

BAYVIEW/HUNTERS POINT COMMUNITY GROUP ASKS HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL FOR HELP

This past March, Wendell Fitzgerald, (President of the Henry George School of Northern California) received a call from Walter Maitz, a graduate of the Progress & Poverty course taught by Fitzgerald some three years earlier. Maitz invited Fitzgerald to a meeting taking place in Bayview-Hunters Point district of San Francisco. A community group had been meeting since the previous December to consider the question of how best to develop the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard and the whole south east part of San Francisco in general.

The Bayview-Hunters Point area is home to the Hunters Point Naval Shipyard which had been an important ship repair facility for the Navy since World War II. The Navy decided some time ago to withdraw from the Shipyard. The Navy proposes to lease the Shipyard to the City of San Francisco on a long term basis (60-70 years) and to give to the city, option to purchase the area at the end of the lease term.

Maitz had been meeting with the group since its inception. He remembered some of the ideas he had learned in the Progress & Poverty course taught by Fitzgerald, and Maitz thought that the group might be interested in hearing some of these ideas.

It turns out, that Harold Brooks, a long time resident and community leader in the Bayview-Hunters Point Community, had heard of the ideas of Henry George from Robert Scrofani (former Director of the Henry George School) on numerous occasions over the years. Brooks is more or less the elder statesman of the group which now officially calls itself South East Economic Development (SEED). When Fitzgerald made some suggestions based upon Georgist theory about what

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ETHICS & ECONOMICS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT CONTINUES

By Cathe Smeland

In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king!

If we are to believe the above, then it would stand to reason that in the land of economic illiterates, the beacon of reasoned vision that Henry George's teachings are, should be greeted with a royal welcome.

It is much more the case that the "blind" refuse to be led by the insightful wisdom of George's writings, insisting that what they see is all there is to be seen. After nearly a century of this tiresome tug of war in the dark, a new way to look at (and to help see) all of this is being developed - namely, the California High School Curriculum Development Project, begun by Robert "Bob" Scrofani and carried forward by those with whom he was working.

California is one of the states that has led the nation in mandating economics and ethics to be taught in high schools. Scrofani had worked with Social Science teachers and an Economics writer to develop a "strand" of ethics to be taught with the Economics Curriculum.

Under the management of Jack Alter, a San Francisco Unified District High School teacher and board member of the SF Henry George School board; the model Ethics and Economics Curriculum is to be field tested by the end of January 1993. It will then be ready for presentation to selected school districts and to the 1993 Georgist Conference in Los Angeles next summer. ❖

This issue is dedicated to:

Robert E. Scrofani

*Former Director of The Henry George School
Of Northern California
And Editor Of The Mercury*



Men like Henry George are rare, unfortunately. One cannot imagine a more beautiful combination of intellectual keenness, artistic form, and fervent love of justice.

-Albert Einstein, Physicist

The country needs a new and sincere thought in politics, coherently, distinctly, and boldly uttered by men who are sure of their ground. The power of men like Henry George seems to me to mean that.

-Woodrow Wilson, U.S. President

Henry George was one of the really great thinkers produced by our country... I wish his writings were better known and more clearly understood.

-Franklin D. Roosevelt, U.S. President

The teachings of Henry George will be the basis of our program of reform.

-Sun Yat Sen, Chinese Leader

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR LIBERATION THEOLOGY IN LATIN AMERICA

Presented by Fr. Alan McCoy, O.F.M.

At The Summer Quarterly Meeting Of
The California Chapters of Common Ground-USA
And
The Northern California Henry George School
Sunday August 30th, 1992- Malibu CA.

I come not as an economist, a demographer or a politician, but as one who would be a Christian; one who shares the Judeo-Christian tradition in my ministry to people. In the past years I have been privileged to experience something of the plight of the poor and dispossessed in many parts of the world- in Africa, Latin America and Asia as well as here in our own Los Angeles area. And it has been very helpful to be able to follow the development of Liberation Theology in response to these realities.

Surely, Latin America deserves special attention because of its serious problems and also because of the efforts made there in recent years to deal with the basic problem: land tenure. Liberation Theology, based as it is on the fundamentals of Latin American reality and Latin American theological reflection upon that reality, has had a major role in these efforts.

