘*political*’ means (which he describes as the ‘uncompensated appropriation of wealth produced by others.’)<sup>25</sup> The several ways in which powers held aside for the State (or for any form of government whether autocratic, aristocratic or democratic) can be used as a club for the strong against the weak were widely discussed by the

American delegates at the constitutional convention and in the *Federalist Papers* written to convince the people of a nation then being born of the wisdom of that convention's product. The concepts adopted to protect against any such abuse include the separation and the balance of powers, and the Bill of Rights.

The primary instrument of coercion, and thus of injustice between people, is through the control of natural resources, land, the earth, access to which is the indispensable condition for existence. 'Everybody has to be somewhere.' Man without access to land is a slave. And so it is that virtually every written code of laws — the predecessors to constitutions and the more formal social contracts — has included some provision for guarding justice in land. The codes of Moses (1500 B.C.?), Lycurgus (900 B.C.?), Solon (600 B.C.?) and Licinius (300 B.C.?) all recognise the common rights of the world to a fair share in the earth.

We can now see that there is no way in which Smith's proviso requiring justice as a restraint on self interest, to enable the 'invisible hand' to operate efficiently, can be satisfied until the contradiction in the Lockean proviso has been resolved.

With the collapse of the socialist antithesis, some people advocate that society should return to the thesis as it was originally set down. That cannot be. 'You can't go home again.' Anyone who believes it possible must at least examine the record of how the appetite for speculative gains from land has, through all the years of free enterprise, torn the social fabric. The gradual appropriation of England's commons over many painful years is a chapter in that story, and Oliver Goldsmith's poem, *The Deserted Village*, is eloquent testimony to it. Land hunger and the appropriation of land value was a deep concern for colonial America's Calvinist leaders long before there were states to send delegates to a constitutional convention where other human foibles could be discussed. The Rev. Jonathan Edwards, for instance, who has been called America's outstanding theologian, and who served the New England colonies as its conscience in those early years, lashed out against the greed of the 'river gods' who so ruthlessly ruled the Connecticut River valley. It was Edwards who delivered at Enfield, Connecticut, the challenging sermon, 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.' He preached against fornication, 'night walking', and irresponsibility towards



honest debts; but in his mind sharp practice in land speculation was as great an evil as any other. When his patron and uncle, Colonel John Stoddard, died in 1748, and left the still young minister at the mercy of strong men whom he had chastised, it fell to the Rev. Mr. Edwards to deliver a funeral sermon over the Colonel. Perry Miller, a leading scholar in the roots of American religion, dramatises it in *Errand into the Wilderness*. Here is what Edwards thought of land speculators 240 years ago.<sup>26</sup>

It is particularly unbecoming of them to be of a mean spirit, a disposition that will admit of their doing those things that are sordid and vile; as when they are persons of a narrow, private spirit, that may be found in little tricks and intrigues to promote their private interest. Such as will shamefully defile their hands to gain a few pounds, are not ashamed to grind the faces of the poor, and screw their neighbors; and will take advantage of their authority or commission to line their own pockets with what is fraudulently taken or withheld from others.

Were those early 'river gods' an exception in the evolution of the Locke/Smith thesis? Speculation in land, with all its sharp practices, has been a major factor throughout American history. Charles Haskins, a professor of history at the University of Wisconsin in 1891, analysed a shocking episode called the Yazoo Land Companies which carries this overview.<sup>27</sup>

The spirit of speculation in land was a prominent characteristic of the United States at the close of the last century. Although the Crown had received frequent petitions for land grants in the West, there was little westward migration until the time of the Revolution. Then the number of emigrants, the cheapness of the lands, and the lack of an established system of sale in small quantities offered many inducements for the formation of great land companies whose opportunities for speculation were increased by the depreciated currency and the general ignorance concerning the west. So strong did the spirit of speculation become that in 1796 an English traveller would say: 'Were I to characterise the United States, it would be by the appellation of the land of speculation.' In spite of its exaggeration this assertion contained much truth. 'All I am now worth was gained by speculation in land,' wrote Timothy Pickering (then about to become Secretary of State under President John Adams) in the same year, and many eminent men could have said the same, often with a later experience quite similar. Land speculation involved Washington, Franklin, Gallatin, Patrick Henry, Robert Morris and James Wilson, as well as many less widely known.

