

task of formulating and advancing a program for
Georgist Action NOW.

Georgists: What is your answer to this call?

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THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE
TO ADVANCE FREEDOM

*By Promoting The Principle
of Natural Economic Rights*

22 WEST 48TH STREET NEW YORK, N. Y.

A
PROPOSAL
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"Look around today. Can this state of things continue? . . . The pillars of the state are trembling even now, and the very foundations of society begin to quiver with pent-up forces that glow underneath. The struggle that must either revivify, or convulse in ruin, is near at hand, if it be not already begun . . . Forces have entered the world that will either compel us to a higher plane or overwhelm us."

—Henry George

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WE, THE UNDERSIGNED DISCIPLES of Henry George, submit this memorandum for the consideration of all who call themselves Georgists. We pray that this happily widening fraternity will, in the spirit of Henry George himself, keep open the avenues of thought and seek the truth regardless of where that search may lead or in spite of whatever individual prejudices it may challenge.

We believe that the proposals we make represent a logical development of Henry George's doctrines of social action and a step in the encompassment of the task which belief in those doctrines self-imposes. *That task is the establishment of the Georgist teachings as the underlying principles of human society.*

FIRST: Henry George was a man of action. It is obvious that the character or quality of a man is to be judged not only by what he says, but as well, or perhaps more so, by what he does. Thus, we note that Henry George entered the field of active reformism in addition to establishing the fundamental principles of reform.

That is to say, he sought to establish these principles in social life without delay. He exhorted mankind to adopt the principle of the Single Tax at once, for, if this were not done he presaged that "progress must turn to decadence, and modern civilization decline to barbarism."

This alarming prophecy was no careless slip of the pen, no casual observation made in a moment of hysteria. Henry George repeats it over and over again, in all his works. He took every opportunity to emphasize the fate he felt certain awaited a slothful and indifferent mankind.

"A civilization like ours," he warned in Progress and Poverty, "must either advance or go back; it cannot stand still."

And again, "The civilized world is trembling on the verge of a great movement. Either it must be a great leap upward, which will open the way to advances yet undreamed of, or it must be a plunge downward which will carry us back toward barbarism."

He spoke and wrote always in terms of the urgent present; he pleaded with unmatched eloquence for action at once; he admonished that "our civilization has reached a critical period, and that unless a new start is made in the direction of social equality" his century would mark the climax of progress and the beginning of a new era of barbarism; he predicted that failure to heed his warnings would result in "carnivals of destruction" in which "brute force and wild frenzy will alternate with the lethargy of a declining civilization"—a prophecy that has come true in so full a measure as to defy description even by one so masterful of words as Henry George himself.

What stands out in the life of Henry George, in his life as an author and his life as an active man of affairs, is his belief in immediate social reform and his faith that vigorous, purposeful and determined action could make that reform a reality.

We side with Henry George in this belief and in this faith.

We suggest that Georgists who do not share this confidence in the practicability of Georgist social reform in the near future reconsider their conclusions, that in doing so they take recourse to the writings of Henry George and to a review of his unrelenting struggle against the specific evils of his day.

We believe that the test of a theory in any field of applied science is its capacity to be utilized in an appreciable degree universally and immediately; that its value lies precisely in this capacity; and that of all proposals for social reform Henry George's alone has this immediate and universal applicability.

We propose that Georgists adopt a policy of social action now for social reform.

SECOND: "Capitalism" so called, i.e., the system of private monopoly of land together with virtual big business monopoly of profitable enterprise, has failed. Of this, the whole world is convinced.

Marxian Socialism has had its day in Russia. The evil results of this experiment are universally apparent. The "Workers' Paradise" is a land of scarcity, domestically speaking, and in international affairs a den of war intrigue. Marxian Socialism, the prototype of all collectivistic schemes, is a failure irredeemable in the eyes of mankind, save for a small stubborn faction.

Naziism and Fascism obviously can serve only nationalistic interests. Neither Hitler nor Mussolini pretends to be the protagonist of a doctrine for the establishment of universal freedom and prosperity: they offer, each in his own way, salvation of a sort for their own peoples. Military victories may temporarily gain respect for totalitarian prowess, but the common sense of nearly all men outside the boundaries of Germany and Italy tells them that the apostles of Fascism and Naziism have also failed; it is patent that they, like the Monopoly "Capitalists" and the Marxists, have no solution for the problems of poverty, social disequilibrium and war.