In August 1986 I was asked to join an ecumenical group to visit Brazil at the invitation of the Brazilian Bishop's Conference Committee on land reform. Our delegation of six persons was assembled for two major purposes, first, to raise the consciousness of our delegation members about the issues of agrarian reform in Brazil and about the role of the churches of Brazil in the reform...and second, to explore and recommend appropriate responses by the churches and citizens of the United States.

Our delegation visited cities and villages between the coastal city of Sao Paulo and the northwest jungle city of Manaus. Prepared for the task by readings and a briefing by the Washington Office on Latin America, the delegation members attended three national meetings and interviewed on site (in select conflict areas) over fifty pastoral agents and rural workers actually involved in the land conflicts. The largest number of interviews were held in the Bico do Papagaio (Parrot's Beak) area in Northern Brazil where the land conflicts are most acute. The government, in 1985 created a plan for the modernization and disappropriation of all large farm holdings that were not in production. Even a weakened law that was eventually adopted was met with violence; some 22 rural workers were killed in 1985 alone. The violence is not limited to assassination. The delegation reviewed evidence of homes being burned, fields and crops being destroyed, death threats, torture, intimidation and

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Fr. McCoy Speech

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defamation of character, and falsification of land titles and other documents.

The conflicts over land tenure arise from a history of massive inequality of opportunity. Within Brazil's total population of about 134 million (as of 1986), ten percent of the 5.2 million landowners owned 80% of the farmland. In other words, among the 5.2 million landowners, 5 million own only 20% of the land. All the while 60 million Brazilians (nearly half the population!) live in extreme poverty. In recent years more than 15 million landless people migrated to the large urban centers. And in the last 25 years more than 24 million people have migrated looking for land employment, stability and housing.

Invasion of land in recent years, was only of land kept by large landowners and corporations ; and who for reason of land speculation, have unjustly expelled rural workers from lands that these workers brought to fruition. The inter-church meeting in Goania was on agrarian reform, and understood in the context of the strong biblical image of the search for the Promised Land.

The bishops had prepared a document entitled: *Liberate The Land*. Our conclusions were:

A) Support the campaign by churches, unions and concerned politicians for a serious redistribution of land. B) Urge legislation which would impede the monopolization of land by corporations, speculators and large landowners. C) Oppose the international financing of efforts to merely "modernize" agricultural production without providing for land redistribution. We reflected on the words of Pope John Paul II on Recife (1980)... "It is not legitimate, because it is not in accord with God's plan, to manage this gift (land) in such a way that its profits benefit only a few people, while others, the vast majority finds itself condemned inevitably to a situation of want, poverty and marginalization". After our return from Brazi, Amnesty International has kept in touch with us regarding the ungoing conflict.

Last September, I was called to some ministry in Haiti, and was able to get some pictures of what those people have been and are going through because of land monopoly and foreign support of the dictators of the past. In these last years I have been

sent to Latin America many times on missions in support of causes for justice; and although the statistics show that some Latin American countries have advanced in the last years and that a certain development has come along, I can assure you that this has not happened to the great majority of the people. As in our own United States, the condition of the poor has deteriorated to an alarming degree.

I want to congratulate you for your continuing interest in such a cause as the betterment of our society. Your concentration on Land Reform is surely an approach that is basic to any lasting betterment of the condition of so many people. A question to be asked is: "Will it be possible to bring about the many ideals of the Georgists without a change in our way of living? Before the fall of communism in Eastern Europe it was said that the Third World countries were economically oppressed, deprived of civil liberties; and the capitalist countries of the West were culturally oppressed. The consumerist orientation of the economy made them all powerless and thus unable to overcome unemployment and create an economy that serves the whole of society.


To respond to the genuine needs of society, Liberation Theology must accept the fact that the market economy is the most efficient instrument for utilizing the natural resources and to bring about

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true prosperity; but the market must be governed by principles of justice, directed to meeting human needs, and oriented to the common good. Liberation theologians can no longer just fight the market system, but they can demand that the market be appropriately controlled by the forces of society and by

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From The Editor's Desk...


The Mercury is published to cultivate what is close to the hearts of all people, the ideas of freedom, justice and economic social progress. This is in keeping with the philosophy of our organization's namesake, the American Economist, Henry George.

