

HALL OF FAME

Ever since Henry George was eligible for election to the Hall of Fame for Great Americans in 1935, efforts have been made to get him elected. His closest success was that first election in 1935 when he fell just short of the necessary votes. His fortunes declined in subsequent elections, held usually every five years, despite the fact that Dwight D. Eisenhower (then President of Columbia University) voted for him in 1950. The most recent effort was in 1976 when the Henry George Institute promoted a campaign for the purpose. The Director of the Hall of Fame, Dr. Jerry Grundfest, was impressed with the number of nominations George received - but still he did not make it.

Now it seems that the Hall of Fame itself is in jeopardy. This pantheon of bronze busts of famous Americans, situated on the former campus of New York University (now Bronx Community College) has fallen on hard times. New York University has moved to lower Manhattan, the Bronx has deteriorated, the Hall does not attract the visitors it once did. The Hall of Fame's funds are depleted and its staff, including Dr. Grundfest, has been disbanded. However, there is a move afoot to save this landmark.

We worked so hard for so many years to get Henry George in. Will his fame last longer than the Hall of Fame? Might he say, with the Latin poet, "I build monuments more lasting than bronze"?

LET'S GET THE ISSUES DISCUSSED

By GEORGE MENNINGER (Chicago, Ill., USA)

This is in reply to the Guest Editorial by Bruno Eichert in the Autumn GJ. First, he asked about my success. My arguments are not based on my success but rather on George's and the Communists' success. Think about what George did. He started with nothing and within a short span of years built a movement he did not think could be stopped. Look at his speeches, books and articles; see if you can find any that do not say the land belongs to all the people. Listen to him: "The sentiment of justice is yet fundamental to the human mind, and whatever dispute arouses the passions of men, the conflict is sure to rage, not so much as to the question 'Is it wise?' as to the question 'Is it right?'" The causes of the Civil War were many, the least of which was slavery. But when it came to a battle cry, it was "die to make men free."

Look at the success of the Communists. Country after country, with as many different leaders, but one argument - give the land to the people. Why couldn't it have been us? Well, we are selling "tax reform", which doesn't inspire.

Second, Mr. Eichert asked about converts. I once had a rather good history professor who spent half an hour on George as the man who opposed unearned increment. He went on to explain how good art rising in value was unearned increment. Converts? Converts are a product of getting the issues discussed. I was set to discuss the issues in that course, but I never found out what the issues were. George never asked for converts, he asked for free and open discussion of the issues. It is still all we can ask today - get that and converts will come.

Third, I agree that most of my friends believe land should be private property. But I would go a step further and say that even if they could be convinced otherwise, most couldn't care less. Yet I do believe that there are people who are unhappy, who feel things are wrong, and who would work like the devil if we could only point the way.