The point here is not to moralise but to trace the continuity through history of greedy behavior, which time and again showed up in the grasp for speculative land values, even on the part of good, even great and otherwise decent men. It is as much a part of human nature as the hunger for power — the political means of satisfying needs from which protection has been sought in such devices as separation, balance and the Bill of Rights. Speculative greed can be satisfied by the accumulation of economic rent, but the price of this right is the denial of freedom of those who are excluded from a share in the fruits of Mother Earth. It is the chief human 'folly and injustice' against which the social contract has not yet struck a balance. The solution is Henry George's fiscal remedy which, elegant in its simplicity, is comprehensive in its power to unleash the talents of individuals while protecting the rights of everyone as members of a community.

Charles Peirce — not an economist, although he was the author of pragmatism and an acknowledged authority in at least six scientific disciplines — was among those indignant about greed at a time when the American continent was finally filling up. He wrote about greed in his essay, 'Evolutionary Love.'<sup>28</sup> 'The twentieth century, in its latter half, shall surely see the deluge-tempest burst upon the social order — to clear upon a world so deep in ruins as that greed-philosophy,' he says after a long passage tracing the effects of unbridled 'self interest' then predominating as the robber barons fed off the system of capitalism and free enterprise which were pushing toward supremacy.

Peirce could not have known that Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, in his early twenties, was, at exactly the time Peirce was lamenting greed, himself feeling the same indignation welling up. It was in the year Peirce published 'Evolutionary Love' that Lenin became a member of an underground revolutionary group engaged in the distribution of literature among factory workers. And so, as it has turned out, it was earlier than the 'latter half' of the twentieth century that the 'deluge-tempest burst upon the social order' in the form of the antithetical Revolution; but here we are again with the same indignation over greed still welling up in compassionate people all over a small world growing smaller. This time, however, something else seems ready to happen to it.

Socialism may have collapsed, but the indignation is still there, and will remain there so long as Smith's proviso regarding the balance between self interest and justice remains unmet. That is a claim that can be supported in any country of the western world on any single day in the public prints. Laurence Harris, for example, explaining in the pages of London's *The Guardian* 'Why I remain a small 'c' communist,'<sup>29</sup> says it is 'because the vast mass of lives are materially, physically and spiritually impoverished. They are profoundly unfree. I don't think capitalism is able to overcome that blight, and in many ways it perpetuates and worsens it.' In fact, capitalism could overcome the blight if it were to do about greed what democracy has done about the hunger for power. It is towards the resolution of this problem that history now appears to be moving, and to the clarification of which this book is dedicated.

## V

A certain spiritual yearning implied by the concept of the millennium — a fervor — is essential to the generic sense of the word as it relates to a consideration of social evolution. One of its accepted meanings is the imminence of 'a period of general righteousness and happiness,' the widespread hope for which seems not uncommon in historical dialectics. The millennial hope has been a factor in the dialectical stages under consideration here — the reasoned thesis and the revolutionary antithesis.

John Winthrop surely felt something of it when he preached a lay sermon aboard the flagship *Arabella* in 1630, when the first Puritans were sailing towards the new continent, partly because 'wise men thought that England was overpopulated and the poor would have a better chance in the new land.'<sup>30</sup> The sentence is not Winthrop's, but that of historian Perry Miller. A careful reading of his book supports the claim that for Miller's words 'the poor' one could correctly substitute 'the as yet unprovided.' It was the group of people Marx and others would later call the proletariat.

Winthrop, who was trying to articulate for his adventurous colleagues just what it was they were seeking to accomplish, assured them '... wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill, the eies of all people are uppon us.'<sup>31</sup> His words foreshadowed the

thesis, Winthrop's sermon having been delivered two years before John Locke was born.

