

A Plea For Action

By JOHN LUXTON

ONE summer day a few years back the graduates of the Henry George School of Social Science were assembled on the banks of the Mahwah River at Suffern, New York, to listen to words of wisdom and exhortation from the veterans of the Georgeian movement. The most eloquent of the pleas for continued march of the movement came from the late Joseph Dana Miller. The gist of his message was that we, "who are living upon borrowed time" can not carry on indefinitely and that it behooves the younger soldiers in the campaign to keep up their courage and be prepared to meet all vicissitudes of time and the general stupidity of the human race without regard to personal comfort if they wish to see that liberty to which their forefathers dedicated themselves established firmly in America.

Since that afternoon much water has trickled through the Mahwah and many ideas and movements alien to the principles laid down in the Declaration of Independence have fouled the threads of our social fabric. Mr. Miller has liquidated his debt to eternity with interest compounded many fold and the younger generation can no longer look to him for inspiration. It is now high time for all who have taken to heart the meaning of the message of Henry George as interpreted by Oscar Geiger and Joseph Dana Miller to get into the front lines and fight as they fought, without thought of self but of the greater whole, mankind. Where shall the fight begin? Right here, where ever you are, and now. A corporal's guard of those who have attended the classes of the Henry George School of Social Science in every town and hamlet where such classes have been held would make up an army formidable in the fight against privilege and greed. In the time that has elapsed since Oscar Geiger started his great adventure enough volunteers should be found so thoroughly imbued with the principles of democracy and liberty as to confound the purveyors of Communism and Fascism.

Is there as much need of vigorous and unstinted action as the writer suggests? Look around you in the world and see. Democracy is flouted, even in our own country. In "Not Peace But a Sword," an American novelist and newspaper man, Vincent Sheean, despairs of democracy which by blundering has caused the tragedies of Czechoslovakia, Spain and China, and looks with favor upon the Fascist idea of government. The United Christian Front is born, not to forward the principles of Christianity, but to foment racial and religious hatred, choosing to believe that the present depression and unemployment are due to those who control the money of the world and that these banking interests are in the hands of the race to which Christ belonged. The youth of the high schools and colleges are urged to unite in a national youth move-

ment, a very good idea if intended to work for a better democracy and for true liberty, but, we find that it becomes a cradle roll for a movement which by no stretch of the imagination can be called democratic. Ten or more millions of men are out of work and the best that can be done by our Executive and Legislative departments is to employ them on part time at various projects, some useful, some otherwise, and pass the bill on to the innocent unborn generations. That this method offers no hope of our getting out of the depression and that consequently the future generations will also have the added burden of their own unemployment and depression problems seem not to have entered the minds of our representatives. A clergyman, depending upon his religious cloak, rant over the air and in a weekly publication about the evil of the money powers, and stirs up racial hatred by attacking the Jews. That another gentleman of the cloth, Father McGlynn, advocated the only method which would insure justice to all, seems not to be known to the reverend gentleman from Michigan, and to many of the most violent of his supporters the names of Henry George and Father McGlynn and what they stand for are as unknown as the origin of the Sphinx. Nazis and Deutsche bunde soldaten parade in stormtroopers' uniforms, swastikas and all, behind hedges and stockades of Bund camps and inculcate in the younger generations of natural born American citizens a contempt for democracy, and a love for all that Hitler represents.

In addition to the above symptoms of discontent to be seen all about us we have violations of the Constitution which forbids the imposition of taxes or imposts by one State upon the products of another State, and these violations are upheld by the courts because they are disguised by legal subterfuges such as quarantines, labor and insurance regulations, or motor vehicle laws. Sales taxes are increased and all sorts of nuisance taxes are imposed to get revenue while revenue continues to shrink and business stagnates. Man's right to labor if he can find a job is interfered with by government's surrender to the worst forms of unionism. Pickets on public highway assault the eardrums of passersby with raucous cries and talks or interfere with the comfortable and easy use of the citizens' own sidewalks and the police are afraid to restrain them, so great is the power of the union. Late dissatisfied members of the community have taken to picketing the homes of members of Congress who have voted according to their judgment, which in absence of a specified mandate is what we expect Congressmen to do.

