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One must remember that the wealthy classes of that time were as fearfully bitter against Single Tax as they are today against Communism. Some of the same slanderous charges of home-breaking and immorality were brought against them. Through certain reactionary Catholic Bishops, the forces of wealth brought a terrific pressure against Father McGlynn, who spoke not only for Single Tax, but for the Irish Land League, which was fighting landlordism in Ireland.

The campaign resulted in Father McGlynn's excommunication, the worst fate that can befall a priest. But he did not flinch. He remained a Catholic. And he remained a leader in the fight against poverty.

FATHER MCGLYNN was the priest of one of the largest parishes in New York. His parishioners stood by him, even after the excommunication. They attended their old church, but sent all their money contributions to Father McGlynn's Anti-Poverty League. They held parades of protest, they conducted a sort of sit-down strike.

After some years of this, the people won their fight and their Beloved Priest was restored to them. The Pope removed the excommunication ban on Father McGlynn, and he was enabled to fight poverty both as a priest and American citizen.

Father Coughlin has received no such harsh treatment from his Church, but the episode illustrates that when enough rank-and-file Catholics who hate Nazism and fascism turn their full pressure on, Coughlinism will go.

The Single Tax philosophy of Henry George was based on the idea that the land belonged to all the people, and that monopolists should not be allowed to profit by increases in land values. Henry George believed that the cause of American poverty could be found in the millions of acres of land that were held out of use by greedy land speculators. He devised a system of taxes that would prevent land profiteering, and throw open the traditional forty acres to every American worker.

A struggling, small industrial capitalist could agree with this philosophy, because it would enormously reduce his rent charges. Quite a few followed Henry George. That was before the rise of mass machine production and the reign of great financial and industrial monopolists.

He was a great and good man. And he fought that old fight against greedy wealth that every sensitive man has fought who ever heard the whimper of a little child hungering in a land of plenty. Henry George aroused millions of Americans to the hateful paradox of mass poverty growing side by side with the swollen fatness of a handful of millionaires. He taught Americans that there could be no real freedom until there was economic justice in the land.

Henry George belongs in the calendar of the notable heroes of American progress. And so does the Beloved Priest, Father McGlynn, whom every Catholic, ashamed of Coughlin, should find cause for new pride and courage.

Change the World



A Tribute to Memory
Of Henry George
And Father McGlynn

By MIKE GOLD

I AM sorry I wasn't present last week at one of the many meetings held to celebrate the centennial of that great American, Henry George. If it is not late, however, let me ask the readers of this column, even in the midst of a world crisis, to mentally doff their hats for a minute in tribute to Henry George.

He was a singularly pure and brave political figure, and although comparisons are always slightly false, one might venture to place him as the Karl Marx of the lower middle class in America. Henry George gave a whole generation of American radicals who were fighting the juggernaut march of the trusts much of their political theory. And like Marx he not only wrote a people's "Bible" in his famous "Progress and Poverty," but he also was an active participant in the daily political struggle.

I forget the exact year, and maybe some old timer can furnish it to me, but somewhere in the 1880's, Henry George ran for Mayor of New York, with the unanimous support of the trade union movement. He conducted one of the most stirring campaigns ever witnessed in American life, and was almost elected.

But Boss Tweed's Tammany was his antagonist, and it isn't difficult to believe the adherents of Henry George who claimed that the ballot boxes were unusually stuffed, and the election typically stolen.

It is also interesting to remember that New York's Catholic people were largely behind George. Recently, I have been reading a fascinating biography by Stephen Bell of the Catholic priest, Father McGlynn, who became Henry George's best-known propagandist.

Today, in many minds, unfortunately, Father Coughlin, ranting, roaring, spreading race hatred, and intriguing with foreign fascists to deceive and betray the poor and oppressed of America, has become a symbol of the Catholic priesthood.

In the 1880's, to many minds, that symbol was Father McGlynn, the Single Taxer and leader of the Anti-Poverty League. There were millions who came to love him. It is impossible to read his life, even at this late date, and not love him, too.

→ "Rebel Priest, and Prophet"