The cry for bread and peace issues from the throats of nearly two billion human beings. Who can answer this call?

Monopoly "Capitalism," Socialism, Fascism, Naziism, each in turn has had its day and failed. There is no answer to be found in any of these.

With each passing day the cry becomes deeper—and more desperate. The organism we call society does not and cannot stand still. It must either make a leap upward or take a plunge downward.

We believe that the doctrines of Henry George answer this call for a new way of life that will bring peace and prosperity through justice. We believe that the two billion human beings now inhabiting this planet, however indifferent they might have been to us before Monopoly "Capitalism" broke down and Socialism, Fascism and Naziism had their trials, are now hungry for the very doctrines we have to offer and that they will listen to us if we speak up. The peoples of the world are hungry for a new way of life in which to believe.

We believe that our time, the time of a Georgist emergence into the councils of world affairs, is at hand.

Yet, despite our recognition of circumstances favorable to the propagation of Georgist doctrines, we are convinced that only a policy of social action now for social reform can take advantage of those favorable circumstances. We do not believe that Georgism will be accepted in "the course of events" through pressure of objective circumstances. *We take cognizance of the historic fact that no deep-rooted social reform has ever been achieved except through conscious, aggressive, zealous effort.*

With all the widely recognized social systems so patently incapable of carrying on the task of social rehabilitation, and with no apparent practical substitute for violence and social regimentation available, the thoughts of mankind on the problems of the day are characterized by bewilderment, despair and a deepening sense of hopelessness and resignation.

Here is a fertile situation for even worse calamities than those now befalling the world.

We do indeed stand on the brink of a new barbarization, a barbarization which very likely would surpass that of earlier times in the same degree that our material achievements exceed those of antiquity.

We believe with Henry George that the choice is thus sharply defined; the struggle is one that will either "revivify or convulse in ruin" the civilization of our day.

We believe that precisely because the incredible has come to pass in evil things it is possible of achievement in good ones. We believe that mankind, having suffered the depths of so-called "Capitalist" depression, the horrors of totalitarian domestic tyranny and the nightmare of total war, is prepared psychologically to swing, pendulum-like, to the opposite extreme, that is, toward total freedom and total peace.

The very fact that the incredible is the order of our day makes plausible the accomplishment of a fraternity of human beings based on equal rights. We reject the defeatism of those who believe the eventuality of universal justice and brotherhood is unattainable. We reject as impractical, evasive and insincere all policies of social reform which defer indefinitely the active struggle for radical change on the grounds that the opposing forces are too strong to warrant challenge. We deplore the attitude of those who fail to concern them-

selves with action designed to achieve a free society NOW.

Indeed, we believe that if Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini can achieve the incredibly evil with false doctrines, it is altogether plausible for us to hope we can achieve the incredibly good with true doctrines.

For these reasons we propose that all Georgists adopt an attitude of social action *now* for social reform, *with the conscious and irreducible purpose of establishing a Georgist society at the earliest possible moment.*

THIRD: We believe that the general purpose of establishing a Georgist society should be implemented at once with specific means for its achievement.

We believe that these means should be selected according to practicability, and that summary prejudices against one type of action or another should be discarded as a violation of the Georgist free market doctrine. *To outlaw experimentation in forms of action is to establish a monopoly over Georgist efforts and thus to restrict the opportunities for success.*

We believe that the unpredictable flux of events precludes the adoption of a "five year plan" or any other rigidly set course of action; that the happenings of the day will reveal opportunities which an alert, determined and purposeful fraternity of Georgists will be able to utilize advantageously. "Social progress," said Henry George, "is by steps, and the step to which we should address ourselves is always the next step."

And again Henry George wrote, "Whether the first step be long or short is of a little consequence. When a start is made in a right direction, progress is a mere matter of keeping on."

We are heartily in favor of all efforts to educate men and women formally in the doctrines of Henry George. The training of a vanguard of persons skilled in the logic which sustains Georgist doctrines is an essential step in the movement toward social reform.

But it is only one of many steps that have to be taken on the road to Georgism. Formal education is a preparatory stage in the program of reform,

as it is also in business or professional life. A physician is trained to practice medicine. A social reformer should be trained to advance a program of social reform. Education is a tool, not a goal. We appeal to Georgists that they view the historic task we have undertaken in a perspective commensurate with all the realities of social and economic affairs.

