

# SAGE'S PAGES

SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE GEORGE ECONOMY

Instead of the thorn shall come up  
the fir tree, and instead of brier  
shall come up the myrtle tree.

And they shall build houses and  
inhabit them; and they shall plant  
vineyards and eat the fruit of them.  
They shall not build and another  
inhabit; they shall not plant and  
another eat.

--Bk. of Isaiah, Ch. LXV.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all my fellow Georgists and SAGE members. As your duly elected President, I look forward to the year 1953 as a year in which we will blend our efforts to bring the teachings of Henry George before the attention of peoples everywhere.

As your President, I hope to make SAGE the kind of organization that you want it to be, a vital organ of the Henry George movement. We who make up the membership of SAGE have in our power the ability of bringing about a new moral awakening in America and throughout the world.

I call upon you to join with me in an earnest drive to give assistance and spirit to the educational efforts of the Henry George Schools throughout the country. By increasing our membership, by instituting educational programs of our own, by forming speakers bureaus and discussion groups, by cooperating with the student promotion activities of the School, we can be that strong shoulder the Henry George Schools can look to for support.

To each of you I pledge my devotion to the responsibility you have entrusted to me. To the best of my abilities, I will serve you and seek to work for all those ideals and principles Georgists everywhere embrace. To these ends I am dedicated.

*David Goldstein*

David Goldstein  
President, SAGE, Inc.

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**EDITORS' REPORT** The Speakers Bureau of the Henry George School in New York has been tremendously effective in bringing Georgist speakers before the public. In less than a year and a half, 62 engagements have been filled with clubs and associations. Under the impetus of SAGE, where the Bureau first took fruit, the School undertook to expand its activities under the guiding hand of David Goldstein, Regional Secretary.

We look forward to more wonderful results and take great pride in this, the growing child of our labors.

## ETHICS AND ECONOMICS

Reduced to its simplest terms, Georgism is an economic system based on the premise that private ownership of land is ethically unjustified. Is this premise correct?

To answer this, we must first ask ourselves: What is it that justifies the private ownership of any material thing?

If we assume that a man owns himself - his brain, his nerves, his hands, all his faculties - must we not therefore assume that he owns that which his own faculties can produce? It is human labor, then that constitutes the rightful basis of private property, and anything produced by human labor can in justice be individually owned. This is what John Locke and numerous other philosophers have maintained.

If you produce a shoe or a machine, you are therefore entitled to use it or exchange it as you wish; and if you exchange it the person who receives it in exchange can rightfully own it, as you have voluntarily transferred your ownership rights to him.

Other than labor, what rightful basis to private property can there be? To admit any other basis is necessarily to say that a man is not entitled to the full fruits of his own labor, that someone else or a group of others can appropriate (steal) what he produces.

With this in mind, let us turn our attention to the private ownership of land. Was land produced by human labor? Obviously not; then, as we have seen, there is no rightful basis of private property in land. Land, the bounteous gift of nature to all human beings, must therefore be owned by society. The rent from land, thusly, which is produced only by the presence of population, must be collected by society. And let society use this ground-rent fund to pay for the expenses of government. This is the essence of Georgism! This is the judgement of Logic, Ethics, and Expediency.....

When people are forced to pay part of their labor in taxes to support government because ground-rent is being privately appropriated, then they are paying twice, in the form of ground-rent and taxes, for that which they should only pay once. And when people have to

pay a higher ground-rent than necessary because valuable land is monopolized (i.e., speculative rent) then they are being robbed again!

Thus we see that there is no ethical basis for the private ownership of land or the rent from land. In fact, to allow it is necessarily to allow 'landowners' to appropriate part of the labor of their tenants, and to appropriate what should be the revenue of government; a system of private ground-rent collection such as we now have denies to most men the full fruits of their labor, which is nothing but a condition of partial slavery (harsh word but true!).

And it can readily be expected that the public collection of the ground-rent will do more than abolish present injustices, and that the establishment of ethics in economics will produce tremendous positive benefits; but to enumerate these would be beyond the scope of this article.

Now the socialists say that capital (e.g., machinery) must be owned by society. But capital is a product of labor, therefore it must in justice be privately owned. The socialist position is a restriction on the natural right of private property. When we thus violate ethics, we destroy initiative, we lessen capital, we lessen wealth production, we increase poverty.

