



HENRY
GEORGE
SCHOOL
OF
SOCIAL
SCIENCE

MARCH 1986

NEWSLETTER

The Earth is the Birthright of all People

ECONOMICS? WHAT'S HAPPENING!

Revisioning Economics: A Pathway to Liberation is the title for a series of Wednesday evening panel discussions the Henry George School is sponsoring from April 30th to May 28th. Fifteen different panelists offering alternative points of view will focus on Rent, Hunger, Trade, Jobs and Debt. A representative from our school will be included in each panel. Since we have encountered an enthusiastic response from some of the best local experts in the field, it promises to be an exciting event. Find out what they are thinking!

April 30th: "Who Pays The Piper?
Why Is Rent So High In The Bay Area?"
Panelists: Dr. Steve Shmanske - economist;
Sue Hestor - attorney, social activist; Clay
Berling - Henry George School.

May 7th: "Food To Go? Why Are
Millions Of People Starving?" Panelists: Dr.
Keven Danaher - lecturer, social activist;
Larry Hatfield - journalist, lecturer; Fred
Foldvary - Henry George School.

May 14th: "Let Freedom Ring? Why Can't
We Compete Abroad?" Panelists: Dr. Greg
Christensen - economist; Dr. Robert Ozaki -
economist; Robert Tideman - Henry
George School.

May 21st: "Princes And Paupers? Why Are
8 Million Workers Unemployed and 20
Million Underemployed?" Panelists: Dr.
Newby Schweitzer - economist; Dr.
Julianne Malveaux - economist; Alanna
Hartzok - Henry George School.

May 28th: "Going For Broke? Why Are We
Living 'Beyond our Means'?" Panelists: Joe
Fuhrig - economists; David Englestein -
Marxist theorist, teacher; Roger Somers -
Henry George School.

This unimaginable gestalt will occur at the
Cultural Integration Fellowship at 2650
Fulton St. across from Golden Gate Park.
\$30 dollars for the five evening series. You
will receive a brochure in a few days.
Please come and bring your friends!

BISHOPS URGE A MORAL ECONOMY, ECONOMIC RIGHTS FOR ALL AMERICANS

In a dramatic and searching document the Roman Catholic Bishops of the United States have focused on the causes of poverty in our country.

Now in its second draft, the "Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy" has led to thousands of written responses, numerous meetings, conferences and extensive media coverage.

The Bishops affirm the conviction "rooted in Biblical promise and Church tradition," that American society must alter its values and act more generously toward the poor. We must, say the Bishops "create an order that guarantees the minimum conditions of human dignity in the economic sphere for every person."

Economic Rights

The letter makes a clear call for a recognition of economic rights as "prerequisites for a dignified life in the community." In the first place stand the rights to life, food, clothing, shelter, rest and medical care (which are) absolutely basic to the protection of human dignity.

The Bishops called the protection of these economic minimums "critical to the growth of freedom" and as essential as "the political and civil freedoms granted pride of place in the Bill of Rights."

Moral Position

In the American economy the poor among us must "have the single most urgent claim on the conscience of the nation," the Bishops write.

The chapter on these priorities reiterate this fundamental thought a number of times.

**the investment of wealth, talent and human energy should be specifically directed to benefit those who are poor or economically insecure.

**increased active participation in economic life by those who are presently excluded or vulnerable is a high social priority.

Private Property

The Pastoral Letter stresses that while there is a social mortgage on property the Church has long defended the right to private ownership of productive property. The Bishops define private property as a force which "enlarges our capacity for creativity and initiative." Small and medium size farm business and entrepreneurial enterprise in America, "are the most creative and efficient sectors."

Economic concentration of wealth, the letter says can only be avoided by widespread home and land ownership.

As Georgists would agree, the letter makes clear, "private property does not constitute for anyone an absolute or unconditioned right." Church teaching opposes collectivist and statist economic approaches but it also rejects the notion that a free market automatically produces justice."

Since all economic issues cross national boundaries today, the Bishops call for a US policy "designed to help empower people everywhere and give them a sense of justice and work to help them improve the quality of their lives and to insure that the benefits of economic growth are shared equitably among them."

Land Tax

The letter cites a number of measures to achieve economic justice. In the area of land taxation the Bishops repeat their "continued support for a progressive land tax on farm acreage to discourage the assimilation of excessively large holdings."

In addition the Bishops ask for a review of tax measures and subsidies which benefit the wealthy investors and technology which serves to displace labor.

The letter ends with a call for action on this "ethical vision."

POVERTY IN THE U.S.A.

1960	22.2%
1973	11.1%
1977	11.7%
1980	13.0%
1983	15.2%

In 1983 the poverty threshold for a family of three was \$8,000. In 1983 14% of American children were living in poverty.

GRADUATES HONORED AT HOLIDAY PARTY

Seven graduates from the fall-winter class were honored at a holiday reception with the Board of Directors of the Northern California School.

The graduates included:

- Deborah Schantz, Albany
- Eric Waldschmidt, Berkeley
- George Raya, San Francisco
- David Cronshore, San Francisco
- Paul Heidt, San Francisco
- Lisa Reynolds, San Francisco
- Georgianna Scott, San Francisco

OUR NEW ADDRESS AND PHONE

The Henry George School has moved. Our administrative office is now located in the home of Dr. Dionne Marx, Education Director, at 63 Chattanooga St. in San Francisco. The zip is 94114. Our new phone is (415) 282-6260.

ROGER SOMERS AT SCHOOL HELM

Roger Somers, a product of a long line of Georgists is the new President of the Henry George School of Social Science in San Francisco. Somers, a retired builder and resident of Marin, is also a writer, jazz musician, artist and designer. He also is now turning his inestimable energy toward seeking justice through the Henry George School.