Although George's contribution to Social Philosophy and Economics is not part of the popular mainstream of ideas, his theories have survived in the form of land tax and social reform movements through out the world including: The Association For Good Government- Australia; Common Ground-USA; Escuela de Ciencias Sociales Henry George-Dominican Republic; Land & Liberty International-Great Britain; - just to name a few. To those who wish to further explore the ideas of George, we recommend starting with his landmark work, *Progress And Poverty*, first published in 1879. It has intrigued and influenced many thousands of thinkers, scholars, and world leaders. From Martin Luther King Jr. to Gandhi. (See page 2 of this issue for some thoughtful quotes by those of many whom have acknowledged tribute to George and his ideas).

We live in a world with the same problems of mismanagement of resources and land, warring factions, hunger, and the vast imbalance between wealth and poverty. Our economic pursuits have affected the delicate balance of our planet. We battle over water rights and land development. Our jobs are sent across our borders with little regard for the environment or well being of laborers (those left behind or of those newly employed).

We have solved the problem of equitable and mass production of goods, but we have not solved the problem of how to produce without destroying our environment nor how to insure that our progress and prosperity benefits all. These are the same issues Henry George raised over 100 years ago. Humanity has attempted a variety of solutions, in the meantime, many have failed miserably and most do no more than address the symptoms. We probably won't try what works, until we have tried *everything* that doesn't.

All we, who have been struck by George's vision, can say to those who have not yet been introduced to the work of George, you *will not* be disappointed if you take the time to look. ❖

Bayview/Hunters Point

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might be done with the shipyard, Brooks was impressed and has been promoting the ideas to the group, other organizations and individuals in the City.

In brief it was suggested that SEED recommend to the City upon its assuming a long term lease, that it rely solely on the collection of ground rents from sub-tenants for purposes of providing and maintaining infrastructure and services the area will need. At the same time it will be recommended to the City of San Francisco, that it not collect any property tax or possessory interest tax on buildings or improvements the tenants build or install in the Shipyard area. In addition, it will be recommended that the City not charge its payroll tax or any other tax within it's jurisdiction. In this way the City should have enough revenue to support the new services it will have to provide for the area, without burdening the rest of the City and at the same time provide a powerful incentive for private business to come

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the state, so as to guarantee that the basic needs of the whole society are satisfied.

This is a challenge also to those who propose the theory of Henry George. Can you help with authentic liberation? Are you willing to adopt a lifestyle that allows others to survive and change models of production and consumption as well as change structures of power which govern societies today? Among specific concerns is that of the international debts of the third world countries... debts that must be deferred or even canceled to support the fundamental right of people to subsistence and progress.

We have seen that the terrible disproportion between so-called *developed* countries and the *developing* countries is comparable to a great extent to the affluent and the poor in our own country. In these last years we have seen a terrible tragedy in our midst: 40,000 children born in the United States each year do not live to see their first birthday. 67 new born babies die each day in our land. Our infant mortality rate puts us last among 20 Western Industrialized Nations. We have the highest child poverty rate and the highest abortion rate in the Western World. The rate of teen-age suicide has tripled in the last thirty years. More teen-age boys die of gunshot wounds than from all natural causes combined.

Moreover, our foreign policy is increasingly children's policy. Global poverty, armed conflict and systematic injustice threaten the lives of children and their families. Children will pay a terrible price for indifference toward international economic policy and neglect of human rights.

The challenge faces us. Are we up to it? Can we present a coherent strategy, a thorough going land reform, a reordering of the country's economic priorities and democratization that empowers vast sectors of the population? This will confront fierce opposition, fiercely determined enemies abroad and at home. And yet there have gone before us some wonderful people who have given their lives in a peaceful, non-violent protest against the very evils we mention. Some days ago, I was reflecting how many people that I have known that have given their lives in a non-violent peaceful standing for the justice and peace we are speaking of. I recall some thirteen. Most famous would be Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador. I was in San Salvador the

day he was killed and was about some tasks that he had asked for. When he was killed I was actually meeting with some five members of his social action committee. Some time later, I received word that four of those five had been captured, tortured and their bodies thrown on the side of the road. The day after the killing of the archbishop, as we planned for his funeral, I met a number of the people working for the church in San Salvador. Among them were three American women, two Religious Sisters and one Lay woman. Later they, together with a fourth religious, were captured by the military, tortured and killed. Two of our Franciscans were also killed for their work with the poor and needy in Central America. A Jesuit friend of mine, the rector of the University of Central America in San Salvador, was also killed by the military along with his Jesuit confreres, the housekeeper and her daughter.

