1887

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Shortly after the mayoralty election Henry George told a newspaper reporter that his own plan was to buy some ink and pens, and get back to his writing.

In a certain sense he had no choice. He was a defeated candidate, an ex-journalist, and a free-lance writer. What came next, except by his pen, depended first of all on invitations he might receive, on organizations which might volunteer — not very much on himself alone. In a way it was like 1881, when, the author of a new book, he was waiting opportunities to match his ideas. Now he rested a moment on a high platform of history, known the world around, but waiting nevertheless for situations to arise that would decide his course.

They were not slow to appear. Shortly after the New York City vote he went to Boston to speak for the mayoral candidacy of George McNeill, his recent editor as compiler of *The Labor Movement the Problem of the Day*, who presently polled 3000 votes. Before Christmas George had many invitations to speak, many more than he could accept if he were going 'to keep our ranks firm' at home, he explained to Thomas Walker.

He did leave New York for an immediate brief speaking tour in the province of Ontario, however; and three months later he took another trip, going through the small cities of northern Ohio, lower Michigan, and Wisconsin, and on to Burlington and Kansas

City and return. This second effort was both encouraging and discouraging. He had three or four college audiences, including those at Ann Arbor and Madison (which a candidate for the master's degree in history, Frederick Jackson Turner, attended); and he made about $1000, the best yet. On the other hand, he faced some thinly occupied halls and his performances did not always satisfy himself. He enjoyed being celebrated

and being offered pleasures along the way. In Boston it gratified him to make his appearance in Faneuil Hall, and in Montreal there was the fun of a sleigh- ride, and of wearing fur cap, gloves, and coat provided by the hotel manager. A little change of scene, some compliments, and relaxation were just in order.

But the ex-candidate could not escape a winter of high pressures. After 2 November the talk about George for President increased mightily; and, far from being confined to *John Swinton's* and other papers which had campaigned for him, it was conceived more frequently in fear of his running than in hope. *Leslie's Weekly*, which may be drawn on again for a sampling of ordinary sentiment, said that the recent elections demanded to be understood, for the country as a whole, as more important than most between-presidential contests. Whereas the usual thing, as in 1874 and in 1882, was for the dominant party's control of Congress to give way to the other party, this time the voters had indicated a deeper change: they had shown that the labor movement exerted a greater pull over its members than did loyalty to the old parties. City politics in New York was not unique, thought *Leslie's*: anywhere in the United States, or throughout the country had he been candidate for President, Henry George would have received a proportionate vote. The New York *Sun, World*, and *Times*, and the *Boston Post*, the *Springfield Republican*, and the Macon *Telegraph* were only the ranking newspapers among those prompted by the vote of 68,000 to speculate on the chances of the Henry George wave rising to presidential force by 1888.

George himself must have known beforehand, must have approved, and must have felt committed when Father McGlynn contributed 'The Labor Party View' of the situation to a *North American* series on the 'Lessons of the New York City Election.' Henceforth there would be a 'new Land and Labor Party,' the priest declared, and it would remain 'utterly distinct from all other

parties.' Moreover it would advance 'on the same platform and under the same leader to repeat, at the earliest possible moment, in the State and in the Nation, this magnificent canvass, and to more than repeat the moral victory of the late municipal election in New York.' Not since 1872 had Henry George had anything to do with party irregularity at national level.

McGlynn's article appeared in December. For the time being no more aggressive political role was required of the leader than trying to keep 'our ranks firm'; and he had included in his valedictory to his campaigners the most natural advice about how to carry on. Education was the essence, he said: 'Thought precedes action and controls action ... [We need] little societies, little branches, little clubs that shall educate, that shall discuss, that shall rouse and stimulate thought. That is the power.' The excandidate urged that social reform be fused with political, and that the Australian secret ballot be part of labor's demand. His suggestions amounted to saying that New York's recent excitement would be transformed into a durable movement if New Yorkers would now do what Britishers had done in 1882 and 1883 — organize and discuss the ideas of *Progress and Poverty*. This led to the Land and Labor Clubs.

An early sign that all elements would not consolidate easily, however, appeared before November was out, in the tame-spirited little organ of the Knights of Labor. In the *Journal of United Labor*, published in Philadelphia, Terence Powderly praised George's vote as 'a triumph unparalleled in our history,' and he claimed credit for the Knights as having made a great contribution. But for himself he declined membership in any continuing labor party and said that he would make no more partisan speeches; and, for the order, he declared that the Knights of Labor should now revert to the old principle of staying out of politics altogether.

To a twentieth-century reader it is a little surprising to discover the recent mayor of Scranton making such anti-political pronouncements, and doing so months before Samuel Gompers began his well-known iteration of the same idea. But doubtless George and his colleagues in New York discounted the influence of an out- of-state leader who lacked the capacity for firm control over the rank and file of his order; and surely they understood also that, as the church hierarchy was now sustaining its attack on George,the Roman Catholic Grand Master Workman would need to be extra cautious.

At the close of 1886, about the time Henry George himself was making speeches in Canada, the continuing party organization lay in the hands of a small committee. Father McGlynn was chairman, and John McMackin and Professor David B. Scott, whose place was presently taken by James Redpath, were the other members. Early in January a county convention,

340 present, met in Clarendon Hall. It gathered the representatives of local supporting organizations; and, in three sessions spaced a week apart, it produced an organization intended to be permanent and designed for national expansion, the now definitely named United Labor party. The platform committee worked under the chairmanship of Daniel de Leon. In this capacity the Columbia lecturer introduced as program a reaffirmation of Henry George's own Clarendon Hall platform of the preceding September. Perhaps there is a suggestion of socialist influence in some new phrases and tones of the platform, and the party name does seem to represent a concession made to that side of Henry George's support. But at the moment of launching the new party, as at the moment of George's taking over the mayoralty campaign, ideological dominance as well as political force lay with Henry George. Despite the discomfort which we have perceived in George's attitude toward socialists, and uneasiness which can be seen on the other side in the attitudes of the Marxist *Workingmen's Advocate* of New Haven, as in England the followers of Henry George and the socialists continued to march alongside in reasonable peace.

