

(COPY)

Verlin Gordon

VERLIN D. GORDON
417 Franklin
Lima, Ohio

November 14, 1946

Mr. Otto K. Dorn
Henry George School of Social Science
50 East 69th Street
New York 21, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Dorn:

I felt compelled to write you this letter to let you in on some very interesting and inspiring experiences I have been having here lately.

On October the 8th, last, I was invited to speak to the Men's Brotherhood of the St. Paul's Evangelical and Reform Church of Wapakoneta, and to present the slide film "Millions of Jobs." It so happened that I had prepared a talk for just such occasions, entitled HENRY GEORGE AND THE CHRISTIAN BASIS OF PEACE. Please don't think I'm boasting when I say that the meeting was successful. Curiosity was aroused regarding George's solution to the problem of poverty, however I left them curious. Last evening, a friend tells me, Rev. Loew of that Church made the announcement that interested people were invited to attend a class in Fundamental Economics at my home in Lima.

As a result of the above talk, the Minister of the Van Wert, Ohio, Evangelical Church (30 miles from here. Wapak is 15.) invited me to bring film and talk to present before his group. This I did last Tuesday evening, November 12th. And, although the group was small at that location, the pastor, V.P. Wierwille has asked me if I would be willing to accept him and his wife, along with several others, into my next class. Believe me when I say that he is interested in Henry George.

Well, here I go rambling on and on. Yesterday morning a young man approached my desk at Westinghouse, and requested a brief resume of talk, etc. He is trying to get me in as speaker at the local U.B. Church. And then, on top of all this, I just received a special delivery letter from a church in Piqua, Ohio, 45 miles south of Lima, inviting me to speak there next week. And this Piqua Church is a large one. Boy, am I having fun!

Mr. Dorn, I have always been able to work better for this great educational movement alone. My two last classes taught me more about the Philosophy of Freedom than I ever knew before. Then along came my first opportunity to speak! It frightened me a bit, yet I was overjoyed. Here was the opportunity to learn by doing.

All these experiences have filled me with a burning desire to let every church, every union, etc., know of the splendid work of the Henry George School. Please don't think I'm bold when I say that I wish it were possible for me to carry out such a program. More than likely you have already heard, through Mrs. Carlson, about the fifty percent cut in Westinghouse personnel being made here in Lima. And due to the fact that I have little seniority, I must go too. They say its only temporary, a result of material shortage, but one never knows. I received my notice nearly three weeks back. I still have several to go.

In a way, all this offers me the opportunity to offer up a proposition. Since success is coming to me, really at a rather uncertain time, not knowing whether I will get a position in Lima or not, I would like to ask: Would it be possible to talk the Board, etc., into letting me organize classes throughout Ohio, making use of the vast opportunity that is now in my lap? Several months back I presented the plan to Miss Bateman -- as you suggested -- but no results.

Again, I say, use me as an experiment. Set a time limit if you wish. However, I will assure you that I will succeed. I want to interview Union officials, church leaders, business men, etc., and I know you will be pleased with the results. It will demand more of my time than any shop work, but I am happy at it. Also, Mrs. Gordon shares my enthusiasm in this work, now. She sat in on my two most recent classes -- and what a difference!

If I am offered the above opportunity to carry on, I want to contact students of Henry George in large Ohio cities, and organize classes for them.

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Verlin

P.S. This may lead to a self-supporting endeavor in the near future.

November 18, 1948

Mr. Verlin Gordon
417 Franklin Street
Lima, Ohio

Dear Verlin:

I was delighted to read in your letter of November 14th that you are meeting with success in your public speaking and class organization efforts. You will succeed, I know, because you have the necessary qualifications for success. You have a good personality, a pleasant speaking voice, and a thorough understanding of your subject - as well as sincerity of purpose which will help you win the confidence of your audience. This leaves you with one other person whose confidence you must gain, and that is a man by the name of Verlin Gordon.