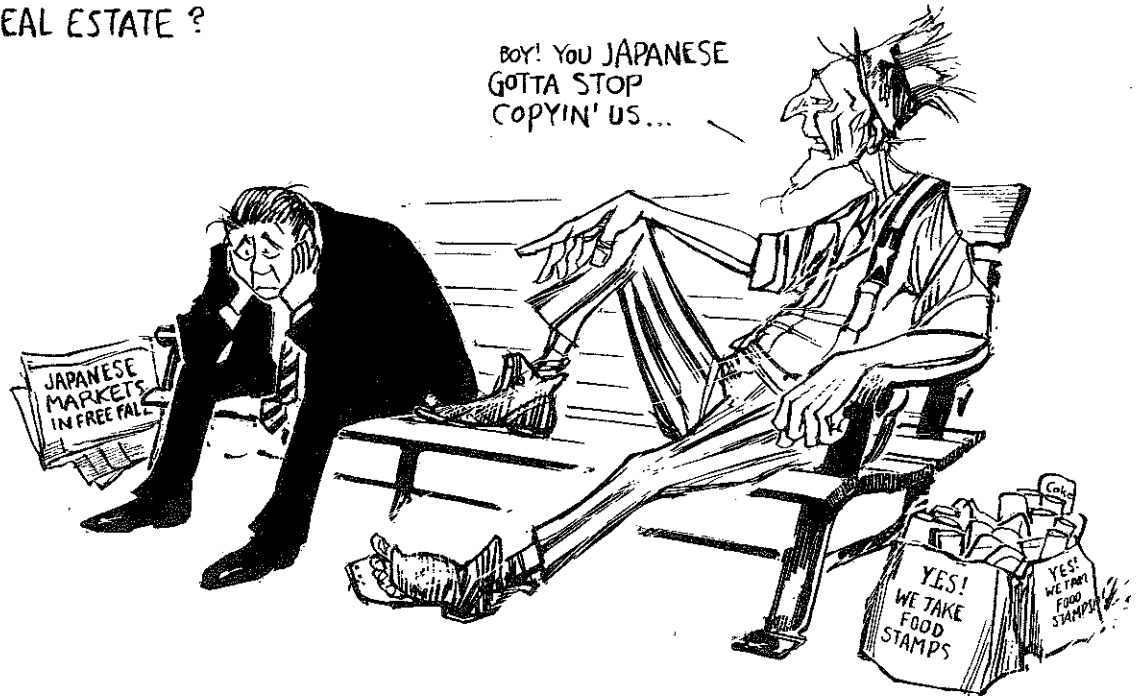
"If one such country could adopt the Henry George plan..."

When in Nicaragua on a fact-finding visit, I along with other members of the delegation were guests of a couple, Felipe and Mary Barreda - leaders in the basic Christian communities in Nicaragua, and genuine friends of the poor, though both were relatively wealthy. They had arranged for us a fine dinner and meeting with some of the leaders of the small communities. It was a genuine pleasure to visit with them and their children and friends. Shortly after they were captured by our U.S. backed Contras, held captive and tortured for four months and finally executed. I saw the diocesan paper with the picture of the youngsters receiving the coffins of their mother and father into the church for the funeral. In this instance as in the other, it comes home to us that the price of true justice and lasting peace is courage and hope. We ask ourselves, what of our involvement in all this?

You have been informed of the progress made in the meeting in Santa Domingo. If one such country could adopt the Henry George plan with the

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YOU BORROWED ON INFLATED STOCKS
TO BUY INFLATED REAL ESTATE ?



DANZIGER

The Christian Science Monitor

Bayview/Hunters Point

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in and make capital improvements and provide jobs. SEED also wants to include recommendations that insure local and minority hiring set asides and training. These recommendations are being drawn together in a proposal which is soon to be presented to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency and other concerned public and private groups and individuals. ❖

" That which is
unjust can really
profit from
no one...
That which is just
can really
harm no one."

...Henry George

Fr. McCoy Speech

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other necessary steps to insure justice , we might have a truly outstanding example to show the rest of the world. Much has to be done to convince the American public and through them our political leaders, that it is to the best interests that such an experiment be made. If our government does not allow such an experiment, the steps in Santo Domingo are doomed from the start.

