

A Word With You

NEXT to getting the Single Tax adopted, surely the dream of every Georgist is to see it taught in the colleges.

The natural reaction of the student who has been exposed to the Georgist philosophy—whether he has been to college, is now attending, or intends to go—is, “why don’t we get this in college?” Alas, we have no ready answer.

Should we blame Vested Interests? This is a conjecture which is hard to accept or reject—there is evidence on both sides.

Is it that we are not members of the Club? From Henry George on, most workers in the movement have been on the outside of Academia. Have recriminations back and forth impeded a rapprochement?

Or perhaps the academic mind does not commit itself strongly to any stance, Georgist or otherwise? We have to be thankful for small favors, as when a professor cautiously admits that possibly, under certain special circumstances, it might be a little better to tax land just a little more than buildings—but of course, we cannot generalize, and the Single Tax theory must emphatically be rejected. (Now, *there’s* a stance—but we are still thankful for small favors.)

Another possibility is, quite simply, that our time has not yet come. We learned, after many bad experiences

that the mecca of land value tax legislation has to be attained as a result of broadly based support, that heaven cannot be stormed.

Colleges, too, are part of society and reflect the state of society. We may stand in awe of the “men of light and learning” (as George called the professors), but in spite of everything, the germinal ideas of civilization are hatched but rarely inside the world of organized higher education. Pasteur, Einstein, George himself, and any number of innovators were mostly rejected outsiders. Even the current fad of mathematical economics was begun outside the pale. After a while, when these strange ideas become formalized and familiar, they are taught in colleges.

So let us not be too impetuous. Wandering in the Sinai wilderness, we understandably regard the college world as a Promised Land now inhabited by Philistines and others.

Well, all right, we’ll get there eventually. But let us not forget that those Sinai wanderers of long ago found their soul and received the Law there—and when they finally got to the Promised Land they behaved badly and remembered Sinai as the time of their heroic greatness. So let’s make the most of our wanderings, and also say a prayer that we’ll behave well when we get to Canaan. —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 community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

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