

The Baroque



"A short, worthwhile, spot." Opinions expressed herein are those of the writers and not necessarily endorsed by the Henry George School.

HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL of NEW JERSEY

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M A R C H 1 9 7 8

HENRY GEORGE WAS THAT RARE, PECULIAR AND STRANGE THING - AN HONEST MAN

The President of the University of California, recognizing his ability as a thinker and speaker, asked him to give a course of lectures on economics. He gave one--this was all they could digest.

California colleges have had a lot of trouble with economics--it has been a theme more fraught for them with danger than theology. How Californians make their money and how they spend it is a topic which in handling requires great subtlety of interest, a fine delicacy of expression and much diplomacy, otherwise twenty-three petards!

Here is a passage from Henry George's lecture before the University of California:

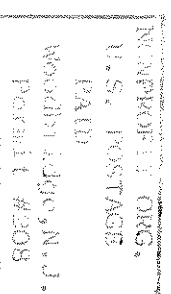
For the study of political economy you need no special knowledge, no extensive library, no costly laboratory. You do not even need textbooks, or teachers, if you will but think for yourselves. All that you need is a care in reducing complex phenomena to their elements, in distinguishing the essential from the accidental, and in applying the simple laws of human action with which you are familiar. Take nobody's opinion for granted; try all things; hold fast to that which is good. In this way, the opinions of others will help you by their suggestions, elucidations and corrections; otherwise they will be to you as words to a parrot.

All this array of professors, all this paraphernalia of learning, can not educate a man. They can but help him educate himself. Here you may obtain the tools; but they will be useful to him only who can use them. A monkey with a microscope, a mule packing a library, are fit emblems for the men--and unfortunately, they are plenty--who pass through the whole educational machinery, and come out but learned fools, crammed with knowledge which they can not use--all the more pitiable, all the more contemptible, all the more in the way of real progress, because they pass, with themselves and others, as educated men.

LITTLE JOURNEYS TO THE HOMES OF THE GREAT ELBERT HUBBART

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"A MONKEY WITH A MICROSCOPE"

By - James C. Carson

As a result of the great fear of the growth of communism in this country, one of the more popular remedies backed by the great vote is the hunting down and punishing of traitors in government. Little thought is given to the conditions producing the communist and how to remedy them. Last year, a nation-wide survey by the Opinion Research Corporation of Princeton revealed 55% of our high school seniors agree with Karl Marx's socialist theory of "the fairest economic system is the one that takes from each according to his ability and gives to each according to his need." 23% of the teachers interviewed went along with Marx's contention.

When we consider that Alger Hiss, a bright, likeable fellow is a product of our educational system and that the youngsters in high school will shortly begin to staff our business and industrial establishments and enter government service and head families of their own, the failure of our schools and colleges to immunize our young against the brightly-colored fallacies of the communist philosophy becomes all the more a challenge to those of us from an older school who, like Tom Jefferson, believe the less government the better and in Jefferson's maxim of "equal rights for all; special privilege for none."

Why have our schools and colleges failed to educate our young in the fundamentals of our national heritage? I would illustrate the cause of their failure with the following account of what happened at the University of California March 9, 1877. The University was young and did not have a chair of political economy. When plans were made to establish one, Henry George, who had proved his threefold power as original thinker, writer, and speaker, was suggested for the chair.

George's familiarity with economics as eviced in "Our Land and Land Policy" and his long record of thoughtful editorials won him an invitation to deliver several lectures at Berkely before the students and faculty. George had had a long-time ambition to wear a skullcap, and he took much care in preparing his first lecture entitled, "The Study of Political Economy."

His lecture was a masterpiece on the subject, and it was probably the most sensible ever delivered in that place. He covered many phases of economy, but I would like to call attention to two of the points raised in his address. The first reveals why real political economy has been clouded over and ignored in our schools and colleges for many years until today the communist philosophy has won over a majority of our young, mostly by default of our defenders. The second gives us a view of George's theory of education. The quotations from his address follow:

"The very importance of the subjects with which political economy deals raises obstacle in its way...The conclusions of political economy involve pecuniary interests and thus thrill the sensitive pocket-nerve. For, as no social adjustment can exist without interesting a larger or small class in its maintenance, political economy at every point is apt to come in contact with some interest or other which regards it as the silversmiths of Ephesus did those who taught the uselessness of presenting shrines to Diana.

