

# LAND and LIBERTY

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*COVER PHOTO: Picture taken in the capital's Docklands, where redevelopment has brought heartbreak to both young and old. Full story, and pictures of some of the sufferers, on Pages 72, 73, 76, 77.*

## Dangers in Decade of Change

**HISTORIANS** will record the 1990s as the Decade of Change.

Never in our lifetime has there been the convergence of so much social and economic upheaval.

• Socialist countries have abandoned their allegiance to Marxism. With the collapse of the coup in Moscow, there is no going back to the command economy.

• The recession in the English-speaking countries has exposed the vacuous nature of the "free market" economics espoused by Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

Even the entrepreneurs who were supposed to gain from the abandonment of the "Nanny State" are fighting for their economic lives - and conceding that there is something fundamentally wrong with what passes as a market economy in the west.

• Then there is the problem with the environment. Nature is fighting back. She will not allow us to plunder her riches indefinitely.

Another "ism" is being thrown into the dustbin of history - one that says nature is obliged to provide her wealth "for free" (at least, for those who claim to own her).

• The last bastion of legalised racism is also going under. South Africa is now well on the way to restructuring her social system in favour of the majority of her citizens.

**WHAT** does this list - which is not a comprehensive one - tell us? First, the flux of social energy on a global scale threatens the vested interests, which realise they are not likely to retain their advantages. They will try to cramp the changes to preserve their privileges.

But we are optimistic. Change presents the opportunity for a con-

structive dialogue that can lead to the adoption of appropriate reforms. For the politicians are all at sea; they do not know how to channel the undercurrents that have plunged them into treacherous waters.

Good.

Because that means ordinary folk can now take initiatives. This was illustrated in the streets of Moscow. If the coup leaders had known what they were doing, the citizens would not have been able to storm the KGB's headquarters.

Fortunately, the tired old leaders did not know what they were doing. Ideologically, they are bankrupt. And that created the vacuum which the man in the street was able to fill.

**BUT BEWARE.** Times of crisis are also fertile for demagogues. That risk enhances the need for a vigorous, enlightened debate among the majority.

Intuitively, people know that we need a new philosophy; one that is relevant, a guide to the 21st century. Land and Liberty believes that the principles articulated by Henry George in Progress and Poverty will be recognised as the historically relevant one for our times.

But there is no natural law which guarantees that reason will prevail. There is nothing to prevent this decade turning into the beginnings of a new Dark Age. That places an onerous responsibility on the advocates of the Georgist philosophy. Today, people are searching: are Georgists doing all they can to inform them?

Miss this boat, and we will have to wait another 100 years for the same combination of propitious opportunities to come our way... .

**COMMENT by the Editor**