Soon George's old plan to have a newspaper of his own involved him critically in just this relationship. Immediately after the election he turned to old friends for aid and advice about launching the paper. He corresponded with John Russell Young, who had been the first to suggest his undertaking a journal in New York; and from that friend he took the idea of calling it the *Standard* — the name Mr. Young had intended for the paper which had not materialized, after he quit the *Tribune* in 1869. George also consulted Thomas Briggs of London; and from that source received a loan of $1000, the money with which to start operations. This presented a question of business procedure. Briggs would rather have been a stockholder than a creditor. But George preferred the

more old-fashioned, independent, and personal way of doing business — journalistic business at least — and so he stuck to Henry George and Company, and Mr. Briggs accepted the arrangement. The decision put Henry George in debt, but otherwise assured him independence, and he was ready to take the chance. The first issue of the *Standard* appeared on 8 January 1887, two days after the ULP convention gathered in Clarendon Hall.

Though the *Standard* was a weekly, it threw Henry George into some degree of competition, and necessarily into a delicate relationship, with the daily *Leader*, which had now outlived its original campaign function by a full two months. To this situation has been traced the ultimate break between New York Georgism and New York Marxism: the story has been told that the socialists captured the *Leader* away from the recent candidate, and that this led to the founding of the *Standard*. But, as well as disregarding the previousness of George's commitment to a new paper, the story as told overlooks the fact that after the election there occurred a period of active co-operation between George and the *Leader*.

Certainly, as will presently appear, George used the *Leader* during the month of December to return Archbishop Corrigan's fire. Then, when the *Standard* did begin and George hired away Louis Post to be an editor, he urged that others carry on the daily. This is not to say that the *Leader's* transition, at this point, to doctrinaire socialist editorship, in the person of Serge Schevitsch, could ever have pleased George greatly. On the other hand, the New York socialists were still riding the labor party's kite; and, in his moment of seeming great strength, George would have had no reason to foresee in the Russian emigrant a future opponent of significance. For the early months, nearly the first half, of 1887, the *Standard*, with an economic-reform policy like that of the old San Francisco *Post*, and the *Leader*, with a socialistic one, rubbed along without editorial combat, two highly hopeful journals of social reconstruction, equally the organs of the United Labor party.

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By Henry George's standards, Archbishop Corrigan represented a worse political abuse, even, than Tammany's rumored skullduggery at the polls, and a more subversive influence than a Russian socialist at an editor's desk. During the campaign the

archbishop had suspended Father McGlynn from his priestly offices, and a little later he issued a pastoral letter which continued the suspension. More alarming than that, the pastoral letter condemned as morally wrong the ideas about property advanced by Henry George and accepted by the recalcitrant clergyman.

A personal letter from Archbishop Corrigan to Cardinal Manning, now printed, justifies our picturing the New York churchman actually scanning the gift volumes Henry George had sent him. He had read a bit, the archbishop wrote; but what he said confirms the opinion of those contemporaries, Archbishop Walsh especially, who believed that he had not appreciated the general character or gathered the distinctive meanings of *Progress and Poverty*. Corrigan's misunderstanding of the book, indicated in the terms of his pastoral letter, and the presumption of authority in his public censure, both, infuriated George. He replied to the archbishop's letter, as if against all the forces of ignorance and the subversion of religion and freedom, in the *Leader* for 8 December 1886.

This made front-page news. Behind the news (we know now, but Henry George at the time had no way of knowing), upper members of the Catholic hierarchy in the United States and Great Britain were consulting among themselves about the two-in-one problem, the discipline of Edward McGlynn and the ideas of Henry George — and simultaneously they consulted also about whether Catholics should finally be denied, or be permitted, membership in the Knights of Labor. The fact that two new cardinals from this continent, Gibbons and Taschereau, were going to Rome in the spring to receive their birettas, gave extra urgency to these discussions; there would be policy making at ultimate levels. The seniority of Cardinal Manning, his interest in social questions, and the fact that he was a member of the Sacred Congregation of the Inquisition are doubtless the factors that account for his advice and counsel being especially sought concerning American affairs.

The correspondence of ranking churchmen, some of it recently made public, reveals complete agreement among Catholic leaders that Father McGlynn would have to be disciplined seriously for defying his archbishop's orders. On this point Corrigan's decision,

if not all his accompanying judgments, may be thought of as final. On the other hand, he and Bishop McQuaid of Rochester definitely lost out on the issue of the Knights of Labor. Cardinal Gibbons' more liberal disposition prevailed here. Estimating correctly that the order was rapidly losing its growing power, and would soon wither, the church decided against an overt policy of excluding Catholics from union membership.

As for the issue which concerns us principally — what the church's ruling would be about the ideas of Henry George — the story is very complex. While as we have noticed Davitt assumed a role of intermediary, on McGlynn's side, between American insurgency and Cardinal Manning, Archbishop Corrigan made his own request that the English cardinal speak publicly against George's philosophy. Manning refused to do just this; and the refusal may be presumed to represent in some degree the personal sympathy for George which had sprung up in 1885 when the two had met in London. Doubtless it represented also a degree of community of thought between Cardinals Manning and Gibbons — for Gibbons now estimated George, as he did the Knights of Labor, as a waning phenomenon more likely to diminish if Catholic authority disregarded it, rather than challenged it, in public.

