

The Spirit of Henry George

—PRISCILLA DUNWIDDY—

Certain philosophic groups like the Georgists, have their rise and continuance in the understanding and acceptance of some truth.

It is an irrefutable fact that land owes its value to human use and to the density of population. While this is basic to the Georgists, it is not peculiar to their thought, but is strongly recognized by multitudes of people, many of whom are opposed to Georgist conclusions. It is what followers of Henry George propose to do about the truth they recognize, that puts them in a class by themselves.

A whole system of profit has been built around the buying of land for speculation with only the consideration of financial gain. In other cases holders of property which has been lifted into great values by the massing of population, have gained power and influence in the community out of all proportion to what they have returned.

The Georgists sometimes think of themselves as following certain limited courses—and while their idea offers a specific technique and solution, there is a broader aspect to consider, and that is democracy.

In the spirit of that broader aspect they ask what can be done to encourage a greater sense of human worth and freedom, while opponents are asking only how much they can make. They survey conditions from a clear view of what actually would bring more good to more people.

This, too, Is Selfish

This is, however, not simply a humanitarian consideration. It is as selfish as the desire which seeks only to make money, but it is on another level. It is common sense for any person to see that the more other people are benefited, the more secure he will be. So his is an enlightened selfishness and this is a part of democracy.

Whenever a Georgist finds another special interest group or individual working for more good for more people, he would do well to express the fraternal spirit of the broader movement.

Every time Georgists can relate themselves to others in the democratic purpose they move forward and upward in accomplishment and creativeness as envisioned by Henry George. They may continue to stress special things, but they need no longer be restricted within narrow limits.