

A Word With You

TERROR and sudden death in street and subway are nothing new. We may believe the Gashouse Gang were rough customers; and Prohibition days saw their share of street violence. But haven't we a right to expect that as the city develops, life and limb should become more secure? Instead, lawlessness appears to be on the increase, and more and more parts of the city are becoming unsafe. (I speak of New York but it is also true of other large cities in the U. S. and other countries).

The most chilling aspect of this is the attitude of the citizens. In a respectable residential section a woman is assailed and stabbed to death while thirty-eight people witness it and do nothing. They "didn't want to get involved." A man is attacked and killed in a subway train — and 200 people do nothing.

This is terrible to contemplate, and the agonizing question must be asked: *Why?*

Sociologists speak of "anomie" or "alienation" as a disease of modern times. The individual does not identify his interests with those of the community — he does not feel a part of it.

The city has grown into a big indifferent, faceless monster. The individual is weaving his way through a world he never made (or so he thinks), struggling for a living as in a jungle, protecting himself as well as he may and retiring behind his

private fortress whenever he can. "They" run the city, and he's not at all convinced "they" are on his side. A criminal attack might be part of something else lurking in the city. Best not to "get involved."

This social disease may be compared to the bodily disease of cancer, wherein a "lawless" element appears in the body, and the body fails to build up the necessary defenses against it. The social disease of "anomie" is similar in that the danger is bred from within and the rest of the community does not respond.

In his introduction to *Progress and Poverty*, Henry George describes a scene which is even more true today: "In the shadow of college, and library, and museum, are gathering the more hideous Huns and fiercer Vandals of whom Macaulay prophesied."

What we are undergoing today is one more variation of the paradox of progress and poverty. While we are building a grander city, a world metropolis, the unsolved economic problems are gnawing at the foundations. Slums, poverty, squalor, injustice, ignorance, corruption — and anomie — are sapping the vitality of the city that is aspiring to be the world's greatest. Did not George warn that just as communities seem to attain all they are striving for, these problems hit the hardest? And did he not go on to solve the problem?

— Robert Clancy

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The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community — known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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