The above qualifications are, of course, general, and apply to some extent to any vocation you may choose to follow. I am not trying to persuade you to go to work for the school, for that is a question for you and your family to decide. In order to be successful you must be happy; therefore in choosing your vocation you should choose the one that will bring the greatest happiness to you and your family. A business or industrial pursuit may bring you a greater financial return - which is also an important requisite to happiness. From what I know of you, I would say that you will be successful in any pursuit.

Another factor to consider is, which of these lines will do the most for building up your standing in the community. Which will develop your own capabilities, intellectually and spiritually, so that you can perform the greatest degree of service to your family and community. In the school work you will match your talents with leaders in many lines of business, church, and education. In a business pursuit you will match your wits, skill and brain with people in industry and commerce. You will be dealing in material things, or rendering personal service; all of which is necessary to life and happiness. Your success in either event will depend largely upon where your heart is and to the extent of efforts and study that you are willing to put into it. Therefore, consider carefully which will put you into the more favorable environment; the environment that will help most in your intellectual development and consequently bring you the greater degree of success and happiness.

Now, Verlin, you can see I am not trying to tell you what you should do, but rather I am urging you to think this problem

Verlin Gordon -- #2

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through in an endeavor to reach the very best possible conclusion. Do this, and if you then feel that you would like to tackle the job of organizing classes in your vicinity, then I suggest you give us as much essential information as possible about yourself and your plans. For instance, how and where would you propose to start? What plans have you in mind? Do you have a car? If not, what are the facilities for getting about in your section? What salary would you expect and approximately what would be your expenses when away from home?

If you will give me this information and as much other as will enable us to work out the best plan, I will talk this over with Bob Clancy and we will work out a proposition to put before the Board.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Yours sincerely,

Otto K. Dorn

OKD:ula

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Lima, Ohio

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50 East 69th Street
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Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Verlin

P.S. This may lead to a self-supporting endeavor in the near future.

Verlin Gordon

September 22, 1943

Mr. Verlin Gordon
218½ East Market Street
Lima, Ohio

Dear Mr. Gordon:

John Monroe very kindly sent me a copy of your letter of August 30th. I think I know just how you feel regarding the proposition the School made you and how you arrived at your conclusions.

I trust I may be pardoned for relating a bit of my own experience, for I feel it may be of some value to you in making future decisions regarding the great work in which we are both so vitally interested. I say I think I understand why you hesitate and why you doubt your ability to make good. Is it perhaps because of your present experience in making converts?? Have you perhaps found it rather difficult to convince some of your closest friends and associates? If that is the case then let me assure you that your experience is not unique since that has been the experience of most individuals working alone.

I became interested in Henry George in 1896 at which time I really expected to see legislation enactments taking place within the next few years which would at least bring about some of the benefits that we are all working for. This of course, was expecting a little too much. I then settled down to trying my hand at convincing my friends and anyone else, that would listen. In thirty-five years I doubt whether I convinced more than five people, which gives me an average of one every seven years. Rather slow, isn't it? And then came the Henry George School and my first experience with class room methods of making Georgists. During the first six months I accomplished more at the School than I had done during the previous thirty-five years. This may sound fantastic, but it is true, not only in my case, but also in others.

It has been several years since I have personally conducted classes, but there is plenty of other work to be done in promoting classes and in building up schools in every city, town and village. This together with the Correspondence Course is, in my opinion, the most effective thing any of us can do in ^{bringing} light to a much troubled and befuddled world. I am sure that some day we will find you deep in this work and extremely happy to be in it.

Now then as to the drafting of fathers - that is of course

quite a different matter. If you are at present engaged in an essential industry, I feel you should stay at it since the Army and the Navy needs these materials quite as much as they need men. If you feel this is your duty as you see it, you may rest assured that you are doing the right thing and we agree with you.