But while Cardinal Manning held back against Corrigan's request, he was forced to consider more vigorously than he ever had, Henry George's ideas. Only a month after the New York vote he wrote Monsignor Preston a letter which it would have pained George to see. The best the cardinal said for the reformer was a brief passage of personal appreciation. The point of the letter was Cardinal Manning's admission that when he had spoken favorably of Henry George's ideas he had read only *Social Problems* (the book the Marxists liked), and had not realized as he now did the degree of radicalism in *Progress and Poverty.*

The sum of the matter, in the beginning of 1887, was that under the drive of a dynamic but an undiscriminating archbishop, one uncommonly deficient in humility, high Catholic authority was beginning to take serious notice of *Progress and Poverty*, and of Henry George's writings as a whole. It was a late reaction — later than the notice taken by academicians in England and America, and five years after the Irish Land League crisis — but hardly the less serious on that account. If Archbishop Corrigan's pastoral

letter actually represented right Catholic thinking, then George's writings ought to be forbidden to all Catholic readers: and that is the issue to which the matter rose before the year was far advanced. On arrival in Rome, Cardinal Gibbons discovered a real likelihood that *Progress and Poverty* would be placed on the Index of Prohibited Books — as completely

denied to Catholic readers as the writings of Machiavelli and Rousseau were, or those of Karl Marx, among George's contemporaries.

The cardinal from Maryland, the state which carried the tradition of the famous Toleration Act of 1649 and had America's longest record of a mutually respectful Catholic-and-Protestant adjustment, did what he could to avoid that result. Gibbons spoke for Henry George to the degree of saying that property in land is different from property in things; and he rallied resistance to prohibiting *Progress and Poverty*. A year later, after Father McGlynn had been excommunicated and after Henry George's political career had been ruined, the New York *Herald* printed a statement by Cardinal Gibbons against placing Henry George's works on the Index.

Just possibly that publicity is partly responsible, along with the action of 1892 which ultimately restored Father McGlynn to his priestly offices, for today's lack of understanding, especially among George's admirers, that Archbishop Corrigan more nearly had his way than not — that the works of Henry George were actually denounced by the Congregation of the Inquisition. This anticipates by two years. But the transition from unlimited political hopes for Henry George in 1886 to political rejection in 1887 is nevertheless the point to interpolate in the Henry George story the events which illustrate the most determined and effective force against him. They have very recently been stated in the precise and detailed scholarship of historians at the Catholic University.

Early in 1889, as the writings of Fathers John Tracy Ellis and Henry J. Browne now make clear, the question of placing George's writings on the Index came up once more. As we shall see, Terence Powderly, though by that time a leader with a command much smaller than in 1886, was then swinging again into the Henry George orbit of thought. Whether or not on that account, the Holy Office acted. It ruled the American radical's writings to be 'worthy of condemnation' — in principle as complete a censure as placing

the work on the Index would have been. Rather than risk publicity and an American reaction, however, the cardinals (in their own words) 'decided to refrain from a published condemnation.' This meant that the bishops were informed of the Inquisition's ruling and could act within the premises according to their individual discretion. Presumably this condemnation, and

the possibility of action, holds to the present day. At very lowest estimate, the principles of Archbishop Corrigan's pastoral letter of November 1886 were quietly endorsed by the highest authority.

For 1887, George was confronting this situation in the making. How intensely he felt about the archbishop's censorship is indicated by the fact that he risked the first several issues of his new newspaper — literally its new life or early death — on the most emotional of all public questions: Catholic authority *versus* individual political freedom. In this paper his first-issue 'Salutatory,' a general editorial, seems shriveled and unimportant beside his several-column signed piece on 'The Case of Dr. McGlynn.'

In prose as sober as his emphasis was sensational, Henry George reviewed the background and development of the case. He told of Father McGlynn's service as chaplain in the Civil War; he praised, but did not play up as much as a Protestant controversialist might do today, the priest's fondness for public schools and his indifference to parochial ones; and he reviewed also McGlynn's role in 1882, when he had spoken at 'the darkest hour of the land movement in Ireland.' This led to a Protestant's denunciation. Henry George charged Archbishop Corrigan with a 'barefaced attempt' to use the Catholic Church as a political machine. Clergymen should have political convictions, he repeated. Let McGlynn be for Grover Cleveland, or for whomsoever, let him follow his conscience where it might lead. He quoted — and five months later reprinted in full — the diocesan letter of the Bishop of Meath, the one disavowing any authority in a bishop to control the economic thinking of his flock, yet advising them morally to consider private property in land as exploitative and wrong. Catholic political opinion had been freer in Ireland during the crisis than in New York under Archbishop Corrigan, George taunted.

He sustained into February this kind of heavy assault. In one issue he quoted the *Irish World* as saying that every one of the

35,000 Catholics estimated to have voted for George had done so knowing that he braved the displeasure of the archbishop. The *Standard* carried the attack even onto doctrinal grounds: it argued that the church's historic affirmations of the rights of private property did not correctly extend to land. Like the Leader in October, when that paper presented in full Hewitt's replies to George's letters, the *Standard* now printed complete

statements from the opponent's side. A front page was spread with documents and statements when Father McGlynn was summoned to Rome to have his case adjudicated, and he refused to go. American politics were being directed by a foreign power, the *Standard* observed. Reminiscent of California days, George mixed irony with argument in his editorial onslaught. Archbishop Corrigan, an official in America, whose residence was called a palace, he mused, whose perquisites came to about $40,000 a year, whose authority was as princely as his title.

Among dozens of newspaper reactions to the *Standard*, few were as friendly as the Sacramento *Bee*, now in the hands of his old friend's heirs — to this day a Catholic family. And few were as practical and accurate as the New York *Commercial Advertiser*, which thought that 'Mr. George had succeeded in giving mortal offense to the one great body of his supporters without gaining fresh accessions.' Though for the first month the circulation of the Standard boomed, blowing up to 40,000, it soon became apparent that George's anti-clericalism was going to be expensive. In the spring the paper lost money, and the proprietor blamed low sales on Catholic pressure. Only after midsummer, when George and the United Labor party had entered a new campaign, did the tide turn and the *Standard* make a little profit.