Thus we see that if only labor can justify the private ownership of any material thing, then necessarily:

1. land should not be privately owned
2. capital must be privately owned.

Any economic system which disregards or denies this, denies ethics itself, and allows labor to be partially exploited or regulated, while poverty or the fear of it prevails.

Only a society soundly and ethically based can survive; there is no other choice. This is the lesson of history.

And so we see that Georgism - the public collection of the ground-rent - means that every man will be entitled to the full fruits of his own labor and enterprise, and that no man can reap (even partially) what another has sown. Thus Georgism, and only Georgism, is the application of ethics to economics.

--S. Cord

## DECEMBER 14th MEETING

At this meeting elections were held (see page 7) and Art Fleming, one of our instructors, gave an interesting demonstration of legerdemain. About 50 persons, including guests, attended.

Some of the guests and new members who were present were: Marsha Biddle, Wayne Berry & family, George Kinnes, Bernard Douglas, S.A. Preiser, S. Wagner, H. Schief, T. Swinges, and Alice Wilkins.

In accordance with our new policy of less business and more informality, our organizational business was completed in about 30 minutes and a pleasant hour was spent in the Coffee Shoppe where informal discussion prevailed amidst free refreshments.

Art Fleming's show was very entertaining and included: threading 18 needles in his mouth at one time, an ever-filling pitcher, multiplying sponges, Chinese rings, and his specialty, a crystal ball that defied gravity. Mr. Fleming has a keen sense of humor which adds to his ability as a magician.

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## LEAP YEAR DANCE

Our last dance for 1952 was held this past Dec. 6th and novel rules were in force -- the ladies were instructed to pick their own partners while the gentlemen were forbidden to do so.

Perhaps because of this novelty, the affair was unusually well attended -- over 100 people were there -- and the usual hilarious time was had by all.

However, we must report that it was only during the first half-hour that these leap-year rules were observed. Our conservative-minded ladies were too reticent to avail themselves of this new state of affairs for long.

Our Lydia Kurchin did her usual excellent job in organizing this dance -- her services are invaluable to SAGE -- and she was ably assisted by her sister Nina, Val (Coffee-Maker) Hallgren, Ruth Atkins, Anita Wener, et al.

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

TREASURER'S REPORT - We are still in excellent shape financially. BUT--we ask all those who are receiving dues notices to respond promptly, no matter what the answer might be. Peter Ignatowsky is doing an excellent job for all of us - please help him out.

STEERING COMMITTEE - This committee, headed by Elaine Wener, accomplishes more than we can report in this space. In particular, Margaret Norman helped organize the SAGE 'sales presentation' at the recent P&P graduation.

FRIDAY NIGHT COMMITTEE - Tom Gilmartin is now heading this committee, and he has a number of people helping him.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE - A successful Leap Year Dance was held on Dec. 7th and plans for a Theatre Party are being made. Our sincere thanks to Lydia Kirchin, our outgoing chairman, for excellent work done in 1952. Mrs. . Biddle is taking over.

DISTRIBUTION COMMITTEE - This last card-distribution campaign was the biggest SAGE ever attempted - 25,000 cards were distributed! Again Irving Faust has done a splendid job. But he was not alone - Nellie Wester, Anita Wener, Eleanor Whitfield, Gertrude Shaw, and numerous others, including members of the School staff, went out with him on his trips.

Final results are not in, but although usually SAGE distribution accounts for 1 out of 7 of the School's enrollment, returns so far indicate that this average will be definitely exceeded.

SAGE has cause for real pride in this accomplishment; the people mentioned above are to be congratulated for accomplishing an important task. The next distribution campaign starts April 1st. Volunteer for a distribution party one night a week--put your ideals to work--and enjoy doing it!

Saturday, March 14, 8:30 PM--ST. PATRICK'S DAY DANCE

Admission \$1.00 in advance.      \$1.25 at the door.  
Society and Rhumba Orchestra - Come One! Come All!!

## **INSTALLATION DINNER**

At SAGE's Fourth Annual Installation dinner, the 1953 slate of officers was formally installed into office, with Dorothy Sara, faculty member, in the role of master (or mistress ?) of ceremonies.

