

## Steinmetz: The Social Individualist

By LEONARD F. KLEINFELD

IT MAY BE RATHER anomalous to describe as an individualist a man who devoted much of his life to political socialism. Yet, if one should examine the life and activities of Charles P. (for Proteus) Steinmetz, the noted electrical engineer, such a description would not appear so paradoxical. All that is necessary to make the point valid is to separate Steinmetz's political interests from his professional career. It is in the second area that his streak of individualism shows.

Steinmetz was one of an extremely distinguished few who have been accorded the rank of "genius," a title he undoubtedly deserved, and carried comfortably. Though he was generally considered an American, he was born in Germany and did not come to the United States until he was twenty-four years old. By that time he had attained profound knowledge in the fields of mathematics, electrical engineering, and chemistry, and had already earned a reputation for unusual scientific brilliance. By that time, also, his socialistic militancy had caused him difficulties with various governmental authorities, a circumstance which might have hastened his emigration.

Individuality can be demonstrated in many different ways. In the case of Charles Steinmetz, it was evidenced by his personal manner and by his professional ingenuity. He insisted on doing things his way and was a complete maverick with respect to innovative developments in electrical science. Even the gigantic General Electric Company dared not curb Steinmetz, and for decades allowed him full autonomy as its chief consulting engineer. This unique status brought about numerous accomplishments on the part of GE's one-man think-tank, who in addition to performing scientific miracles, wrote a number of books and countless papers, and taught electrical engineering at college. While basically a magnificent theoretician, Steinmetz possessed a practical side as well, and held about 200 patents. His great contributions to studies in lightning, magnetism, and alternating current are unsurpassed in the field of electrical science.

## Henry George: 100 Years after Progress and Poverty

By IRVING STARER

HENRY GEORGE is remembered today—when he is remembered—not as a politician, but as an advocate of economic and social reform. Understandably so!! As a politician, he was never elected to political office. However, as an economist and social philosopher, he succeeded in having his concepts published, widely disseminated and discussed. In fact, in several parts of the world some of his ideas are still alive!!

Among his present day followers, there are those who believe that the only practical way to bring about wide acceptance of his economic principles is through political action. Work within the political system, they say, and, through elected officials who may be favorably disposed to George's ideas, enact legislation that will gradually introduce Georgist innovations.

George himself, though he ran for public office, was highly skeptical of the idea of achieving his reforms through the political system. As he said in *Social Problems* (page 242):

"Social reform is not to be secured by noise and shouting; by complaints and denunciations; by the formation of parties, or the making of revolutions; but by the awakening of thought and the progress of ideas. Until there be correct thought, there cannot be right action; and when there is correct thought, right action *will* follow."

Despite the enormous energy he devoted to his work, Steinmetz continued to engage in the socialist movement, and in fact several times ran on that ticket (unsuccessfully) for public office. Politically and economically, socialism may very well be the antithesis of individualism, but it seems evident that sympathy for the tenets of socialism does not preclude one from personal individuality. Charles Steinmetz was certainly one in a million; he put on a one-man show that cannot be forgotten, and relying solely on his own talent, ability, and brainpower, produced unmatched achievements. Surely all this bespeaks qualities that mark him a true individual.

There are still others who feel that only through "academic respectability" and accommodation of George's ideas to present day economic thinking can acceptance of his ideas be achieved. This can be accomplished, they believe, through the efforts of his followers who now reside within the academic community. They would rely on the political method of chipping away at currently acceptable "wisdom," making accommodations and compromises, and slowly but gradually introduce Henry George to current economic thought — an infiltration process, so to speak.

Though these two methods may result in gaining some acceptance and application of George's concepts, I believe that Henry George's ideas can best be promoted through what is the most direct approach—*education*!! This approach is almost dormant today.

A renaissance in the teaching of Henry George is sorely needed!! The Henry George schools are *not* alive and well!! They are practically dead!! This sad state exists because in recent years too much time, effort and money has been expended to promote Henry George's ideas through political acceptance and academic respectability. Not enough has been done through direct education. Let us revitalize the existing Henry George schools, let us establish new Henry George schools, let us develop new teachers and, above all, let us *teach* Henry George!!

*"An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man."*

—Ralph Waldo Emerson