

# The Georgist Journal

Number 30

Winter 1980-81

---

## COMMENT - A NEED FOR RISING EXPECTATIONS

As we move into the last decades of the twentieth century, our epoch appears to be in a state of confusion. Old standards have been levelled and new ones have not emerged. We are said to be in a time of "falling expectations."

Everything seems to be in a "post" stage. The arts are in a "post-modern" period, science is post-Einstein, psychology is post-Freudian, youth is "post-hippie." In economics we are in the "post-Keynes" era; our system is in the "post-capitalist" period and the Soviet system is in the "post-Marxist-Leninist" period. World politics are in a "post-colonial" era, and we seem to have come to the post-American-domination of world affairs.

With all these "posts" we may well wonder where we are. And with so many uncertainties, it is understandable why there is nostalgia for the world that was (or perhaps a world that never was), and a longing for certitude, for the solid old virtues.

Yet we need only take a closer look to see that all was not so certain. A half-century ago we were into the Great Depression and documentary films of the period show uncertainty and confusion a-plenty. Statements of leaders of the time seem ignorant and quaint, if not foolish. If we go back further - to World War I or even before, the picture hardly improves. There was not much effort to solve problems humanely and rationally. Rebels of the time were tearing apart a fabric that did not hold very well together. What the rebels gave us now appears in turn to be coming apart.

Rather than return to a doubtful past, a better way out of our muddle would be to look squarely at things, try to resolve them reasonably and look to the future.

If we are at the end of the line in so many fields of endeavor, if things have unwound themselves, then it is time to consider what we want, to take what is good from what has been handed down to us, to rebuild anew.

Much that has been done in our social, economic and political life has failed or is tottering. Included in our inheritance from the past is the neglected philosophy of Henry George. If our generation would take another look at it, they would find that it fits in very well with a reordering of things on a new, constructive, progressive, reasonable basis that could again bring "rising expectations."

Let's do our best to bring about such a reconsideration in this context.

- R.C.

---