You as convinced proponents of Henry George's principles have your work cut out for you. The challenge is to prudence, yes, but also to courage- to continue in the face of serious opposition. If this is an answer, it can make tremendous difference in the world situation. We reflect seriously on the words: "The Land is mine, says the Lord". ❖

Fr. Alan McCoy is a Franciscan priest, with a Doctorate in Canon Law from Catholic University- 1944. He has taught Canon Law & Moral Theology at Santa Barbara Theologate 1944-49. In addition to administrative & pastoral work Fr. McCoy has been President of the Canon Law Society of America 1966-67, President Conference of Major Superiors of Men in the U.S. 1976-82, Executive Director of Franciscan Conference 1982-89. For the past 15 years Fr. Alan McCoy has been on the road quite a bit with his work taking him to Africa, Asia, & especially Latin America. His work is specifically related to social justice & relief of those suffering from armed conflict.

NOTES FROM... HGS SACRAMENTO



Recent Events

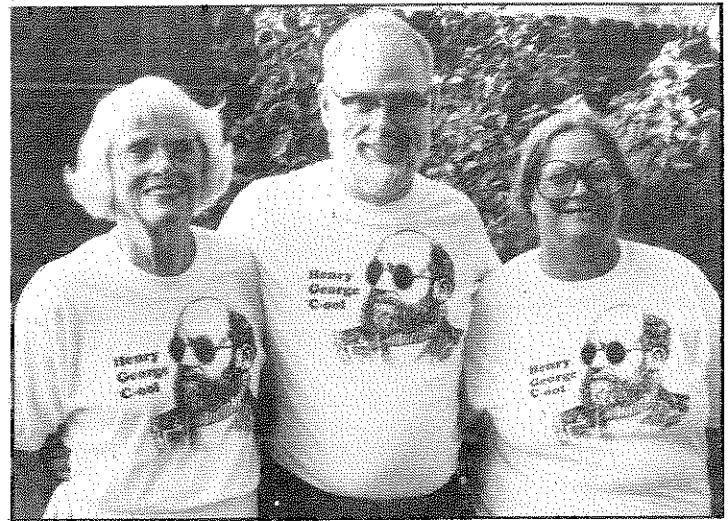
■ Graduates of the Spring Social Problems Class were honored at the home of Wayne and Gloria Luny. Evelyn Friend-Loomis, presented her report on the Santo Domingo CGO Conference.

■ The Sacramento HGS September Dinner Meeting featured Bruce Kennedy, Manager of The State-wide Planning Section for Parks and Recreation as the guest speaker and presented " The History, Future And Politics of Stone Lakes Wildlife Refuge Project".

■ A Public Meeting was sponsored by Sacramento-Henry George School at the Citrus Heights Sunrise Center Clubhouse featuring The League of Women Voters presenting pro & cons of ballot measures.

Social Problems Class

Gail Voeller, HGS Board Member has been teaching a four session class based on Henry George's book "Social Problems". Many of the students attending are active in community organizations and are finding George's work timely.



(l.to r.: Gayle Voeller, Wayne Luney, Evelyn Friend Loomis)

**IS THE 21st CENTURY....
...READY FOR GEORGE?**



Sacramento HGS members model T-Shirts from the CGO Conference in Santo Domingo Designed by Lindy Davies of the New York City HGS, the shirt showing Henry George in a turtle neck, complete with shades and a peace earring- updates his image for the 21st century.

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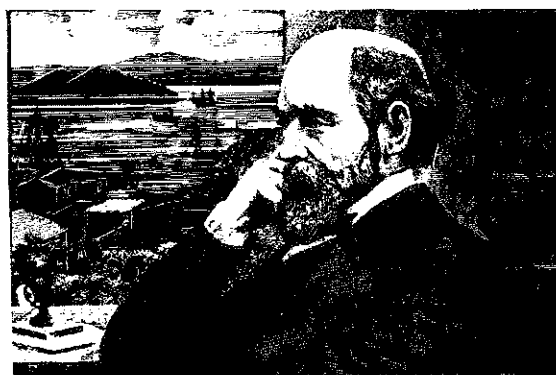
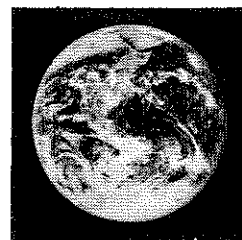
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