

THE APPRECIATION OF THEOCRATIC ORGANIZATION BEGINS

In the fall of 1919 there came the launching of the work with the new magazine *The Golden Age*. This magazine had been announced on Friday, September 5, 1919, during the Cedar Point convention discourse "to Co-laborers," delivered by the Society's then president, Brother Rutherford.

Little did God's people in 1919 know the significant part that the new instrument, *The Golden Age*, was to play in exposing the unholy combine of Nazi-Fascist-Catholic building. In the years that were to follow, numerous and powerful were the death-dealing blows that were to be dealt to this combine by articles and cartoons appearing in this courageous journal.

TOM: You mean like the GA No. 27? Was there some special arrangement in this work with this special issue?

JOHN: Yes, there was. An effort was being made to reach as many persons as possible. Around four million copies were printed and these were given away free or on a voluntary contribution of ten cents. Not only were they distributed from house to house but they were carried by the brothers and given to friends and chance acquaintances.

But the regular work with *The Golden Age* was carried on differently. As outlined in a pamphlet published by the Watch Tower Society in 1919,

THE GOLDEN AGE work is a house-to-house canvass with the kingdom message, proclaiming the day of vengeance of our God and comforting them that mourn. In addition to the canvass, a copy of THE GOLDEN AGE is to be left at each home, whether a subscription is taken or not. . . . Class workers will procure their samples from the Director.^r

TOM: Was this director elected by the congregations as the elders had been?

JOHN: No. Those congregations desiring to participate in this new field of service opening up in 1919 were asked to register as a service organization with the Society. When the Society received these requests, the brothers at headquarters *theocratically* appointed one of the local number in the congregation to serve as the Society's appointee, to be known as the "director." He was not subject to local yearly election. This meant that for the first time authority was being taken away from the democratically controlled congregations under their "elective elders," and direction was to reside now, specifically, under the Society's international supervision. True, it was limited, but the visible theocratic organization got started with this arrangement. The director was to operate alongside the body of democratically elected elders who continued to control congregational studies and lectures in the usual manner.

TOM: It would seem to me that some of these elders might not take to that arrangement too readily.

JOHN: There was some resistance from those who were not progressive and who did not have a vision of the work that lay ahead. Some insisted on living in the past, in the time of Pastor Russell, when the brothers in general had viewed him as the sole channel of Scriptural enlightenment. It was the published and accepted thought down till 1927 that he was "that servant" of Matthew 24:45.^s However, just as the Watch Tower Society had been the publisher of Bible truths in the days of Brother Russell, so it would continue to be used by Jehovah during this period of restoration of true worship. A warning was given to the brothers not to accept private interpretation and blindly follow self-styled leaders who were more interested in per-

^r *To Whom the Work Is Entrusted* (1919: pamphlet of Watch Tower Society), p. 1. ^s *W* 1927, pp. 55, 56.