BOARD

The Board includes from San Francisco: Wendell Fitzgerald, Eric Spiekerman, and Cathy Smeland. From the East Bay: Otto Grimm, Clay Berling, Linda Joslin, Fred Foldvary, Tony Breadon, Laurie-Geisking and Clarence Burger. From Pacifica, Bill Gentes and from Marin, Roger Somers and Ray Cook. Wayne Luney is President of the Sacramento branch.

SCHOOL PASTORAL PROJECT

Alanna Hartzok, Associate Director of the school is meeting with groups involved in studying the application of the letter. For more information call (415) 763-0783.

**GEORGE'S RELEVANCE TO
CONTEMPORARY
SOCIAL PROBLEMS**

The Georgist philosophy is still relevant to many modern social problems. We will briefly mention a number of these problems and the positive effect that George's proposals would have upon them.

URBAN DECAY: Decent housing is becoming scarce and more expensive, slums are worsening and current efforts to relieve these problems have basically failed. George's suggestion of a shift from taxing improvements to taxing the value of the land itself would encourage the improvement of property. This would have the effect of rehabilitating the slums and making good housing more available and less expensive.

POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT: By discouraging land speculation, George's land value taxation will make more use of the existing land and thus create more jobs. The renewed demand for labor will raise wages and help to reduce the amount of public welfare necessary.

TAX REFORM: Citizens today groan under the weight of heavy property, sales and wage taxes. These taxes increase with every effort a person makes to improve the quality of his or her life. Land value taxation, on the other hand, is a unique form of taxation that does not penalize those who work and contribute to the community. Taxation of land values is an obvious and viable alternative to oppressive taxation.

INFLATION: Government waste, deficit financing, taxation of production, monopolistic and speculative rises in the price of land and natural resources, and over-expansion of the money supply all contribute to inflation. To the degree they were actually implemented, George's proposals would either eliminate or greatly alleviate these causes of inflation.

WORLD HUNGER AND LAND REFORM:

The extreme poverty and hunger that exists today, especially in the Third World, are incorrectly ascribed to overpopulation. There are sufficient natural resources, if used wisely and efficiently, to support everyone comfortably. But currently these

resources are being monopolized by a small minority. Georgist reforms would give landless people an opportunity to produce for themselves instead of for a privileged few.

HUMAN RIGHTS: Individual rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are most fully secured on a basis of equal rights to our natural heritage -- the earth and all its resources. George's proposals provide the means to bring this idea into reality.

COMMUNISM, STATISM AND WAR: State socialism, or communism, is often supported as a solution to poverty and exploitation -- even though it calls for strong government regulation of society. Military dictatorship is often seen as a solution to communism. Implementation of Georgist ideas - with their reliance on liberty, democracy and equal opportunity - would weaken the appeal of statist solutions to social problems. And true free trade grounded in equal access to nature would promote world cooperation and

**N.Y. DIRECTOR
STAN RUBINSTEIN HONORED IN
CALIFORNIA VISIT**

Stan Rubenstein visited California in October for special meetings with the Board of Directors and affiliates in Northern and Southern California.

Rubenstein, a former high school teacher and an Assoc. Professor at Delphi University in N.Y. helped to launch the new economic literacy project for which he has prepared numerous videos and monographs.

During his visit Rubenstein, who traveled with his wife Bobbie, received an award from the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco and the California legislature for 35 years of service in public education.

Dr. William Filante Assemblyman from Marin and Sonoma, and a former President of the School made the presentation. Assemblyman Art Agnos of San Francisco joined in the award.

RESPONSES TO THE BISHOPS' LETTER

As part of its outreach program the Henry George Schools of New York and No. California have responded to the Bishops' letter by participation in meetings, discussions and on-going committees. Following are excerpts from responses of the school:

N.Y. DIRECTOR STAN RUBENSTEIN in a letter to the 300 Roman Catholic Bishops:

..."It was disturbing that so little attention was paid to the role land ownership plays in our economy. Farmers depend on the land's fertility, basic industries rely on its natural resources, and commercial enterprises thrive on the intangible but very real factor of location. And yet we treat land as though it was another commodity, man-made, to be bartered in the marketplace.

"The American economist Henry George, in attempting to understand and eradicate poverty in the midst of plenty, developed a remedy that was both economically sound and ethically compelling. He sought to remove the burden of taxation from those who truly earned their wages and interest and lay it instead on those whose income is derived from the industry of the entire community -- the owners of valuable land.

"George's approach would free employers from taxation, making jobs plentiful and economic growth inevitable, but would ask landowners to pay their full share for the privilege of profiting from that growth."

S.F. DIRECTOR E. ROBERT SCROFANI at an Archdiocese Conference, "First Draft, First Thoughts."

"The Bishops are quite understandably concerned with the unemployed in our society. But without lifting the huge burden of land monopoly, little will be done in our free economy to alleviate their suffering.

"In the United States three percent of the population owns 95 per cent of all privately held land.

"If we accept that the earth is a gift and a trust from God; that we are but 'tenants' and 'sojourners', we must realize that the right to exploit the earth and profit from this exploitation carries certain responsibilities.

"In Appalachia and in the Heartland the Bishops of America have already taken note of the tremendous role of land in our economy. But in this important pastoral letter, they address only the distribution of wealth rather than the inability of the poor to produce because they have no access to the land and its resources.

"The Bishops need to focus on the land issue in the production and distribution of wealth. They cannot relegate the land question to the section on agriculture. Finally they need to examine more fully George's peaceful solution for equitable distribution of wealth by tapping the enormous value of land which is now appropriated by the landholders of every society."

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