

## “They Will Demand a King”

**D**URING the afternoon of his 100th birthday anniversary the late James C. Carson and I sat talking in the kitchen of his 5-room apartment in the downtown section of Muncie, Indiana.

“You know this is my birthday,” he said. “I have spent the morning hours sitting here, going over events, comparing the ups and downs — and while some of the downs have been rough, really rough, I must say I have been more often up than down, and I really believe I have had the best of it.

“The young fellow today hears the talk about freedom, and he is inclined to think that we still have it. Had he been around as long as I have — lived in this country before the free land played out — he would be amazed at how little freedom remains.

“As soon as he is big enough to run around and understand the language well enough to obey orders, he is started on a compulsory schooling designed to last until his late teens or mid-twenties. And from what I have seen of its results, it pretty effectively chills his ardor to think things out for himself. As soon as the school system turns him loose, he is grabbed for military training. Finally the military organization turns him loose to get his living the best way he can.

“He is immediately faced with the necessity of getting in on a special privilege of some kind in order to scratch out a living for himself, his wife and his growing family. And he is faced with the necessity of getting every transaction down in black and white for a searching scrutiny by our Internal Revenue Service. If he cannot account for every penny he is in real trouble. His bank account and other tangible property can be confiscated and his standing in the community subjected to every harassment an all-powerful, well-heeled bureauc-

racy, backed by the whole police power of the nation, can invent or devise.

“As the passage of time begins to age him and industry shuts off his opportunity to produce a living, he finds himself forced to starve along on a government dole constantly nibbled down by increasing rent, taxes and inflation of the currency. By the time he begins to realize where he is, he is helpless to defend himself, and a new generation of ignorance has come on to take his place.

“Unless our schools and colleges change their instruction in political economy and undertake to enlighten our younger generations on the few simple laws that govern the production and distribution of our wealth — the few simple laws so ably described in that masterwork on economics, *Progress and Poverty* — all I can see ahead for the young fellow today is the realization of a prediction by Henry George.

“Somewhere in his writings Henry George said that if we persist in continuing the present system of wrong source taxation on the fruits of our industry, the great mass of the people, fenced off this earth and crowded together in the monstrous slums of our great cities, cut off from even the hope of an opportunity to better themselves, blinded by the version of political economy that is being taught, will become so confused that in their misery they will demand a king. A president cloaked in kingly powers is the same thing. And we will wind up finally under the heels of a dictatorship, vicious and blood-thirsty in its strivings to maintain itself in the seat of authority, and mad with its power to enslave the people.”

— Elmer Russell Greenlee  
(In a Bluebird Letter)

HENRY GEORGE NEWS