"Macaulay has well said that, if any large pecuniary interest were concerned in denying the attraction of gravitation, that most obvious of physical facts would not lack disputers. This is just the difficulty that has beset and still besets the progress of political economy.

"And the man who is, or who imagines that he is, interested in the maintenance of a protective tariff, may accept all your professors choose to tell him about the composition of the sun or the evolution of species, but, no matter how clearly you demonstrate the wasteful inutility of hampering commerce, he will not be convinced.

"And so, to the man who expects to make money out of a railroad subsidy, you will in vain try to prove that such devices to change the natural direction of labor and capital must cause more loss than gain. What, then, must be the position which inevitably meets a science that deals with tariffs and subsidies, with banking interests and bonded debts, with trade unions and combinations of capital with taxes and licenses and land tenures! It is not ignorance alone that offers opposition, but ignorance backed by interest, and made fierce by passions!"

Speaking of education, the statement of which knocked all chance forever of his becoming a professor, George said, "For the study of political economy you need no special knowledge, no extensive library, no costly laboratory. You do not even need textbooks or teachers, if you will but think for yourselves. All that you need is care in reducing complex phenomena to their elements, in distinguishing the essential from the accidental and in applying the simple laws

WE OWE IT TO OURSELVES

Who was it said of the national debt, what difference does it make, we owe it to ourselves, don't we?

The question was - who are "ourselves"?

There was a time when the "ourselves" were the wealthy U.S. citizens.

And, of course, not only did we owe the debt, but we paid interest on it!

"Middle-class American taxpayers are working to pay interest to rich American taxpayers, who own most of the national debt in the form of Treasury bonds, government securities and the like."

"In January 1977, the annual interest charge on the national debt (an interest bearing \$725 billion dollar "lien" on taxes to be collected from U.S. taxpayers in coming years) had risen to \$42.3 billion. The interest alone on the federal debt is now almost 40% the size of our entire national defense budget; that is to say, 40% of all the money spent on the Western world's largest military establishment... But that is not the worst of it..."

In less than 4 decades, foreign ownership of the U.S. government debt has risen from a mere \$200 million in Dec. 1939 to over \$100 billion as of Dec. 1976... 80% of this debt is readily marketable whenever these foreign governments and individuals choose to cash in their bonds and securities. It was precisely this process of increasing foreign indebtedness that accompanied the drawn-out disintegration of the British Empire..."

(Concluded on Page 3 - WE OWE IT)

AS MR. BENNETT DOES

Albert R. Bennett, a graduate of the Henry George School of N.J., 1964, who continues to contribute financially to the support of the school, reads THE GARGOYLE, and actively promotes the cause of Henry George, writes and calls attention to the Bible, JAMES 2:20 "Faith without works is dead", and ECCLESIASTES 5:9 "The Profit of the earth is for all."

Mr. Bennett urges that we work in our local community, county, State and Federal Government, through our Representatives. He suggests do as he does when he writes them - include leaflets explaining Land Value Taxation. Such literature may be obtained from the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.

The 1978 GEORGIST CONFERENCE has been set for July 1 - 5 at Bryn Mawr College in Pennsylvania. Plan to Attend!

Julian P. Hickok, who has long been associated with Georgism in Philadelphia has been ill. Get Well Soon JP.

Percy R. Williams, for many years the Executive Secretary of the Henry George Foundation of America, died in Pittsburgh, Pa., a few days before his 91st birthday, on December 27th.

Ralph Borsodi, while not generally known as an active Georgist, nevertheless was; died at the age of 90, on October 26, 1977. He was the author of a number of books and founder of The School of Living.

SALT OF THE EARTH

Did you know that there is a metal plaque on the crest of California's 12 million ton Shasta Dam? It reads "U.S. Government property - Do not remove."

Professor: Isn't it amazing. Light travels from the sun at a speed of 186,000 miles per second!

Student: What's so wonderful about that - after all, it's all downhill.

Ad in newspaper: I am paid on Saturday and am broke by Tuesday. Would like to exchange loans with someone who is paid on Tuesday and is broke by Saturday.

