

A Word With You

PERIODICALLY, we get nostalgic about the era twenty-five or thirty years previous—approximately a generation. In the 1930's we were humming tunes from the "good years" before World War I—"Shine on Harvest Moon," "Me and My Gal," etc. During World War II we reminisced about World War I and remembered "Over There," "Yankee Doodle Dandy," etc. In the 1950's we revisited the roaring 20's and became mad about the Charleston, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Lucky Lindy, and "the era of wonderful nonsense."

And now? We've been due for several years to bring back memories of the 1930's, but it just doesn't come off. When the 1960's came we couldn't face the next round of remembering the past—the crash of 1929, the Great Depression, the agony, the misery . . .

And so we did a couple more whirls of the Charleston—paused—and then plunged all the way back to 1900. Yes, now they're bringing back Sarah Bernhardt and Tiffany glass, Aubrey Beardsley and Art Nouveau. It is true, however, that the economists of that period—Ely, Taussig, Seligman—are all but forgotten, and there's no sign that they will be revived.

As for the 1930's, we might reminisce fondly about such as Humphrey Bogart and Glenn Miller, but we pull them out gingerly, one by one—we're in no mood to re-evolve the whole era.

That was undoubtedly the most traumatic episode in our entire history. We can even remember the wars with more equanimity.

Yet, could we but get ourselves to do it, there was something about that era worth looking at a second time. We hit rock-bottom, but it was a real rock and not a phoney cloud. We sobered up and — save the mark — we thought. We suffered and despaired, but we sought for answers, whereas today we don't want to face what is really going on. It might be good for us to recall clearly the Hoovervilles and breadlines, the demonstrations and street corner discussions. We might even pick up a thread we've lost since then.

As for the economists, the 1930's produced Keynes—hardly anything to get nostalgic about. Unlike his predecessors of 1900, Keynes is still very much remembered—he's the one who gave us the new bootstraps by which to pull ourselves up, the new cloud on which to hover.

But we have other things to remember. It was, after all, in the 1930's that the Henry George School was founded. And at the School we are able to face the '30's—not with nostalgia, perhaps, not with traumatic fear, either—but with an understanding that invites us to look forward to the future.

— Robert Clancy

Volume 30, No. 3

March, 1967

The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 67th 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.

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