With best wishes for your success, I am,

Sincerely,

Otto K. Dorn

OKD:dm

C O P Y

216¹/₂ E. Market Street
Lima, Ohio
August 30, 1943

John Lawrence Monroe, Associate Director
The Henry George School of Social Science
Chicago, Ill.

Dear John:

During the last three weeks, I have been carefully weighing every fact pro and con concerning my appointment to the Henry George School. Of course, thoughts arose which failed to come to mind during the brief interview on August the 8th. For instance, I am convinced that I have not as yet proven my ability with tangible results. Why haven't I introduced the philosophy of freedom to Lima? If I could gain publicity for the School in New York, why is it that I have failed here? I am certain to be faced with one question in the minds of my associates in both Chicago and New York, if I assumed such great responsibilities, and that would be: "In what way has Gordon proven his worth?"

I want you to know that I am really grateful to you and Miss Bateman for the confidence you have placed in me. The fact is, this splendid opportunity arising as it did, has almost overwhelmed me. It is exactly what I had dreamed and prayed for. But I must be absolutely honest with you and all those who have placed their confidence in me.

Again, the father draft seems to be ever looming closer. I am not a coward, neither do I wish to hide behind a so-called defense job, however it would avail little if I would accept the position only to face induction into the armed forces. And when a man quits here at Westinghouse, both employer and employee must turn in said name to the local draft board. I made an attempt to obtain a leave of absence from this plant, but failed. Such are the costs of a war economy.

I am more than pleased with the compensation you offer. I only wish I lived in Chicago, and could offer my services voluntarily. In this way without cost to the School I could prove whether or not I am worth such gracious pay.

Faithfully yours,

(Signed) Verlin

P.S. I am now more determined than ever to do something BIG for HG, so that I will not be found wanting in the future!

Points about Verlin D. Gordon

1. Correspondence course graduate.
2. Active and balanced writer on his own of letters to editor.
(Wall St. Journal, etc.)
3. Influences and works personally with industrial leaders.
(Benjamin Affleck, retired president, Atlas Portland Cement Corp.).
4. Works with people in movement (Vi Peterson, Miss Bateman, Mr. Gilbert Tucker).
5. Charming as to person and attire.
6. Modest.
7. Zealous.
8. Young, 30.
9. Father of boy 7 years of age.
10. Mrs. Gordon sympathetic to his interests in H.G.
11. Now in production department of Westinghouse Electric.
12. Wants to work for H.G. full time - pay no object.
13. Not attached to Lima or any other place -- willing to go to work for H.G. anywhere, now.

I. Put NY local classwork on extension basis.

II. Appoint Director with full responsibility for production of P&P classes in NY.

A. Getting and using meeting places.

1. Headquarters at 30 E. 29th St.

a. All first floor except Schalkenbach space for offices of Director and Registrar, and student workroom.

b. Basement for storage.

c. 3rd floor for classrooms.

d. 4th and 5th floors if and when needed.

2. Donated space (such as YMCAs, churches, etc.).

B. Selecting, training, and assigning helpers.

1. Full time Registrar (and ^{later} possibly Secretary).

2. Volunteers.

a. Secretaries.

b. Teachers.

C. Raising of funds from NY graduates past and current.

D. Making and coordinating all records pertaining to NY classes, volunteer service, and financial income and expenditure (incorporating cards of all past NY graduates)

E. Handling all public relations pertaining to local promotion.

1. Advertising, direct mail and newspaper if any.

2. Newspaper publicity. 3. Radio. 4. Personal contact.

5. Correspondence.

III. Require of Director periodic (monthly or term) reports of progress, prospect of future operations, and financial budgets.

Administrative direction by Board of Trustees as such and by National Director only on basis of over-all reports and budgets.

IV. Pay deficit remaining after contributions of local graduates, to cover salaries, promotional expenses, and pro rate rent of headquarters to make possible expansion of local classwork.

All money received from any source and disbursed for any purpose to go through the School bank account (as Los Angeles is handled).

