

A Word With You

MANY Georgists of today are attracted to various conservative or right-wing movements, and there are reasons for this. These movements seem to favor individual liberty as against government encroachment, and this cuts a lot of ice with Georgists.

But a word of caution is in order against too close an identification. I do not refer to such open-end conservatism as represented by *The Wall Street Journal*, for instance, with whose reportorial and editorial approach we can relate without difficulty. I refer more to closed-end right-wing crusading movements.

Nor is there anything to be said against individual Georgists joining such movements (or "liberal" movements either, for that matter). The Georgist philosophy, being universal in its appeal, attracts a wide spectrum of persons and points of view.

What I have in mind is the temptation to link Georgist and right-wing movements together as one cause. While there are some things in common, there are some serious differences.

There is among right-wingers a strong tendency to blame poverty on the poverty-stricken; and if any help is needed, to depend on private charity. Although they are cool toward public welfare, they are not quite against more government, for they want a stronger police to quell signs of discontent among the poor. In this mood, they are seldom if ever receptive to

another way, the Georgist way, of getting rid of poverty.

The devotion of right-wingers to freedom is open to question in other respects, too. They find it hard to swallow that freedom means equal freedom for all mankind, and do not want to inconvenience the present owners of the earth in order to give the disinherited billions a chance. "Freedom" to them means "do not disturb those who possess."

Years ago, left-wing causes seemed to have something in common with the Georgist cause because they too were protesting against the status quo. But the differences were too great. Since then, the status quo itself has become more leftist, thus giving our protest against it more of a semblance to right-wing protests. But our criticisms of both left and right remain substantially what they were in George's day.

Grumbling about taxes and regulations is pretty universal, and this is what makes it seem that the right-wing movement is going places. But a protest without a program cannot get far. The Georgist movement has a program and it has places to go.

We do not need to link up with dubious causes, whether of the right or left. Our greatest strength will come from remaining independent and promulgating the full philosophy. "I am for man," said George, and it's as simple as that.

—Robert Clancy

No. 30, No. 5

June, 1967

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 the 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.

The Henry George News does not assume responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles.