

Wait and See What Happens

"HOW long before the Georgist philosophy becomes generally recognized and accepted?" asked Robert Clancy in "A Word With You" (April HGN). He cited Christianity—300 years, Marxism—70 years, woman suffrage—50 years, Keynesianism—10 years, and noted that *Progress and Poverty* was written 90 years ago, but "what's holding up the parade?"

The first of the readers to respond to this was Louise McLean of San Diego, who wrote:

"Having been born to parents who knew and followed Henry George, and having known his daughter the late Anna George de Mille and her daughters (I also remember Henry George, Jr.) — I often think of what she said in her home in Hollywood, 'It's bound to come because it is right.'

"I also remember the fight for women's suffrage in the country when Mrs. de Mille again said, 'It's bound to come because it is right,' and when it seemed a long time coming a similar thought was expressed by a suffrage worker. But the women received the ballot, and Henry George always believed they should have it. So cheer up, Georgists. Some of us who are along in years may not see it, but it will come!"

Noah D. Alper of St. Louis preempted Mr. Clancy on his optimistic 1979 "wait and see" date. "As to the time of a possible break-through of the Georgist ideas," he wrote, "I'll settle for Bob's projection of 1979 if there's a guarantee—but I'm warm to the possibility it can be nearer 1969 than 1979.

"Today's potential for speed-up of ideas to people with the capacity of grasping the Georgist public revenue concept is very great. The key to this is symbolized by three M's, — Means, Methods and Men with publication relations know-how. The Henry George movement could be rolling within one

year with such momentum as to be unstoppable if these three M's existed within one organization."

Another former extension director, Laurie S. Mannell, of Oakville, Ontario, was more cautious. He was sure it is not the land speculators or vested interests that have kept the Georgists back, rather it is the Georgists themselves.

"Every Georgist is an individualist (that's what they are taught), and I doubt if you can find three or more who can agree on anything. They try to organize but never get anywhere," said Mr. Mannell.

"When planners, architects and politicians show some interest in our ideas we invite them to our meetings—then instead of making them our friends we tear them apart.

"Where will we be in 1979? Exactly where we are now, and saying let's wait until 1989. But can we wait? There is not that much time."

A longer reply came from Joseph LoPinto of New York, enclosed with his HGN renewal and a contribution to the school.

He disagreed with Mr. Clancy in his statement on the acceptance of past ideas, and said: "Christianity cannot be counted as a failure since it never has been tried. The shape of the world after 300 years gives evidence that it has not been 'recognized and accepted.'"

"The same holds true for Marx's communism. The Soviet Union is considered to be under a form of state capitalism and Marx's ultimate aim for communism was the withering of the state apparatus. Mr. Clancy contradicts himself when he states in one column that the USSR has true communism and in the next that 'communism turns out to be a ruling clique on top and the rest on the bottom—it can even be the same clique as before' (under the Czar, no doubt).

"What is needed today is an educational system where philosophical ideas, including those of Henry George, are well understood and discussed — one that will train students of quality instead of money-making machines. How can the ideas of Henry George gain any acceptance in a country where for too many decades the general IQ has been that of a 12-year old? Some ten years ago a nation-wide poll was taken on the definition of the word capitalism and 85 percent couldn't answer. It would be well to conduct the poll again and see if there had been any improvement. And how about a poll on the query, who is Henry George? I wouldn't be surprised to see 99 percent answer that they never heard of him.

"It will take a million years to produce an enlightened people who can institute what Mr. Clancy advocates, fundamental justice for all. Man has been on this planet for ten million years, and his recorded history goes back less than five thousand years. It took centuries for him to develop means of communication, and it took

the world thousands of years to produce a Henry George. It is going to take millions more for the acceptance of his worth while ideas."

To this letter Mr. Clancy replied:

"I agree that Christianity has not been given a fair trial. I took care in saying that Christianity was accepted, *not* adopted.

"Whatever deviation Russia, China, etc. has from Marx, they got their stimulus from Marxist doctrine, and it is still the foundation of their beliefs. If the Czar had played it smart, he could have presided over a communist state, just as English royalty now presides over a socialist state.

"While I most certainly agree that our greatest job is education, I do not think it has to take a million years. After diligent and persistent teaching a point is reached where the spreading process develops a life of its own, and we may then see rapid progress.

"If the average intelligence of the nation is that of a 12-year old, that does not dismay me. If we could get to all the 12-year olds, we could get our philosophy across."

Henry George III

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ary war, Kiwanis, Red Cross, osteopathy (his profession), theosophy and politics. In 1943 and '45, like his grandfather, he entered mayoralty campaigns, advocating reassessment and a shift of taxation from improvements to land values in Wilmington. On his first try the Democrats said the party would support him if he would let them tell him whom to appoint. The second time, organized labor made the same offer — he refused both.

In 1949 he hoped compulsory health insurance could be avoided and called it the first step in a socialized state. He said 1,500,000 men and women would be taken from their present employ-

ment and re-employed as lay clerks, inspectors, detectives, accountants, prosecutors, tabulators and tax collectors — all part of the roster of a police state. He predicted that the contract relationship between men would be destroyed, and once individual resistance is broken it becomes an act of disloyalty to protest or fight back — disloyalty to a bureau that cannot afford criticism leads to repressive measures. This is 19 years later and his prophecy is borne out.

Speaking at the HGS early in 1951 he borrowed from the closing chapter of *Progress and Poverty* the thought that "human progress is not the improvement of human nature," but mankind must struggle on for millions of