

# A Word With You

**W**HAT is going on these days? This must be a question on everybody's mind.

In New York alone, within one month, we were treated to strikes and threats of strikes that involved transportation, deliveries, services and sanitation. We do not even have time to react.

Burglaries and assaults keep mounting. Riots and demonstrations proliferate. We thought morality had hit bottom, but it keeps getting lower. The concept of *quo pro quo* — of giving value for value—seems to be ravaged to pieces; and in its place stands the sterling principle, grab everything you can, and give as little as possible — nothing, if you can get away with it.

All this at a time when—they tell us—we stand on the pinnacle of a great, prosperous civilization.

True, we are building wonderful supersonic aircraft — while our traffic snarls get worse and worse. They're making detergents that get shirts whiter and brighter—while our polluted cities blacken our shirts and our lungs (no remedy for lungs, just for shirts). Everything is getting computerized and photocopied — marvelous, but nobody seems able any more to give simple answers to simple questions.

The irony of it is that everybody seems to deplore all this. Who, then, is keeping it going? Every once in a while I may meet a bright young technician of the New Order who, when I

put some human matter before him, stares like an intelligent but uncomprehending insect—he has adjusted—but by and large, people don't like it.

We cannot do all we are doing and expect the unmixed blessings of civilization. We cannot continue our present course without worse results.

What we are doing today violates basic principles, even though it may have begun with good intentions. The idea was to alleviate human suffering—but instead of solving basic economic problems, we built up an elaborate government machinery to handle the matter. We have reared an entire generation to trust this machinery and to build it bigger. And so we have the new philosophy—what you receive is not what you produce, but what you can grab.

Millions of people are taken from production to tend the gigantic machinery. Industry itself is reoriented to meet its needs. There are those who have managed very well with privileges, monopolies, subsidies and tax deals. But those simple enough to tend to productive work are sharply reminded that they must pay more and more for this great enterprise.

So what can we expect? Of course, there has to come a *reductio ad absurdum* when the whole thing collapses of its own weight. At some time—before or after the fall—we will have to do some pretty fundamental thinking.

—Robert Clancy

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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.

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