September 29, 1943

Mr. Otto K. Dorn
Henry George School of Social Science
New York City

Dear Mr. Dorn:

I was certainly happy to hear from you. After sending John Monroe that letter of August 30th I felt certain that everyone concerned would no longer consider me worthy of such responsibility. Believe it or not, I do so much want to become a part of the School and devote all my time to this great work. And your cordial letter bearing your personal experience with the philosophy of Henry George, was cheering. In the mean time, if you have any suggestions to offer as to how I may more effectively gain students for the School, will you send them on to me? I am firmly convinced that enormous possibilities exist in the correspondence division, especially, and am willing to devote the necessary time and energy in an effort to bring in such students.

Thanks again for that encouraging letter. With warm personal regards, I remain

Sincerely yours,



Verlin D. Gordon
216½ E. Market St.
Lima, Ohio

November 12, 1943

Mr. W. J. Knapp
18 Virginia Street Ext.
Sistersville, West Vir.

Dear Mr. Knapp:

Mr. Verlin Gordon was kind enough to allow me to read a copy of your letter to him under date of Nov. 6, 1943, in which you made reference to Henry George's "Progress and Poverty".

I was a bit disappointed at first when you said "While I have not made a careful study of the text, nor completed the course, I would say from my superficial reading of the book, that the theories of George are impractical and could not solve our economic problems".

However, upon reflection I concluded that your study of Henry George must have been superficial indeed, as you admit, since how else could you doubt Henry George and still be in favor of all of the desirable qualities enumerated in the fourth paragraph of your letter when you say "I believe that the well-being of our people as a whole depends upon old-fashioned capitalism. By this I mean, private initiative, competition, free enterprise, property rights, reward for thrift, etc."

With these noble aspirations in mind for our future, I ask you, how are we to stem the present tide towards socialism and again turn the trend towards a real competitive system of free enterprise unless we heed the warnings of Henry George?

Very truly yours,

Copy of letter I received from a prolific writer of letters to Wall St. Journal, Forbes, etc. Wonder if there is any hope in correcting the errors in his thinking.

V. Gordon

15 Virginia Street Ext.
Sistersville, West Vir.
November 5, 1943

Mr. Verlin D. Gordon
216 1/2 E. Market St.
Lima, Ohio

Dear Mr. Gordon:

Thank you for your postal of November 2. Your booklets reach me yesterday, and I enjoyed reading them. Sometime ago I purchased a copy of "Progress and Poverty" by Henry George, and I enrolled for the free correspondence course offered. "While I have not made a careful study of the text, nor completed the course, I would say from my superficial reading of the book, that the theories of George are impractical and could not solve our economic problems."

I give this opinion because (1) It is very apparent that nature intends that there should be poverty in the world; (2) Human nature being what it is, makes ~~it~~ impossible the desired ends envisioned by George; (3) Mixing the theories of Henry George would destroy the maximum benefits of our capitalistic system.

Our form of capitalism, even with its evils, has proved the most effective economic system ever known thruout all history. It has made our nation great and powerful; it has given our people the highest standard of living ever known; it has made us the richest nation on earth; and it has made our land the envy of the entire world. We have had our poverty and depressions; but taken as a whole, our people have fared better than any other people.

I believe that the well-being of our people as a whole depends upon old-fashioned capitalism. By this I mean, private initiative, competition, free enterprise, property rights, reward for thrift, etc. Labor has reached a dominant position in our economic life, but labor leaders, like many capitalists, are abusing their positions and have shown us that labor also has many evils which work against our people as a whole. Labor leaders have proved themselves to be just as selfish, irresponsible, and unpatriotic as any capitalist ever dared to be in the past. Labor has lost the sympathy of the American people which it enjoyed a few years ago.

Again I thank you for your card, and I apologize for this hastily prepared reply.

Very truly yours,
W. J. Knapp