Our newly-elected president, David Goldstein, stated SAGE can and will become one of the important and influential organizations in this country. Through radio and press, SAGE should enunciate the fundamental principles of Henry George as they affect current events."

Steven Cord, Rose Celi, Anita Wener, and Peter Ignatowsky were installed in their respective posts of vice-president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and treasurer, and pledged themselves to carry on the spirit of SAGE.

In appreciation of his talents and leadership, outgoing president Tom Gilmartin received a lighter.

Mr. Robert Clancy, director of the HGSSS, spoke inspiringly on "What SAGE Means to the School." Bennett Challis read "Tributes to Henry George."

The success and spirit of vitality which permeated this dinner is an optimistic augur for SAGE in 1953.

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## **MEETING SCHEDULE**

### Sunday, February 8th

- 2:00 PM - Executive Board Meeting (Room 33)
- 3:30 PM - First Business Meeting of 1953
- 4:30 PM - Social Hour - Refreshments
- 5:00 PM - FORUM & DISCUSSION - "World Government"  
David Targ, Instructor at the H.G. School  
vs. Ernest L. Moses, writer & lecturer on UN.

### Sunday, March 8th

- 2:00 PM - Executive Board Meeting (Room 33)
- 3:30 PM - Business Meeting (Auditorium 2nd Floor)
- 4:30 PM - Social Hour - Refreshments
- 5:00 PM - LECTURE - "You and the Stock Market"  
Erwin Kaufman, Instructor at H.G. School

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PUT YOUR IDEALS TO WORK  
AND ENJOY DOING IT!

### New Year Greeting

The best New Year of all will be  
Whenever men shall come to see  
The Value of the land they own  
Does not belong to them alone,  
But unto the community  
As it was made by you and me.  
Let all men keep what they produce  
But of the earth make Equal use.  
Then Progress for itself will pay  
And usher in the better day.

M.L. Rees

### COMPLETION EXERCISES

Once again the P&P Completion Exercises, held this past Dec. 15th in the auditorium amid colorful Christmas decorations, was a bright highlight on the School's calendar.

The following were the class speakers:

Fred Anschel  
Louis Barrera, Jr.  
Milada Kovac-Raska  
George Haupt  
Donald Odell  
Harriet Smith  
Rita Hirsch  
Rose Gellman  
Gordon Robertson, Jr.  
Winnifred Lydon  
Leon S. Dusowitz  
Judith Dropkin

William Redanz  
David Eisenstat  
Emilie Winter  
Eva Miller  
Peter H. Kaufman  
Oscar Gallela  
Charles Martin  
Paul B. Sims  
Rosemary Fitzgerald  
Clarence Bendheim  
Frank Siclari  
Marco Ades

As a group, their speeches were truly inspiring. Almost all were anxious to continue their studies with the second course, "Economic Problems".

After the formal exercises there was the usual social hour in the coffee shoppe, with refreshments donated by SAGE.

We congratulate the members of the faculty for the excellent work they are doing throughout the year.

## **SPOTLIGHT ON BENNETT CHALLIS**

Several years ago when I attended my first Sage meeting, I was just a guest. I had not taken any courses at the Henry George School but was somewhat acquainted with the philosophy of Henry George, and had heard the name of Bennett Challis, a Sage member, but did not know him personally. As the meeting progressed, with the wrangling that so often marks association proceedings, I watched a stern, handsome face whose eyes kept peering at the presiding officer. Finally, on gaining the chairman's attention he rose to his feet, and with an air that showed all his love for Henry George, suggested that Sagers should devote some of the meeting time to the enjoyment of Henry George's great and fundamental truths. This man proved to be Bennett Challis.

Upon joining the school, I found him to be one of the most untiring faculty members; truly 'The Rock of Gibraltar' of the Henry George School, of New York.

On the first floor rear is his correspondence office which he heads. Here he corrects hundreds of answers sent in by students studying the works of Henry George. These papers come from all parts of the globe. He often acts as a "Court of Last Appeal", in settling economic arguments and in so doing punctures many wrong ideas. As he says, "I have punctured many so-called economic truths, but one theory on money recently presented to me (Valun Theory) I have not been able to burst that bubble; it is based on the Laws of Nature."