George, nearing fifty, is thus very reminiscent of George at thirty and at forty on the Pacific coast. He first committed himself all-out on a public question involving a principle. He then hitched his newspaper to that judgment, and, not uncheerful in daring, waited for whatever might result.

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Meanwhile during the early months of 1887, Father McGlynn, as if in compensation for being a storm center of disruption and

conflict of principles, rendered services which made more cohesive and enthusiastic the New York groups that still chose to follow Henry George.

The most aggressive organizer of the United Labor party, he also founded, and became president of, the Anti-Poverty Society. The occasion of this new beginning was one of the many public meetings held to protest the Church's disciplining of the priest. On 29 March McGlynn delivered an

address which became famous, ‘The Cross of the New Crusade,’ a mighty appeal for social Christianity. The meeting led to consultations in the office of the *Standard*; and one member of the staff, Thomas M’Cready, seems to have taken the initiative. Immediately a New York organization was born, and before long branches were started in the near-by cities. As an effort to combine in individual evangelical fervor and intimacy the seldom-combined moral energies of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews (all others were invited), the Anti-Poverty Society must be accounted a unique phenomena in American religious history.

According to its own announcement, the object of the society was ‘to spread by such peaceable and lawful means as may be found most desirable and efficient, a knowledge of the truth that God has made ample provision for the need of all men during their residence upon earth, and that involuntary poverty is the result of the human laws that allow individuals to claim as private property that which the Creator has provided for the use of all.’ A membership certificate was devised. It centered, in the background, a Maltese cross set within a six-pointed star; in the foreground a figure of Liberty pointed to those symbols. ‘God wills it’ became the society’s slogan.

Regular meetings began in May. Henry George and Edward McGlynn spoke frequently, sometimes together as at the first meeting, which occurred in Chickering Hall, and sometimes one without the other. George, who became vice-president, gave the society a rousing welcome in the *Standard*. Catholics and Protestants had joined, the first report said, and thousands had turned out for whom no seats were left in the great hall. Campaigners of 1886 as different as McMackin and de Leon, Redpath and Lovell, Post and M’Cready, all appeared; and the announcements offered welcome to men of all faiths — from Spiritualists to Deists,

Buddhists, or Mohammedans. One notable early figure was Hugh O. Pentecost, Congregationalist minister of Newark, who now took the first of his many stations on a winding trail of nonconformity and social Christianity. Pentecost soon assumed a prominent place among Anti-Poverty speakers, and told the society that what the apostle Paul had done to give direction to first-century Christianity, Henry George was doing in the present moment of history.

The president and vice-president both wished to avoid any character of having established a new denomination. The purpose of Anti-Poverty was to arouse conscience and thought, said George, not to do charity or substitute for church. But the meetings were held on Sunday evenings, and they included rousing music directed by a loyal devotee of McGlynn who had followed him from the post of choir director at St. Stephen's. The addresses could as well have been called sermons; and there was something very church-like about the taking of collections, which critics called the anti-poverty program of the collectors. Truly the Anti-Poverty Society contained in its history much of the come-outer element and the home-missionary spirit, both familiar in the record of nineteenth-century evangelicalism in the United States. As the leader of the movement, the excommunicated McGlynn could possibly have brought about a major schism in the Catholic Church had he chosen to do so, so massive and so sympathetic with him was lay opposition to the clericalism of Corrigan and his kind.

As for the social critic around whose ideas of a modern Christianity the cross of the new crusade was conceived, the Anti-Poverty Society was a reassuring thing. Henry George, whose family circle joined Catholic and Protestant in spiritual unison, and who himself had long urged that a common religious faith is needful to sustain deep social purpose and morality, naturally envisaged political results to come from the Anti-Poverty Society. In 1887, more deeply even than during his work as missionary in Britain, and in a more sustained way than during the mayoralty campaign, the religious and the political fused in the Henry George movement. During the next campaign, which as we shall see he fought that fall, upstate and in the city both, he pronounced his second effort in labor politics to be 'deeply religious,' and in fact 'no political movement in the ordinary acceptation of that term.'

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At the present time, when labor thought in this country signifies very little in the way of social doctrine and suggests no connotation at all of evangelical feeling, and when Americans have long since been rendered suspicious of united-front politics, it is easy to say that Henry George's

labor party of 1886 and 1887 contained from the outset disparities sure to lead to discussion. There would be tensions among similar groupings today: businessmen with working men, craft-union men with industrial-union men, Christian elements in council with Marxist ones, old-family New Yorkers with new immigrants.

The mayoralty campaign, drowning out the discordancies, perhaps justified the thought in 1886 that a labor party could overcome or override them. At home and in charge of the situation, Henry George himself had much less reason than in Britain, at any rate, to be concerned by the ideological irritations between his neighbors in social thought and himself. As late as June 1887, we have his publicly expressed judgment that labor's common purposes would prevail, and that the new party would surely march in solidarity to the victories it set out to win.

He said these things in the lead article in the *North American Review* that month. Discussing the pragmatism of politics, Henry George chose words much like the now famous ones used a few years earlier by Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., to describe the influences that mold the law. Great public issues, said the possible labor candidate for the presidency, naturally follow what men 'are thinking about, and feeling about.' The Republicans had lost the gleam. To George, the recent crop of third parties and protest groups — Greenbackers and Prohibitionists, trade unionists and Grangers — had the merit of new life and morality, but they were short on ideas and were too narrowly based to justify hopes of winning office. Particularism must yield, the writer said, to the broader needs of the economy.