These realities show us the need for intensified action in the field of social reform. They reveal an urgency which Henry George in no wise overstated: the next few years will develop the outcome of a struggle in which civilization will either be "revivified or convulsed in ruin."

We urge an intensification of formal education, but not for the restricted purposes of education itself. The cultural value of learning in economic and social philosophy is secondary in this moment to its value in the active practice of social reform. Let formal education be directed toward a broader purpose, the training of leaders in a widespread movement *concretely aimed at consummating the reform we advocate.*

We suggest that Georgists define their advocated reform in specific terms; that to achieve the ultimate goal they set clear-cut, immediate objectives; that they solidify their ranks and henceforth apply themselves assiduously and zealously toward the attainment of these immediate objectives.

WE PROPOSE: formation of
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the purpose of which shall be to develop and utilize means for establishing Georgism through immediate, specific objectives conceived as steps on the way to the ultimate goal. "Whether the first step be long or short is of little consequence. When a start is made in a right direction, progress is a mere matter of keeping on." *Let us take the first step and then "keep on."*

As a first step we propose that means be developed for awakening mass public interest in Georgism; that an effort be made to bridge that wide gap in the public mind between a complete ignorance of Georgist teachings and a desire to study and understand them.

"Taking men in the aggregate," wrote Henry George, "their condition is as they make it." Until men consciously know what they want and feel the spirit of the goal they seek, little progress is possible.

But knowledge and understanding are not entirely matters of the intellect; millions of people are unfamiliar with theological and ethical learning; yet they deeply understand the truths of religion and morality. Why is this so? Because, as Henry George expressed it, "The truth which the intellect grasps after toilsome effort is but that which the moral sense reaches by a quick intuition."

The American Declaration of Independence states flatly: "We hold these truths to be self-evident . . ." Why? Because, once the moral sense is properly appealed to, the truths, in question are self-evident.

So it is with the fundamental Georgist doctrines; they, too, are self-evident to the *moral sense*.

That is why Henry George wrote: "To begin and maintain great popular movements it is the moral sense rather than the intellect that must be appealed to . . . For however it may be with any individual, the sense of justice is with the masses of men keener and truer than intellectual perception, and unless a question can assume the form of right and wrong it cannot provoke general discussion and incite the many to action."

Without prejudice to the indispensable technique of formal education, we propose that THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE TO ADVANCE FREEDOM seek every means to bring the moral issue of Georgism before the American public. In doing so we will further at the same time the economic issue of Georgism, for, to quote Henry George once more, "*Economic law and moral law are essentially one.*"

We believe that a vigorously conducted campaign among the general public will arouse widespread discussion; that this discussion will win many sympathizers; that a considerable percentage of these sympathizers will seek more detailed education in Georgism through formal instruction; that those who obtain this instruction will add the strength of their knowledge and zeal to that of those already engaged as leaders and active workers in the Movement; that, in turn, these leaders and

active workers will widen the sphere of activity; and that in this way the Movement will grow rapidly in strength of numbers and determination, finally commanding the attention and respect of all the world.

The task of social reform is not to be accomplished by wishful thinking. Intelligence and zeal are indispensable, yet insufficient factors; they need to be supplemented by hard work and the means to carry on that work, by conscious purpose and an indomitable will. In social development wrote Henry George, "Human will is the great factor."

We propose that THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE TO ADVANCE FREEDOM seek thousands of active members; that it be established and operated on a sound, business-like basis; that its objectives be clearly defined and its methods of achieving those objectives practically worked out.

And finally we propose that THE AMERICAN ALLIANCE TO ADVANCE FREEDOM be organized and maintained as a model of democratic individualism, as a living example, as far as is possible under present conditions, of the ideals of *association in equality* which Henry George tells us is the Law of Human Progress.

"There is no mistaking it — the very foundations of society are being sapped before our eyes . . ." so wrote Henry George.

Not a day is to be lost! In this moment of social crisis it lies within the power of our doctrine, and perhaps within that power alone, to save these foundations and strengthen them to the eternal benefit of mankind.

Let the zeal and vision of Henry George speak once more:

"He who will hear, to him the clarions of the battle call. How they call, and call, and call, till the heart swells that hears them! Strong soul and high endeavor, the world needs them now."

In the name of Georgism and its promise of a happier human society, in the hope of alleviating the misery of countless millions of human beings, we call upon all Georgists to join with us in the