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## AN I-YOU CHAT

Recently a student of Henry George said to me: "It seems like a very good idea and I can find nothing wrong with it. But I do not know enough about it. If it is really so good, why has it not been accepted, and why aren't our leaders for it?" I can only give a few considerations to this question, which vexes me, too.

1. Could it be that George and we are wrong? We have been told so frequently. But it has usually been a matter of waving it away, not refuting it. The few attempts at refutation have been so unsuccessful that they have only added to our conviction that we are right.

2. The Georgist philosophy points out things that are not immediately visible without a little analysis. It requires thinking, and most people do not like to take the trouble. People are more easily moved by the obvious and by emotions.

3. There is also a "law of inertia" operating in human affairs. People do not want to change their habitual ways of doing things, even if bad, and will resist change, thinking up dozens of reasons why nothing should be done.

4. People are swayed by authority. It needs a charismatic leader to make new ideas palatable and acceptable. On the other hand, such leaders are not willing to crusade for unpopular ideas. It is a circle that is difficult to break.

5. People most often think in terms of their individual welfare rather than the welfare of society. If you tell them the price of land is sky-rocketing, they will think of cashing in on it rather than correcting the situation. If taxes get murderous, they will think of dodging them rather than reforming the system.

6. We cannot overlook the power of a vested interest that is the oldest and strongest in the world - the private collection of the unearned income of land. It has a pervasive influence in education, journalism, legislation and business. And it awes people who have no stake in it into defending it even though they are victims.

The above deals with powerful factors ranged against us. But we have something going for us: the still small voice of reason and morality. There are people who will think things out, who are willing to question authority, who are concerned for the fate of society. We will find them if we keep trying.

So there is hope. But the heavy odds against us will explain why our progress has been so slow. There is, however, such a thing as an acceleration factor. Once our ideas get a good grip somewhere, they will tend to move faster and faster.

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Editor

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