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50 E. 69TH ST., NEW YORK 21 N. Y.

December 29, 1980

Dr. Carl Sagan
Professor of Astronomy
and Space Sciences
Cornell University

Dear Dr. Sagan:

You certainly are not alone in your dreams of the "Cosmos" and your concerns for Earth, for survival of the human species. The potential for catastrophe is all around us. As you so aptly concluded, "an organism at war with itself is doomed". And yet, survival depends upon rapid sociological evolution; humanity must develop a social structure matching the sophistication of our technological achievements. We must continue to hope this is possible and work for that eventuality. There is much to lose.

Through Cosmos, you have asked, "Who Speaks for Earth?"; and you have called for "major changes in the traditional ways of doing things, a fundamental restructuring of economic, political, social and religious institutions". A century ago, Henry George (writing with no formal academic background and in total obscurity) powerfully examined this same question in his epic work on the human condition -- "PROGRESS and POVERTY". George made majestic use of objective scientific method to analyze and explain man's relationship to the universe. He realized the finite nature of our planet and its natural resources and, using his innate powers of conscious reasoning, proved a causal relationship existed between human suffering (i.e., poverty and the inequitable distribution of wealth) and the treatment of Earth by nations and societies as "private property".

Tolstoy wrote that, "People do not argue with the teaching of George; they simply do not know it. And it is impossible to do otherwise with his teaching, for he who becomes acquainted with it cannot but agree".

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Dr. Sagan, I fear for humanity; and, I fear that time is very short. This speck of universal dust -- your "star stuff" -- may well be headed for self-destruction as you have described. There are many of us working to stave off the inevitable. Unfortunately, we do not sit in the places of power where the "ultimate question" for humanity's survival must be answered. The collective voice of those who believe, as do I, in the absolute necessity to restructure human society in a manner acknowledging common ownership of land and natural resources, while giving to man all the fruits of his productive effort, is as yet a voice barely heard.

"Cosmos" asked many questions and propagated bold assertions. Reflection and contemplation based upon reason are hopes indicative of the best humanity has produced. You and Henry George, Dr. Sagan, have much to say to us. Only a few have thus far listened to the challenges of "conventional wisdom".

In 1979 the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation published the Centenary Edition of "Progress and Poverty". I give you a copy of this great work in the hope that you will also discover in the thoughts of Henry George new insight into the path to human progress and survival.

Your thoughts, questions, assistance, are wholeheartedly welcomed.

Best personal regards.

Very truly yours,



Edward J. Dodson
Deputy Chairman
Council of Georgist Organizations