In closing let us consider one more evidence of the need of action on the part of the followers of Henry George of this generation. From the pulpit and the professorial chair come doctrines which are tinged with the fallacies of Karl Marx. Man as an earthly animal, bound to the earth from which come the very elements and compounds that make up his tissues, is ignored, and in his place we

have a composite thing, a social creation, a cog that fits in a machine. Private property ceases to exist under such doctrines and the machine becomes the thing to worry about. This leads to the overemphasis of tools which men have created to facilitate labor. So men's energies are to be devoted to schemes to control banking, production and distribution, parental care of the young, the mental and physical growth of the young in a pattern to fit society instead of the individual, and the recreation and enjoyments of the adults. All of which is contrary to the natural law which has decreed that there are no two individuals alike, and to the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy. Some of these attempts to force mankind into a mold are called Fascism or Nazism, two ideologies which oppose Democracy and personal liberty, and another one, Communism, has the impudence to call itself Democracy. All three are insidious attacks on all that Georgeians uphold as the ideals of mankind.

So, you followers of Henry George, who have drawn your inspiration from Oscar Geiger, Joseph Dana Miller, and all the great men of the past who led men to battle for liberty and justice, arm yourselves and prepare to battle that "this world may be a better place to live in." As a battle cry what could be more appropriate than "a fair field and no favor."

Robbing Peter to Pay Paul

WITH the adoption of the new State Constitution by the voters last fall, New York became the first of the forty-eight states to undertake assisted housing.

The Legislature authorized the state to incur a debt of \$150,000,000 for loans to municipalities for the purpose of clearing slums and using the sites for the construction of housing within the means of the lowest income groups. The state is also authorized to make grants and give subsidies to the municipalities; so as to keep the rents within the means of the poorest families. All housing projects built by loans from the state must be on sites cleared of slums, and the occupants of the buildings who must move are to have the first choice in renting the new dwellings. All loans by the state are to be repaid within a period of fifty years and amortized annually. The interest and principal must be guaranteed by the municipalities.

The grants and subsidies must come out of the current budgets. In order to realize funds for this purpose, the state and municipalities are permitted to impose special taxes upon the people, the sum total to be used to meet the interest and amortization of the loans and to reduce the rents to a point which the lowest income families can afford. We are robbing Peter to pay Paul.

The same pressure groups that were behind the Wagner-Steagall Housing Bill in Washington are the ones who are responsible for forcing through this legislation in New

York. The "dervish" movement is on. This is nothing new, for we have had experiences along other lines when groups undertook to get something from the government. All one has to do is shout for it. The Bryan Silver Movement of 1896—the Greenback Movement prior to that—the Prohibition Movement—the Protective Tariff—all resorted to cries and shouts without reason.

When the assisted housing movement began a few years ago, stress was laid upon the fact that millions of families were living under slum conditions, and that all the diseases that man is heir to are caused by people living in what are now euphoniously called sub-standard houses. In New York we still call them slums—a report made in Boston, however, stated there are no slum houses in Boston, but that it does have a large number of "sub-standard" dwellings. According to the definition of a slum, in Webster's dictionary, "it is a foul street of a city, especially one with a slovenly, often vicious population; a low neighborhood." The pressure groups, however, define a slum dwelling as one not provided with cross ventilation, heat and hot water from a central point and mechanical refrigeration.

There is of course no end of this sort of thing, once it gets under way. For instance, there is now pending in Congress an amendment to the Wagner Bill which will appropriate \$800,000,000, with an additional \$45,000,000 a year, for subsidies. Subsidies will come out of taxes collected by the government. It is an illustration of the "haves helping to support the have-nots" under the government pressure groups. In many instances, the taxpayers will continue to live in dwellings of a lower standard than those families who are fortunate enough to get quarters in subsidized houses.

An amazing situation has arisen in this respect—we find many newspapers who have been considered as a conservative press supporting the movement. College professors, generally, are also behind it—but we cannot expect much from college professors. They don't have to reason—they just go along with the crowd.

There is no doubt that there is much bad housing throughout the country—and there cannot be any objection in denouncing the owners who are permitted to rent them. People, however, do not live in slum houses because they like the houses. They remain there because of their poverty. If they could afford better quarters, they would gladly move. Instead of government officials undertaking to wipe out a cause, they proceed to treat a symptom. A house in itself is not a slum—it is made so either through the neglect of an owner or the slovenly habits of the occupants.

Boards of Health are continually asked by their Mayors who favor assisted housing to give them reports on the cases of tuberculosis caused by people living in the old tenements. There is no such data—tuberculosis is not a result of bad housing per se—but one of congestion—