Inflation is so bad these days that all our money is beginning to have stretch marks. And do you remember those wonderful days, when you went to the supermarket and spent \$10 for groceries and you actually had to hold the bag at the bottom.

Minister to wife: You broke your promise not to buy a new dress!

Wife: It must have been the devil's fault. He tempted me.

Minister: You could have said, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

Wife: I did, but he whispered over my shoulder. "It fits you beautifully in the back too."

To some people television is like a steak. It's a medium rarely well done.

There was so much football on television on New Year's Day that a small town passed an ordinance at the behest of the women. It said, any man who watches three consecutive football games can be declared legally dead by his wife.

The world is full of willing people. Some are willing to work and others are willing to let them.

Sorry, no article by Oscar Johanssen this month, he will be back next month.

PLEASE NOTIFY US IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS AND WISH TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THE GARGOYLE.

of human action with which are familiar...All this array of professors, all this paraphernalia of learning cannot educate a man.

"A monkey with a microscope, a mule packing a library, are fit emblems of the men--and, unfortunately, they are plenty--who pass through the whole educational machinery and come out but learned fools, crammed with knowledge which they cannot use--all the more they pass, with themselves and others, as educated men..."

"You are of the favored few, for the fact that you are here, students in a university of this character, bespeaks for you the happy accidents that fall only to the lot of the few, and you cannot yet realize...how the hard struggle which is the lot of so many may cramp and blind and distort--how it may dull the noblest faculties and chill the warmest impulses, and grind out of men the joy and poetry of life; how it may turn into the lepers of society those who should be its adornment, and transmute into vermin to prey upon it and into wild beasts to fly at its throat, the brain and muscle that should go to its enrichment!"

"If you will think of it, you cannot fail to see enough want and wretchedness, even in our own country today, to move you to sadness and pity, to nerve you to high resolve; to arouse in you the sympathy that dares, and the indignation that burns to overthrow a wrong...Would you...relieve distress...eradicate ignorance...extirpate vice? You must turn to political economy to know their causes, that you may lay the axe to the root of the evil tree."

George's address was received with polite and dignified attention on the part of the faculty, and even with some enthusiasm by the students. While he touched on detailed questions of political economy in a most masterful way, this "monkey with a microscope," the "mule packing a library," the questioning of "educational machinery" and "learned fools" was too much.

Two years after the lecture at Berkely, George came out with his masterpiece PROGRESS & POVERTY, a gem that will rank high in the annals of human literature. Had he put on a skullcap and settled down at Berkely, the chances are high George and his great gifts as a thinker would have been buried alive--as has happened to many and many a bright fellow--and the world would never have known one of the greatest philosophers of all time.

I have contended Henry George came on a 150 years ahead of his time, but with the inventions of the atomic and hydrogen bombs and whispers of greater horrors to come, it would seem to me that it is high time our educational institutions, our churches and our newspapers woke up to the fact that if we ever want to have real freedom, real liberty as proclaimed by Tom Jefferson and other great ones, we had better give recognition to some simple, practical political economy.

* * * * *
In Fairfax County, Virginia, a densely populated suburb of Washington, D.C. a house can be constructed from the ground up in 75 days. But it takes 199 weeks -- almost four years-- to get approval from various county governmental agencies. Needless to say, these delays have a serious effect on home prices in Fairfax. The county is trying to cut the length of time down -- to 162 weeks. Examples like this make us marvel at how much better off we would all be in a free economy, one where high taxes, excessive regulation, and other government interferences were eliminated, and we could spend our time and money actually producing things of value.

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People are prisoners of their beliefs, and so long as they cherish a wrong understanding of economics they will be appealed to by one form of collectivism or another. But when they embrace sound economics, collectivism will cease to be a menace.

Edmund A. Opitz - THE FREEMAN

The inescapable point is, of course, that America, too, is quietly losing her independence to unnamed foreign bankers. Not only are we transferring hard-earned taxes of our working people to foreigners as interest and principal payments on that part of the national debt that the foreigners own, more important, we are transferring an ever-larger part of the total debt itself to these foreign creditors. We are mortgaging the Republic to strangers and governments over whom we have no control, and whose loyalty, when it counts, we can never be sure of.

A.Gallatin (Reader's Digest 9-77)