

the Henry George News

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Henry George III

MAY should bring gladness, not sadness — not the painful word that Dr. Henry George had died at age sixty, with so much more to give. Suddenly one remembered that other Henry George who also did not spare himself, but overgave, for a cause he felt was right, and died at fifty-eight.

Henry George III was a doctor in Wilmington, Delaware, who never knew when to stop. He was on the staff of the Riverside Hospital which he had worked desperately to help establish because other hospitals did not welcome the less fortunate. He served his patients devotedly and could not turn away from suffering.

So his heart stopped abruptly before dawn on May 16th. It was the end of a splendid life, and there at the bedside was one of those wonderful "George women," his wife Mary Jane, who like the grandmother could only say to such a man, do what you must. Such women are rare. To her and her two sons, Henry George IV and John Richard, our wordless sorrow rushes forth. Also to his sisters and his mother, whose husband, Henry George Jr., lived to age sixty-two. Dr. George spoke to his mother in California on Mother's Day. He sounded tired and discouraged. Now he has joined his father and grandfather, she said.

It was around 1950 that we were privileged on occasions to have Dr.

and Mrs. George as guests in New York. On one of those visits the accompanying photograph was made. He bore a marked resemblance to his grandfather in personality and appearance. Then as always he was patiently pleading for such things as betterment of conditions in old-age homes, prisons and the mines. He wrote a poignant book about miners, called *Blood and Coal*.

Though it must have taxed his strength greatly, he kept working for things he believed in. He was strongly committed to the principle of land value taxation, knew the subject well, and taught it. Just recently he ordered another dozen copies of *Progress and Poverty* saying he always gave them out to people who seemed interested. He made it clear to us years ago however, that Georgists should not force their views on others. Our first duty was to make some contribution of time and effort in neighborhoods where help was needed. Only then, he believed; after persons had come to respect us for our basic integrity, should one presume to broach the subject of LVT. His own participation ranged over a wide spectrum—the Revolution-

(Continued on Page 15)



"What is needed today is an educational system where philosophical ideas, including those of Henry George, are well understood and discussed — one that will train students of quality instead of money-making machines. How can the ideas of Henry George gain any acceptance in a country where for too many decades the general IQ has been that of a 12-year old? Some ten years ago a nation-wide poll was taken on the definition of the word capitalism and 85 percent couldn't answer. It would be well to conduct the poll again and see if there had been any improvement. And how about a poll on the query, who is Henry George? I wouldn't be surprised to see 99 percent answer that they never heard of him.

"It will take a million years to produce an enlightened people who can institute what Mr. Clancy advocates, fundamental justice for all. Man has been on this planet for ten million years, and his recorded history goes back less than five thousand years. It took centuries for him to develop means of communication, and it took

the world thousands of years to produce a Henry George. It is going to take millions more for the acceptance of his worth while ideas."

To this letter Mr. Clancy replied:

"I agree that Christianity has not been given a fair trial. I took care in saying that Christianity was accepted, *not* adopted.

"Whatever deviation Russia, China, etc. has from Marx, they got their stimulus from Marxist doctrine, and it is still the foundation of their beliefs. If the Czar had played it smart, he could have presided over a communist state, just as English royalty now presides over a socialist state.

"While I most certainly agree that our greatest job is education, I do not think it has to take a million years. After diligent and persistent teaching a point is reached where the spreading process develops a life of its own, and we may then see rapid progress.

"If the average intelligence of the nation is that of a 12-year old, that does not dismay me. If we could get to all the 12-year olds, we could get our philosophy across."

Henry George III

(Continued from Page 1)

ary war, Kiwanis, Red Cross, osteopathy (his profession), theosophy and politics. In 1943 and '45, like his grandfather, he entered mayoralty campaigns, advocating reassessment and a shift of taxation from improvements to land values in Wilmington. On his first try the Democrats said the party would support him if he would let them tell him whom to appoint. The second time, organized labor made the same offer — he refused both.

In 1949 he hoped compulsory health insurance could be avoided and called it the first step in a socialized state. He said 1,500,000 men and women would be taken from their present employ-

ment and re-employed as lay clerks, inspectors, detectives, accountants, prosecutors, tabulators and tax collectors — all part of the roster of a police state. He predicted that the contract relationship between men would be destroyed, and once individual resistance is broken it becomes an act of disloyalty to protest or fight back — disloyalty to a bureau that cannot afford criticism leads to repressive measures. This is 19 years later and his prophecy is borne out.

Speaking at the HGS early in 1951 he borrowed from the closing chapter of *Progress and Poverty* the thought that "human progress is not the improvement of human nature," but mankind must struggle on for millions of

years. He said that Henry George proclaimed "in logic hard to refute, his faith in the fatherhood of God and his belief that immortal man will ultimately return to his divine source." In remarks which followed on that evening, reported in the February 1951 HGN, one catches a glimpse of the limitless horizon which beckoned Henry George III.

"We are prone to consider ourselves with great importance and we tend to transfer that importance to our intimate objects and ideas. . . . We think of this moment as the fruition of all civilizations, and in part this is true. But Henry George tells us that it may be the fate of our civilization to be forgotten. We may be erased just as the traces of other great civilizations have been erased. The ideals for which we strive and die may have to be re-discovered, and rediscovered they *will* be whether any record of us remains or not, because they contain the primitive truth of growth and symmetry.

"It is important that we divorce ourselves from the idea that our philosophy must be accepted in our day. Such immature thinking predisposes one to a feeling of futility and defeat. Man's progress is slow, painfully, brutally slow, but the philosophy of Henry George will find a few converts in each age who will carry on the teachings. In future days those who are now

our enemies may be the first to apply the principles we now espouse.

"Today man has the capacity to become of age. He can mature into a moral creature, a co-creator with God, but the probability is that he will not for he has now produced a technical culture that has outstripped his moral development. . . .

"You may say that I am a pessimist. I do not think so. Ultimately I will learn my part, and take my place, and do my bit, and so will every other groping individual. But it will take time, I will make many failures before I succeed, and so will you. To think of perfection or the ideal in a lifetime or the life of a civilization or a race, is to attach the infinite effect to a finite cause. It cannot be done. But we can try to do our best. We can follow the teaching of the Christian mystic, Tolstoy. We can follow the example of sacrifice and love set by Gandhi, or the Japanese, Kagawa, and grasp a part of what Henry George, our elder brother, saw. By making these lives and what they stood for a part of us, we will mature and progress. They who fight with Ormuzd, though they may not know each other — somewhere, sometime, will the muster roll be called."

Yes, somewhere! And as we turn the pages of the years the generations come and go.

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