The article as a whole gathered many of the ideas of George's old political editorial writing, especially those he had put into the Post during the early stages of the 1872 campaign. In very general terms he now proposed for the nation such large and broad acceptance of his own social ideas as he had been able to command

from those who wanted him to be mayor in 1886. Henry George could hardly have made a plea less particularly concerned with land-value taxation than he did in this *North American* article — it was really a labor manifesto for 1888.

Possibly one reason for the absence of particularism was the recent appearance in the Ohio River valley — where Liberal Republicanism had once flourished, and where anti-slavery Republicanism had for the most

part risen — of a rival labor party. This was the Union Labor party, a new national organization, which gathered in late winter in Cincinnati. It was an assortment of Grangers, Knights of Labor, Greenbackers, and others. At that time, the *Standard* estimated the new party as having low potential, and George's editorial page was only slightly discomfited by the competition it offered — a first judgment amply justified by later events. But the Union Labor party did not die at once, and by summer a skeleton organization had been set up even in New York City, and *John Swinton's Paper* shifted loyalty to it. Despite the differences between them, there must have been personal hurt for George in Swinton's action, and cold comfort that *John Swinton's Paper* presently expired.

During the very month in which the *North American* pronouncement appeared, moreover, signs of disharmony cropped out within the United Labor party's own ranks. It was a crucial time. The party's state convention was looming up for midsummer, and that was the occasion when, according to Father McGlynn's best planning, the George party must take a critical forward step. The nominations to be made for state office would signify United Labor's going outside the one-city area of the party's beginnings into statewide operations, without which there could be no national campaign — Henry George for President — in 1888.

As might have been considered almost inevitable, the disintegration began at the seams between the Socialists and the party leaders. For an early indication, an editorial in the *Leader* of 28 June, presumably by Schevitsch, disparaged Henry George's ideas in favor of Laurence Gronlund's. That Danish-born writer, once admired and encouraged by George, had brought out *CooperativeCommonwealth* in 1884. There he had said about the same thing as *Progressand Poverty* said about land, but the author went on into a pretty definite Marxism; and in 1887 he enlarged the dif

ference between himself and George by publishing a pamphlet entitled *TheInsufficiency of Henry George's Theory*. Even as the *Leader* endorsed this line, however, it acknowledged its own debt and loyalty to George the thinker and the leader of the United Labor party. The *Standard* made no response, but we have Henry George's word of five months later that the

early efforts of the socialists of New York City to make the labor party their own had seemed to him beyond all bearing.

The showdown came late, in August, less than two weeks before the state convention assembled in Syracuse. John McMackin, as chairman of a meeting of the county general committee, took the initiative. The Manhattan socialists, as members of the Socialist Labor party, were vulnerable under the rule of the United Labor party which excluded from membership any who belonged to other parties, though that rule had been waived for the SLP up to now. The exception had been justified on the ground that the SLP was no party in the ordinary sense of the word, and this principle had been endorsed by a county executive committee as recently as 24 July. (There was considerable interlocking between SLP and Central Labor Union membership.) In the ruling of Chairman McMackin, on 5 August, however, ULP's toleration of SLP membership could last no longer: 'I shall have to rule that according to the constitution all parties which have nominated and run candidates are political parties, and are comprehended by the letter of the section.' For United Labor party success, he went on, 'we cannot afford to tolerate Greenback, Irish, German, or Socialist factions ... We must stand for American ideas as American citizens.'

A follower of McGlynn against the archbishop, up to now an asserter of labor's unity, McMackin retained a solid majority of the county committee on his side. But the CLU, where the party had originated a year earlier, was badly shaken; and the ULP's assembly-district organizations, which by now had been extended widely into Brooklyn as well as in Manhattan — and local organizations had been established upstate also, in Albany and Buffalo — were some of them split wide open. It is clear that many hated the break within, and wanted George, or whoever could succeed, to restore the united front. The socialist *Leader* and *Volkeszeitung* felt injured but did not yet abandon loyalty to George or party.

This was the occasion when Samuel Gompers, wearying of the battle of ideas and fearing disturbance in the American Federation of Labor, seceded from labor-party politics, for life. His first impulse, though, was just the opposite. The Jewish president of the AF of L had stood by George

in the fight with Archbishop Corrigan; and in the present row within the party he proposed first that the rival ideological elements 'give over the campaign to the trade unions.' For the moment he contended for the merging of labor union and labor party. Then he withdrew. 'The Federation of Labor as an organization is keeping its hands off this fight. The questions involved are purely political, not strictly affecting labor matters and call simply for individual expressions by men constituting the Federation. A great many of them are Socialists and very bitter towards the U.L.P. Personally I have nothing to say about the ticket.'

After this the connection between Henry George and Samuel Gompers narrowed down to a strictly personal basis. The labor man phrased his attitude toward *Progress and Poverty* in a personal letter of a year and a half after the 1887 campaign. 'The reading of Henry George can do you no harm,' he advised a friend. 'Read the works but keep a level head. They are enchantingly written, but — I have no time to enter into an economic discussion in a letter.' Bicycle rides together, and talk and mutual respect, were the vehicles of their later friendship; at no time did the two ever have very much in common with one another.

The party purge evoked George's most definitive ideas about socialism. In a signed front-page editorial of 30 July he told readers of the *Standard* that any who knew his *Protection or Free Trade* were fully acquainted with how he felt. 'I neither claim nor repudiate the name of socialist.' Socialism and individualism are correlative as principles, he said once more; but the Marxian socialism of Hyndman and Gronlund he called incoherent mixtures of truth and fallacy. 'The proper line between government control and individualism is where competition fails to secure liberty of action and freedom of development.' George admitted that in pure abstract principle he preferred anarchism to socialism.

