

A Word With You

AS I was going over some old things, I stumbled across my forgotten hoard of Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books. A whole era was evoked.

A generation or two ago, you would come upon the Haldeman-Julius double page ads in pulp magazines, offering all sorts of fascinating titles for a nickel apiece. Printed on execrable paper in blindness-inducing type, and covered with faded blue, these little books yet opened up a world to a youngster reaching out. So you saved pennies from your small allowance and sent your order to Girard, Kansas.

Then came the precious bundle and you sneaked off to savor the forbidden fruits that parents and teachers would disapprove. You learned about free thought and free love, socialism and psychoanalysis, the crimes of the Borgias and the secrets of the popes.

Nowadays, paperbacks have replaced the Little Blue Books. They are bigger, better printed, have brighter covers—and cost at least ten times as much (fifty cents and up). Publishers have rediscovered and reprinted no end of esoteric classics as well as trash. (But they have not gotten around to Henry George—Haldeman-Julius was ahead of them in that respect.)

And nowadays, all the backstairs reading is freely available. Gone are the delights of sneakiness—everything is permitted. The Marquis de Sade has

come out in the open. Not Robert Ingersoll, but ministers from pulpits proclaim that "God is dead." Socialism is no longer "versus" the status quo. And the cop on the beat uses Freud on hoodlums.

How is the new generation responding to all this sophistication? Observers note that today's young people are brighter and better informed—but more bland and less adventurous. They go along with the trends and are making better "Organization" people. Rebels—and leaders—are fewer.

It is curious that the two modern diseases that sociologists speak of most often seem contradictory—"alienation" and "conformity." But perhaps they are not paradoxical, after all. The more alienated a person feels, the more he will try to conform. The more uncertain he feels of being accepted as an individual by society, the more he seeks outwardly to blend in.

I won't say there isn't some improvement over the Haldeman-Julius days. Being well-informed is great—provided a little wisdom can be thrown in. Being less prone to fall for charlatans and holy rollers is well and good—provided aspirations and visions are not altogether renounced. Being ready and willing to function within society is only healthy—provided one does not lose his soul.

—Robert Clancy

Vol. 29, No. 5

May, 1966

The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

Publication committee: William S. O'Connor, Arnold A. Weinstein and Lancaster M. Greene, chairman. Editor: Alice Elizabeth Davis. Subscriptions \$1 a year; single copies 10c. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

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