

# A Word With You

ONE does not have to be an economic determinist to see that economics plays an important part in our lives. The economic determinist would have it that the economic facts of life—the way people make their living and who owns what—actually determine everything else—art, religion and what-not.

Those who deny economic determinism sometimes go to the other extreme. They will not even admit that the widespread distress experienced during the depression had anything to do with the coming of the New Deal. The Welfare State, they say, was just the result of wrong-headedness on the part of some perverse professors.

But we need not go to such lengths to avoid being determinists. We can see by observing that economics *influences* our behavior; that economic stress has its effects; that bad results stem from economic disorders, and economic well-being is a good basis for progress in other domains.

And we need only look around to see that something not good is permeating our socio-economic fabric. The robust confidence in progress that was once the hallmark of America has turned into economic hypochondria. We no longer leap forward to dazzling ventures but shrink into a shell worrying about seniority, guarantees, fringe benefits and pensions.

Hardly anything is done anymore for

the sake of doing it without consulting tax tables. Invention and discovery no longer occur on an invigorating peak in Darien but are hampered by a smothering tangle of legality and monopoly.

The spectre of economic struggle has not been with us in America as long as it has in Europe. The ingrainedness of this struggle may be seen in the more honest of the European films which bring out how much an accepted, though dreadful, part of life it is.

But in America the blight is settling, too. We are all affected. Just as the city-dweller carries in his lungs the filth of city air, so do we all carry the corrosive effects of a topsy-turvy economic system in which government intervention has only compounded the problems. Every aspect of human relations is tainted—even if not “determined”—by bad economics.

People are only human, and lots of people in the struggle would dearly love to get away. But where is there to go? Forget the South Sea Islands—there's all kinds of atomic testing going on there. Air traffic over the North Pole is getting dense, and technology has hit the South Pole, too.

Instead of trying to “get away,” we had better do something about moulding our economy more to the heart's desire.

—Robert Clancy

Vol. 30, No. 1

January, 1967

The Henry George News, published monthly by the Henry George School of Social Science, 50 E. 69th Street, New York, N. Y. 10021, supports the following principle:

The community, by its presence and activity, gives rental value to land, therefore the rent of land belongs to the community and not to the landowners. Labor and capital, by their combined efforts, produce the goods of the community—known as wealth. This wealth belongs to the producers. Justice requires that the government, representing the community, collect the rent of land for the community purposes and abolish the taxation of wealth.

Publication committee: William S. O'Connor, Arnold A. Weinstein and Lancaster M. Greene, chairman. Editor: Alice Elizabeth Davis. Subscriptions \$1 a year; single copies 10c. Second class postage paid at New York, N. Y.

The Henry George News does not assume responsibility for opinions expressed in signed articles.