A few days before the Syracuse convention, George justified ditching the SLP. Votes from that party might have committed the United Labor party to the 'abolition of all private property in theinstruments of production ... The truth is that state socialism, with its childish notions of making all capital the property of the state ... is an exotic born of European conditions that cannot take root or flourish on American soil.' Privately George said that the party purge would have been 'inevitable sooner or later,' and he counted on such a degree of success in the coming state campaign as would

carry his own ideas forward — 1887 to be a greater 1886 with respect to educating the people.

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But George was being more optimistic than conditions justified. Parties do not recover quickly from such ordeals as the United Labor party was suffering.

First of all, SLP delegates proceeded upstate from the city, in spite of all that had happened. Schevitsch and Vrooman and others went on the same train as George. In Syracuse, he himself arranged to have Louis Post become temporary chairman, instead of one who might have been soft toward the socialists. On the crucial vote the majority supported the credentials committee, and the SLP men were finally excluded..

At the stage of platform writing, the state party pledged itself to land-value taxation, and it followed Henry George's ideas exactly about socializing the natural monopolies. This committed the ULP to the municipal ownership of water, heat, and light utilities, and to the principle of nationalizing railroads and telegraphs, and of establishing a postal-savings system. Organizationally and ideologically, Syracuse was an unqualified Henry George convention. 'The greatest danger that could befall this party,' George himself said, as Gronlund and Schevitsch and others of the socialist contingent were beaten out, 'would not be the separation of elements — but would be a continuance within its ranks of incongruous elements.'

But these decisions about platform and control only preceded the crucial one for George: should he permit himself to be nominated for the state office which headed the ticket? Had nomination for the governorship been possible — Martin van Buren's line of rise, and Grover Cleveland's — the answer would have been automatic. But the highest office open in 1887 was secretary of state. There was strong reason to place someone more expendable than George at the head of the slate this time, and let the real leaderspeak through the *Standard* and on the hustings. George saw the issue clearly enough, and, according to current reports confirmed by his son, had the wisdom not to want to run.

But Father McGlynn pushed him. And George himself felt that after the purge he should not put on someone else the responsibility for

delivering the doctrine of the party. So he accepted the nomination. Shortly afterward he cheerfully forecasted that the ULP would poll a quarter of a million votes through the state, perhaps 100,000 in the city. It would be hard to judge whether he or the socialists who departed to launch their own campaign were guilty of the blinder hopes, or at least claims, for the future.

The United Labor slate as a whole gave the SLP men an opportunity for ironic comment. A businessman with a Wall Street address accepted the nomination for state comptroller; the remaining candidacies, for treasurer, attorney general, and surveyor, went, respectively, to a merchant, a lawyer, and a farmer. Though the lawyer was Louis Post, a year before the editor of the *Leader,* that paper now asserted that Henry George was heading a pro-business slate; and in the same journal John Swinton presently denied that 'the theory of Henry George' was in any way 'an outgrowth of the evolution of the labor movement.' There must have been comfort for George to learn that the campaign splintered the staff of the *Leader* under Schevitsch, and that many who had volunteered earlier now resigned from that paper.

On the other hand, a new consolidation occurred on the socialist side. Within about a fortnight of Syracuse, the expelled elements set up a new Progressive Labor party, for SLP men and any others who would join. The platform called for the end of private property in land, and declared that there could never be harmony between capital and labor. When John Swinton refused, the party nominated J. Edward Hall, a machinist, to head the slate. In the end the Progressive Labor party received some 5000 votes, not enough to bring remorse to those who had forced the socialists out of the ULP.

Back at home in Manhattan, George set his sights for political aggression outside his party's now shrunken boundaries. Through his newspaper he asked for the votes of all who called themselves socialists in the general meaning of the term; he repudiated only the Marxians and Lasalleans and the Gronlund sort. In an early

huge Anti-Poverty Society meeting, George voiced for the campaign the slogan of the society: 'God wills it, God wills it,' he said must ring abroad. Though he now gave less time, naturally, to AntiPoverty than he had earlier in the year, the society did join in the campaign effort; and just

before the vote George addressed an overflow audience, under Anti-Poverty auspices, in the Academy of Music.

As for the welcome George received, and the effectiveness he achieved among working men and immigrants, the story is a mixed one, different from 1886. He and Father McGlynn gave Labor Day addresses before a mass meeting of German workmen. Proceedings ended with a resolution condemning all, especially German Americans, 'who flaunt the red flag.' Later in September the printers and telegraphers spearheaded an effort to line up the unions. But this was an effort to bring the unions abreast of the United Labor party (and the Anti-Poverty Society), instead of one to bring the party into line with the unions — as the more aggressive situation had been the year before. Even allowing that George was campaigning upstate much of the time, there were fewer meetings of new Americans and working men for George to address than during the mayoral campaign. And as for the Catholic Irish, whereas during the mayoralty campaign the Irish World stood by him, now that paper joined the *Irish Herald* in opposition. With the *Leader* lost, and only the *Standard* to compensate, George and the ULP had not a single daily behind them in the 1887 campaign.

For the campaign upstate George did two tours west, once to Jamestown and Buffalo and once to Rochester, and he made several excursions out of the city, principally up the Hudson. Two days before a trip north he tried the stratagem he had devised against Hewitt. Governor David Bennett Hill had recently advocated equal taxation on all forms of property. This was the old error, with which George had become thoroughly familiar in California, and which David Ames Wells had attacked in New York fifteen years earlier. A public debate on the question would have been exactly to George's taste: it would have given him a superb opportunity to win a hearing for land-value taxation, and it would also have given him a chance to square accounts with the wing of the Democratic party to which Mayor Hewitt belonged.

Unfortunately for the challenger, Governor Hill's polite refusal yielded no such crop of newspaper comment in George's favor, as Hewitt's refusal the year before had done.