A better case, much more specific, for the millennial concept as an element in the dialectical thesis can be made for that much later period of authorship, during which free enterprise and the market system was being spelled out into the world's first written social contracts: the American constitutions. These were being written, debated and voted into existence by free people over a period of 15 years beginning in 1775 and continuing through the belated adoption by Congress of the American Bill of Rights. The most persistent constitutional author in the state of New Hampshire (where the first temporary Plan of Government was adopted just after New Year's Day in 1776, and where the second oldest constitution still in effect was finally accepted by voters in 1784) was a man named Benjamin Giles.<sup>32</sup> He was a new light Calvinist, clearly motivated by what is still called the Great Awakening. A study of the primary sources makes it clear that the reason why Giles travelled on horseback over the mountains and through the woods, winter and summer, between his farm at Newport and the constitutional conventions in Exeter and Concord, was the millennial hope of bringing into existence a better way of life for all people. Giles was certainly influenced by Jonathan Edwards's book on *Freedom of Will*, which historian Alan Heimert has called 'the Calvinist handbook of the Revolution.'

The *Federalist Papers* and the famous exchange of letters between John Adams and Thomas Jefferson,<sup>33</sup> most of them written after their years as president, provide ample evidence that the driving force behind the implementation of the dialectical thesis in the United States was a will to create a better organisation of society, fairer and more fruitful for everyone, than the ones from which they had fled in the Old World.

James Turner, having studied what he calls 'modern belief' in America between the years 1500 and 1865,<sup>34</sup> was willing to report that, 'Near the end of the (18th) century, hope for progress began to feed heavily on religious beliefs, especially in America, where Protestantism harbored a pronounced streak of millennial expectation. This hope gradually took a form among some believers that dove-tailed with the idea of steady human improvement culminating in a perfected society.' He nailed it down more exactly in the closing

decade of that century, a period just 200 years ago. There was a belief that 'The millennium itself would emerge not all of a sudden, but as a gradual perfecting of earthly life through human effort, inspired by divine grace.'<sup>35</sup>

It is not the theological basis of the millennial concept that is being explored here, but the fervor — spiritual energy as a driving force. And for the socialist antithesis that element is nowhere better developed than in a book called *The God that Failed*,<sup>36</sup> edited by an Englishman and including chapters by literary figures in several western countries. The book was pulled together in the years immediately after World War II, and was published in 1950. When it was republished in 1983 it carried a new foreword by Norman Podhoretz in which he acknowledges 'the susceptibility of intellectuals to communism.' But there is more than theory or even ideology behind the vigor with which the socialist antithesis went into effect in the first half of this century. It was a 'god' that had failed. Podhoretz, reconsidering the book a quarter of a century after it was written, sees the major element in whatever it was that drew six literary men from different countries into communism as '... the struggle for social justice.' Marx's and Lenin's versions of socialism were even then beginning to lose support, and Podhoretz was obviously clinging to the possibility that the synthesis eventually to emerge would be a mixture he called 'democratic socialism.'

The editor, Richard H. Crossman, who first saw the need for such a book, suggests the millennial concept as a motivation by singling out a common ground between the six contributors. They 'saw it first from a long way off — just as their predecessors, 130 years ago, saw the French Revolution — as a vision of the Kingdom of God on earth.' It was his concern with 'the lives of the oppressed and the isolated' that drew the American Richard Wright into it. French novelist and playwright André Gide said he initially supported the antithesis because he saw it as 'an impulse capable of sweeping along the whole of humanity.' Each of the seven writers was ready to admit that his god had failed; each was concerned with all humanity, for equality and justice, rather than prosperity for the few while the majority were excluded.

The mainspring of the thesis is liberty. The mainspring of the antithesis is equal justice for all. They are the essentials. The

synthesis, when and if it emerges, must accommodate them both. The claim made here is that Henry George's realisation about the practical terms on which people must relate to each other, and to the planet, stands the test on both counts. The Georgist philosophy also provides the vision that nurtures the fervor and the spiritual yearning that are the driving force of millennial hopes, which are the emotional responses of human beings to the concepts of liberty and justice.

If Charles Peirce is correct, and if doubt and uncertainty do give rise to thought, then truth will be found. Like an undiscovered continent, it must eventually be stumbled across. A new belief in a better world will be attained and acted upon. In that sense the word millennium seems allowable and is employed here.

#### NOTES

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