

Henry George School • CENTER FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE

THE HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL

The first Henry George School was established in the early 1930's to advance, through education, the economic program and social vision of the American philosopher Henry George.

Born in Philadelphia in 1839, George settled in San Francisco where he became a prominent newspaper publisher and author. In 1879 he wrote PROGRESS AND POVERTY, said to be the all-time best seller on economics. The ideas embodied in that book have become the basis of a world-wide social movement.

George ran for Mayor of New York in 1886 and was nearly elected, outpolling the young republican candidate Theodore Roosevelt. He also travelled and lectured extensively and authored several other books. He died in 1897 at the height of his second campaign for Mayor of New York City.

Currently, there are Henry George Schools located throughout the world. They stress the continuing relevance of George's philosophy seen from the perspective of our contemporary world.

A PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY

Central to Georgéan philosophy is the perception that the deep social and economic inequalities afflicting the world have their basis in faulty human social organization and ignorance. If human beings will learn and apply certain fundamental principles of social organization and economics, much of the suffering (so often, and falsely, attributed to 'blind nature' or 'the Will of God') can be alleviated.

The means by which such a social reorganization can occur depends on first accepting certain definitions of economic value.

- (1) The economic value that attaches to land and natural resources is a reflection of social progress and demand rather than the efforts of individuals as such. Since these values are socially created, they ethically belong to society and, in a just society, would be the source of public revenue, i.e. taxes.
- (2) The economic values created by human work resulting in products and services belong, by their nature, to the individuals performing these activities. Consequently, taxes on incomes, sales of products, services, and buildings have no ethical basis and can be regarded as confiscatory.

Georgéan philosophy says that by shifting the burden of taxation onto socially created land values and off work and its products, economic justice could be established.