On the first trip clear across the state, a large audience at Buffalo surprised the candidate. But the better trip was the one that turned at Rochester, and from there swung through Canandaigua, Geneva, Ithaca, and Auburn — the ground which Mormons and revivalists had 'burned over' half a century before. This is the only time in his career when he ever campaigned for farm votes. Over and over again he met, as he had met from the farm-valley journals of California, the proposition that farmers would never be persuaded by land-value taxation. Reporting this phase of the tour in the *Standard*, George admitted that his idea had not taken hold in the country; the best he could say was that 'the ground is ready for the seed.'

But at Geneva and Ithaca he had college audiences, and he discovered respect and admiration. Charmed by Cornell, he took time to reflect that, though the university's timberlands, located in Wisconsin, transferred east an increment which belonged in the West, it was better to have the credit flow — under Morrill Act policy — to good education than, as might have happened, to the private uses of parvenu millionaires. He was happy to find a student Land and Labor Club, and to notice a dozen or so faculty men in the audience. Everywhere across the state clergymen took seats on his platforms — for instance in Geneva, Rochester, Marathon, Dunkirk, and Pitcher. At Rochester admirers had started a little land- value taxation weekly, *The Earth*. The number of votes he was winning, even in the cities, was very doubtful; but he enjoyed upstate New York, and perhaps was exhilarated by its protest tradition.

On returning to the city for the last week of the campaign, George himself was challenged to debate, and *he* could not refuse. Serge Schevitsch, who was an able speaker as well as vigorous editor, made the demand; and the meeting was held in an Eighth Avenue theater, with Samuel Gompers in the chair. There was humor as well as necessity in the arrangements. United Labor party people came with white tickets and were seated on one side of the auditorium; and Progressive Labor people with red tickets were on the other side. There is no reason to suspect that new elucida

tions or conclusions emerged at the meeting; and the report of the *Tribune* is entirely credible, that 'the partisans of each debater were equally certain that their champion had by far the best of it.' For Henry George that

occasion must have presented painful differences from his platform dominance and from the make-up of his audiences twelve months earlier.

He ended the campaign saying that the attorney general's office — Louis Post's candidacy — meant the most of any in the campaign, in practical terms. On that office, more than on any other, depended the power of corruption in New York City. George pleaded for a great concentration of labor effort on that vote.

But in 1887 no signs appeared of a Henry George-inspired panic among the middle classes. When the votes were counted, he had 37,316 in New York City, which are to be compared with the 68,000 he received for mayor — about 55 per cent. He had 72,281 votes in all — less than 30 per cent of the quarter of a million campaigned for. The Democratic winner of the office of secretary of state received 480,000 votes, and the Republican loser, 459,000.

A sharp tapering-off of the United Labor party is what confronted the leader of that party; it might survive as a minor party, it could hope no longer to become a major one. A large part of the Catholic element rejoiced. For a moment George put on a brave face once more, and called for greater energies and new growth. But six weeks later on 19 December, under the editorial title 'What Shall We Do,' George revealed the deep perplexity he had no way to escape. 'I have not definitely decided not to be a candidate for the presidency next year, in case our friends determine to put up a candidate and demand of me to serve as such.'

Henry George was not one to care too long or too much about the fate of a political party. But he had made an error of judgment, letting himself be nominated for the secretaryship of state. There is little reason to think that political results would have been much different had someone else run for that office, however, and had he himself held off until some later try. Hopes for the Presidency, hopes that he might lead a great new national party, and any hopes which assumed that the Henry George wave would roll as high in America as in Great Britain, and then higher still, were not well timed.

By the month of New York state vote, Henry George's reputation in the world was being affected by the currents of feeling which flowed from international and national debate over the execution of the Haymarket anarchists, which had recently been ordered by the Supreme Court of Illinois.

It is impossible to measure the influence which 1887's wave of anti-radical passion may have had on the election. Being called a socialist, communist, anarchist, and nihilist had not prevented George from winning a very large vote in 1886. By 1887 it would seem that he must have been practically immune to injury from name-calling. Not only had his radicalism been disinfected by the purge of the ULP, but also the national anxiety, at least the issue of it, had shifted. The question of 1886 had been, 'Shall terror of radicals spread?' In 1887 it was, 'Is it just to execute the Haymarket anarchists?'

Henry George's first answer to the new question was the one natural for critically minded pro-labor people, and the one which historical investigation in our day justifies — 'No, this is not true justice.' The second issue of the *Standard*, 15 January, said that the state of Illinois would sow dragon's teeth if it executed men not proven guilty, for the real reason that they held hateful, immoral, and foreign ideas. 'An opinion more dangerous to society than that men who teach unpopular doctrines may be silenced by illegal convictions of infamous crimes could hardly be conceived.' The editorial was written by Louis Post, but it represented George's own opinion as well as that of George's journal, and did so for many months to come.

But early in September, shortly before George began speaking upstate, the Illinois Supreme Court upheld the verdict of the lower court. George read that court's opinion and was shaken. While others declared themselves, he and his associates pondered. Then, three weeks after the decision, he printed a changed judgment. While he did so, he protested those consequences of the decision which came under his eye and were hateful to him. He objected, against philistine suppressors of free assembly, when the police of Union Hill, New Jersey, broke up a meeting of sympathy for the con

demned men. He objected, against the radicals, when speakers he called irresponsible stood up in a Central Labor Union meeting to bless the

hand that threw the bomb.

Over his signature, in the 8 October issue of the *Standard* just a month before the election, George announced that he believed the Supreme Court to be correct. To George the unanimity of the judges, rehearing the case at a time and place apart from the event, was impressive. He no longer believed that 'the anarchists were condemned on insufficient evidence.' He specified that it had not been proved that any of the condemned men threw the bomb, but said that it was 'proved beyond a doubt that these men were engaged in a conspiracy as a result of which the bomb was thrown, and were therefore under the laws of Illinois as guilty as though they themselves had done the act.' George ended asking for clemency and commutation of the death sentence — not to make martyrs, not to feed minds with reason to think that America is ruled by violence, he said.

