

I Met Henry George By JAMES C. CARSON

AWAY back in the '80's I was an active in the Knights of Labor as an officer in the Coopers' Union. I had been up to Grand Rapids on a big furniture strike. I had gone on to New York, and was coming back on the New York Central on the way to Chicago when I struck up a conversation with a fellow on the train.

I mentioned the strike, how the men were walking the streets, out of work, and being fed at soup kitchens. The companies had brought in strike breakers who were sleeping on cots in the factories, and they were being guarded by Pinkerton detectives.

In those days, we blamed the companies for everything. I was telling him what a dirty outfit they were, when he asked me—he never expressed an opinion, just questioned me—"Do you think those men left good jobs to go there?"

Well, I couldn't answer him! I just stormed around, but deep down in my heart, I knew they had not.

He was getting off at Cleveland, and while we stood on the platform, he said, "I wrote a book on this once. If you will give me your name and address, I will send you a copy. I would like you to criticize it."

He was poorly dressed, but as he left the train he ran his hand in his pocket, and handed the porter a bunch of silver. I remember the porter saying afterwards—showing me the silver in his hand—"Well! You can't tell from the looks of the frog how far he kin leap!" Later, he said to me, "Say, Mister, I couldn't help hearing what you two gentlemen were sayin', and it seemed to me he was handin' you something!"

It wasn't until months afterwards that I got the book, *Progress and Poverty*. Then for the first time I knew who I had been arguing with. I read it without prejudice, looking for the hole in it. I wanted to find the error to knock his ears to pieces—the monkey wrench. I never have. It changed my whole view of the labor situation. I was a different laborite after that.

After that my trade went out of existence. Machinery took my place and I drifted to other

lines. But those works of George followed me all through life. I made a good many trades on what George called "the Black Art of political economy." I always considered it legalized stealing.

If I were to advise a young man just starting out in life—no matter what school or college he had been through—I would advise him to take the full course of the Henry George School and to go on until he mastered political economy.

If you are satisfied with our present economy and tax structure, this knowledge will enable you to get easy money faster. Should you want to do something big for humanity, it will be invaluable to you in that, too.

A student of Henry George's philosophy can listen to or read any argument a Communist, Socialist, Fascist, black shirt or brown shirt can put up and he can readily show up their weakness. In fact, I encourage them to talk. I read their literature, and I invite them to criticize. I have never heard a criticism that is not answered in George's philosophy.

It seems to me that our so-called democracy is a pretty weak sister when it must shut a man in jail as an answer to his argument.

A number of our industrialists, through the medium of paid advertisements, seem to indicate that in colonial days Governor Bradford handled the Communist problem in a far more sensible way. When they first started out, they all worked under the Communist's plan, and they starved out—rations were down to almost nothing. Then Bradford dealt out the land to each settler—as much land as the settler could use—and the settler was on his own. That fall, there was an abundance. The first Thanksgiving celebration was held, and the Communist philosophy disappeared like a moth in the sunshine.

What a pity it was that this man Bradford did not make this order perpetual so that no person could acquire title to more land than he could use. Land monopoly could never have arisen, and we would not now be faced with these troubles.

From Elmer Russell Greenlee, West Jackson Pike, Muncie, Indiana.