He frequently reviews books and articles on various social monetary theories for the Henry George News, Sages Pages and other publications. He answers innumerable questions and letters no matter how busy he may be, he is always ready to welcome a visitor in search for help.

Bennett Challis is a retired opera singer of note; well versed in many languages and literature.

As a Georgist he is Tops; as a pal he is superb.  
His smile is his charm.

Now more than ever at season of the year  
he has our thanks and best wishes for many another  
Happy New Year.

Neva Bianco

## SEMANTICS

At our November 9th meeting, SAGE had the opportunity of hearing one of the most popular instructors at the School, Mr. Harvey Dawson, lecture on the important subject of 'Semantics & Economics'.

Mr. Dawson used many clever illustrations to show that different people attach different meanings to the same words, and consequently misunderstandings result. Frequently people agree in thought but disagree in their use of words.

He praised George for being so careful in defining exactly and completely all terms used in building up his philosophy.

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Mr. Dawson, who is editor of "Hotel Industry", a business magazine, is conducting a course in Semantics at the School this coming term.

## SAGE COMMENTS

The SRO sign was out Fri. Dec. 12th, when SAGERS successfully resurrected Shakespeare....Future possibility: collection of Mabel Rees' poems in a SAGE pamphlet....Member John Frew at Welfare Island Hospital; send him a line!.... Elaine Wener suggests: develop the one-night-a-week volunteer habit for SAGE....Orchids to Dorothy Sara for programming and MCing the Installation Dinner.

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IS THE ECONOMIC RENT SUFFICIENT  
TO PAY FOR THE EXPENSES OF GOVERNMENT?

The December faculty letter from Robt. Clancy, Director of the Henry George School, brought out that there is a good deal of controversy as to the amount of land values in the United States.

The letter quoted sources which had estimated the total economic rent as only 12.7 billion dollars, which is hardly enough to run the city, state, and federal governments. However, Mr. Clancy reported that in recent months he had received many letters from statistical-minded Georgists who maintained that both the method and basis for this figure was faulty and inaccurate.

One man, Mr. Allan J. Wilson, concluded after careful research that U. S. land values (exclusive of income from natural resources) approximated 1000 billion dollars. Also, Mr. Howard Freeman wrote that the real estate interest rate should be considered to be 10%, and not the 5% Georgists so often use for the purpose of illustration. Combining Messrs. Wilson's and Freeman's conclusions, we arrive at an annual economic rent of \$100 billion, exclusive of income from natural resources.

Mr. Clancy concluded with this statement:

"If we take the economic rent on 1000 billion dollars land values, and add to that the income that would be received from natural resources, and further postulate the rise of land values under the Single Tax, together with the rise of production--then, gentlemen, I present you with a new problem: What are we going to do with all that revenue!"

We present this for your information with the further thought that this question would perhaps be put in better perspective if it were prefaced strongly with a discussion as to the propriety of land value taxation. We cannot talk about whether land values are the sufficient basis for taxation until we have established that they are the proper basis.

If land values are a community product, let the economic rent be taken by the community, and as it is taken we can view its sufficiency or insufficiency, and there is the strong possibility that the primary question of propriety would throw light on the secondary question of sufficiency.

## LANDLORDISM AND SLAVERY

Many of the arguments that attempt to justify private ownership of land (landlordism) would, if true, justify chattel slavery; hence, they must be illogical and fallacious. Let us examine these arguments:

1. Land can be bought and exchanged, and many people have given up their hard-earned labor for it.

Slaves could be bought and exchanged too.

2. The majority of the people are in favor of landlordism.

Throughout recorded history, wherever slavery has existed the great majority of the people have generally favored it.

3. Landlordism is legal.

Slavery was legal, too.

4. Abolishing private land ownership means that some people would be stripped of much of their 'wealth'.

This is similar to the argument slaveholders have used.

5. Oh, my goodness, think of the dislocation that the abolition of private land ownership would cause!

Slaveholders from time immemorial have used this bromide.

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"The land shall not be sold for ever; for the land is Mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me" (Leviticus XXV).

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**\* S. A. G. E. \***

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