For the switch George was called traitor by working-class partisans in America and Europe. Ten days before the election, the Chicago *Labor Enquirer* reported that, when in Cincinnati for a Fourth of July oration, George had asked to have the jailed men assured that they could count on him 'to do all in my power to set them free.' Now observe, 'the scholar and philanthropist is transformed into a seeker for office,' the Chicago paper said. The New York *Leader*, which expired a week after the election, believed that if he had wanted to, George could have exercised such influence as would have saved the anarchists. To this day the charge of faithlessness is repeated and remade. Emma Goldman renewed it. And in the opinion of Professor Henry David: 'The criticism he received was just. It cannot be argued that Henry George's stand was the product of honest conviction.'

Was dishonesty and corruption really true of George, so immediately in the wake of 1886? The first clear and relevant fact, known at least in his own circle and remembered by troubled admirers, is that before he issued the 8 October editorial about the Illinois statutes and the action of that state's highest court, he sought the opinion of a lawyer friend. One of the compliments paid him during the campaign was that Judge James G. Maguire had come on to New York from San Francisco, resigned from the

Democratic party, and made speeches in his behalf. The judge was a Catholic, and perhaps came east to build a backfire against Archbishop

Corrigan. George learned afterward, if he did not know at the time, that Judge Maguire's first opinion had been the same as his own, that the anarchists had not been proved guilty. He had said this to a group of people in San Francisco.

Now in New York George asked him to go over 'the papers' following the Illinois Supreme Court's decision. We know that during the fall Judge Maguire read the briefs, the statements to the press of the convicted men, and the new decision. Just how far he had carried his work when he and George talked over the case, sat up nearly all night on it a friend says, is not clear. We know that any meeting and discussion at this time occurred under campaign pressure, between times during George's upstate effort. There is no way to estimate in what detail the editor and candidate accepted the ideas of the judge, on faith in a friend, as he wrote the editorial. We know simply that George's October change of mind conforms with the judge's opinion, as it was printed in November some six weeks later.

In sum, there is every circumstantial reason to think that George changed his mind under pressure of time, under the influence of an old and trusted friend, and without having or making the opportunity to examine the law and the facts independently. This was a short-sighted procedure but not a corrupt one. If we suppose that Henry George was so human as to recognize that he would get more Catholic and middle-class votes if he endorsed the Illinois Supreme Court action, facts compel us to acknowledge that he had earlier defied these elements repeatedly; and though we might guess him to be not so completely above the recent battle with the SLP as not to transfer, from that experience to this, some distaste for radicals with German names, we are obliged to remember how unreservedly he made friends with Germans. Though events indicate that George changed his mind under pressure, there is no evidence to convict him of any form of corruption.

Doubtless the wisest thing would have been to withhold, or not to have tried to write, the editorial of 8 October. He could still have had his say about the social meaning of Haymarket and the trials, and he could have recommended clemency. His moral intuitions in this case still seem sound. In the present writer's esti-

mation, Henry George seems more than a little tragic: under campaign pressure he did not have the wisdom to acknowledge that he did not know

about the law and the facts, and he acted simply according to his best, but not very informed and not independent, judgment.

The anguish stayed with him. The first letter he wrote after the election George directed to Governor Oglesby. He sent a copy of the editorial; he noted that he had signed no petitions questioning the justice of the Illinois courts. He simply developed the plea of the editorial for clemency. He was moved, he told the governor, by his knowledge of social injustice in the republic, and by a sense that many whose ideas deserved consideration believed that the courts had not done right. He did not want martyrs made.

Two weeks later on 19 November, when the men were dead, he printed an editorial on 'The Chicago Tragedy.' He printed it alongside the letter from Judge Maguire which now stated in detail that lawyer's reasons for accepting the verdict. Tragedy to George, reasonable justice to Maguire — that is the way the *Standard* might have presented the two faces of the matter on 8 October, in the first place. George said that he and his friend had agreed always that the sentence should be mitigated.

A year later, to Herr Gutschow, the friend who taxed him most heavily about his reversing himself, Henry George recurred to the hard matter. 'I would like to know whether time has changed your view of my attitude in the anarchist business. I acted then without thought about what was politic, but only of what was right, and looking back I do not see that I was wrong. I do not see that it is worthwhile to reopen that.'

By the end of 1887 doors were closed to Henry George which two years previously had been wide open, and which were still partly open in Great Britain. As Beatrice Webb has said, and the Scottish labor leaders particularly illustrate, evangelicalism — British evangelicalism not so forced and strained as that of the Anti-Poverty Society — offered a main route into labor and radical movements in the United Kingdom. So did moderate socialism and land nationalization and Lib Lab Radicalism. These corridors remained open in the island kingdom.

But in America, labor was flanked on the right by Catholicism in an unusually authoritarian, Irish, form; and on the left it was

flanked by an unassimilated fringe of radical immigrants not versed in either democratic or Christian feeling. Both sides blocked George's way, neither one respected his doctrine. The main body and center of labor was

of course different. But pressure from the edges, and the strains of reorganization within, served during 1886 and 1887 to make the Knights of Labor and the Federation, both, less hospitable than before to radical ideas. The only sizable movement of moderate socialism in this country, the nationalism of Edward Bellamy, was too new and, as we shall see presently, too different from what George stood for, to serve his cause.

Such considerations make the hopes of 1887 for a great labor party — not to say a presidential victory — seem in today's perspective to have been particularly ill-founded. But since his arrival in New York, in 1880, George had been discovering other men with other interests than those of working men who concerned themselves with his ideas. His future now lay largely among the many open spaces in the American middle classes.