

VISUALIZED PROPAGANDA.

By **GEORGE R. MACEY.**

(Read at The Buffalo Conference of The New York State Single Tax League.)

Visual propaganda is just plain advertising.

Advertising consists largely in familiarizing the public with the name of an article and if the name is kept prominently before the people it will be unconsciously impressed on their minds and sooner or later they will purchase the advertised goods. After that nothing counts but the quality of the goods and if they are as represented and the best of their kind, all other things being equal, they will get a foothold very difficult to dislodge.

No method of education on certain lines of physical development has been so successful in making impressions on the young mind as the very interesting moving pictures which are constantly being shown in the larger cities.

I refer to the development of plant life and fish culture and kindred subjects, all of which had been taught in the schools but which being visualized on the screen are made clear and understandable, in a way almost, if not quite impossible by any other method.

The introduction of a philosophy by the printed word is probably the only true and effective method of propaganda but there is work to be done in the creation of a desire to read what is printed.

Joseph Fels made the statement that throughout Denmark he saw in the public schools portraits of Henry George. Yet here in the country of his birth, in how many such institutions can his picture or his bust be found?

I believe no better propaganda can be instituted than the arousing of the spirit of inquiry into the matter of his identity and what he taught.

For it is lamentable, the extent to which the general public is ignorant on both points.

The branch of visualized propaganda to which I have devoted some effort and which so far as it has been tried, has proved successful, is the arousing of public interest in the Single Tax through the raising of a public subscription in communities which have either a public library or a high school or colleges for the purpose of presenting to those institutions a life size bust of Henry George and a set of his works.

The more subscriptions that can be obtained the better, no matter how small, because the very fact of asking for a contribution and the statement of the object is in itself an opportunity to present the doctrine, and is calculated to arouse the desire to know what there is in the philosophy taught by a man considered worthy of being immortalized in public institutions, and furthermore every subscriber feels that he has a personal interest in the bust and will introduce the subject to his friends.

Then the presentation, which is generally publicly made by a prominent person in the locality, calls attention of the whole community to the author and his doctrine, and the newspaper notices, almost all of which are headed by an electrotpe cut of the bust, are again a source of disturbance to the inquiring mind, largely, as is known to all advertisers, because the eye has been attracted by the picture.

Then again every visitor to the library or seat of learning is confronted by the bust and it is impossible to pass it by without consciously or unconsciously saying to oneself, "Henry George; who was he?"

We all know the man who once sets himself to find out what the Single Tax philosophy really is, is a Single Taxer in the making and his end is as certain as sunrise. Selfish motives may deter his declaration for a time, but he will see the cat and in the end he will declare for the taxation of land values.

In my opinion a picture of Henry George should be in the home of every believer in the true doctrine, if only as an incentive to his friends to ask questions and give him an opportunity to state the case.

This I call visualized propaganda and is in the line of general advertising to the extent that it familiarizes the public with the features of the man whose philosophy we are doing our best to make popular.

Every bust being located with a wide spread announcement becomes a centre of distribution of knowledge which will grow until it meets the ripple from another centre, just as the ripples around two stones thrown into the pool will spread until they become one disturbed surface, but unlike the ripples in water, once started they never subside.

Richard George and I walked through the New York Public Library to find if possible a precedent for asking the directors to accept a bronze cast of the bust of his father and on leaving the building I asked him what he thought our chances of success were. His answer was "Not one in a thousand."

Nevertheless we decided to make the attempt, and through the assistance of the Hon. John Biglow, who was one of the trustees, our proposal was favorably received, and although neither John Biglow nor Dick George lived to see it, the bust, having been subscribed for by upwards of one hundred persons, was delivered and accepted and now stands in the room devoted to works on economics.

This gave us an opportunity for visualized propaganda which was really worth while.

Most of the New York papers gave it a notice, but none of them gave it sufficient space for the picture which was supplied them, and for a time I was disappointed until about two weeks after I was in the office of a country newspaper and there saw a boiler plate cut which had been supplied by the American Press Association to whom as an off chance I had sent a photograph.

On application at the Association office I found they had published the

cut in three sizes, one small one for magazines, one for weekly papers which was a 9 inch two column cut, and one for daily papers throughout the country, which was a 10½ inch three column cut. I was informed that the two latter appeared in not less than five hundred papers.

If there were time I should like to read to you extracts from letters I have received from those who have organized or taken part in the various presentations of this bust in many libraries and you would agree with me that they have been the instrument of arousing public sentiment for our cause; and in no one case has there been a discordant note.

The first bust presented was to the Cornell Public Library at Ithaca, N. Y., and with it went letters from prominent citizens, among others being one from Professor W. L. Drew, professor of law at Cornell University. I am proud to see his name as one of the vice-presidents of the New York State Single Tax League.

One letter in connection with the presentation at Topeka, Kansas, I consider very important, as it came from a man an entire stranger to me but holding the prominent position of Secretary to the Governor, and from this I quote:

"About ten days ago I was present when Mr. George Hughes of this city presented to the Y. M. C. A. of Topeka, a bust of Henry George as well as a complete set of his works. I have heard that you are in some way connected with a movement to spread the light which radiated from the great brain of Henry George upon the economic thought of his country, and I am writing to tell you how the little event we have just witnessed in Topeka has already made an impress upon thoughtful minds.

I went to the meeting out of my great personal regard for George Hughes, and for the general admiration I have had for his great father, Thomas Hughes of England, for more than thirty-four years. He was a great teacher of the things that make for the advancement of justice among men. I got other State officers to come to the meeting with me—men who had not until then given any thought to the Georgian philosophy—and when they left they were complete converts.

I talked with practically all the leading persons who were present and every one of them expressed their enthusiasm over the light they received.

The presentation of the bust and works of George was to my mind, a very great event and it pleased me greatly to be anticipated by David Bowie, President of the Y. M. C. A. and a man of large influence in the business world, in offering a rising vote of thanks to Mr. Hughes, which was responded to with a great sense of his earnestness in the promotion of right and useful ideas.

Very sincerely,

DAVID D. LEAHY,

Secretary to the Governor."

Now in conclusion I want to impress on you what I fully believe that there is no better method of arousing discussion of our doctrine than by visualizing the author, and there is no more satisfying work than organizing groups for the purpose of distributing in public places the bust which is such a true likeness.