

## Small Steps To Giant Leaps In Capetown

Important progress toward land value taxation has been made in Capetown, South Africa. A Site Value Rating system was recently adopted by the South Peninsula Council to assess and tax the land value of the newly designated Cape Metropolitan Area. A group of six Substructures, the districts encompass thirty-nine former municipal areas with a population of nearly two and a half million people. In South Africa, Australia, and other countries, rating is another word for tax, and Site Value Rating taxes the value of the land, just like Land Value Taxation. Under the new system, revaluation of the area will be completed by the end of 1997, emphasizing land values only. According to Godfrey Dunkley, President of the International Union, should the new measures be successfully established in Capetown, more than seventy percent of the total rates collected in R.S.A. will come from SVR. Though the Council agreed to provisions that would allow for a possible return to a land and improvements valuation system, and individual municipalities could decide to give rebates and remissions to property owners, the steps taken so far are convincing and impressive.

## Henry George School Makes the News

In the Tuesday, April 15th edition of the New York Daily News the Henry George School was featured in a half page article titled School Gives Ground For Land Tax, thematically timed for the dreaded tax day. Written by the City Beat columnist Bill Bell, the article provided a brief overview of the nature of the school and the Henry George Institute, and a description of the life of Henry George and the basis of his works and beliefs, built around an afternoon of questions and answers with George Collins and Lindy Davies.

Many of George's most important arguments are covered in Mr. Bell's interview. Included is *(continued on page eight)*

## An Anthology of Henry George's Thought *by George Collins*

In 253 pages consisting of seven heavily endnoted chapters, a seven page bibliography, with a frontispiece of George's 1897 photograph, and an introductory essay by the author, Dr. Kenneth C. Wenzer's *An Anthology of Henry George's Thought* is a valuable compilation of George's writings taken from the pages of his newspaper *The Standard*, his personal correspondence from the Henry George Papers in the New York Public Library archives, excerpts from his books, and other ancillary sources. The book is volume one of Dr. Wenzer's "Henry George Centennial Trilogy", published by the University of Rochester Press in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of his death in 1897.

The anthology is cited as "...the first addition to George's published works in a century." And an important addition it is. It puts before even the most assiduous Georgist reader George's direct engagement with the questions of his day which would otherwise remain accessible only to researchers.

The book demonstrates that no issue, economic, social, political or philosophical, was beyond the compass of what George considered man's fundamental relationship - his relationship to the land. In these works we see both abstract principle and practical strategy brought to the service of individual liberty. George's logic, perception, and humanity can be fairly judged in the way he addresses each topic.

The chapters following the author's introduction group the selected passages from his books, articles, letters and speeches on a thematic basis. The author admits the inevitability of "...some overlapping of subjects. The second chapter, *Exhortive Works*, starts with galvanic pieces such as "Ode to Liberty" from *Progress and Poverty*, the lecture "Moses" and the *Salutatory* printed in the January 8th, 1887 debut of the *Standard*, capturing the reader at the outset with some of George's most eloquent and passionate prose. Other chapters like "On Government, Politics, and the World" contain snippets of letters to notables William Lloyd Garrison Jr., son of the famed abolitionist, on the nature of political policies, and to Patrick Ford, editor of the *Irish World*, for which George served as a foreign correspondent in Ireland, regarding the best course of action for Michael Davett, the Irish agitator, in the attempt to "...topple Mr. British Crown..."

The chapter "Georgism versus Socialism" has some of the most closely reasoned arguments for and against both ideologies that one may consider, and George's strategy with regard to alliances with those who have similar dreams but dissimilar methods or objectives. And anyone who thinks that George either dismissed or failed to fully comprehend the role of money as it applied to the economy then or would later as the economy grew must read the very short but pointed "Various Matters: On the Debt" and "Politics that Mean Something" in the chapter "On Sundry Important Matters."

In the opening preface Dr. Wenzer stated that his mandate for the anthology was to "...preserve what I consider to be George's most important thoughts with as little intrusion as possible." And he does indeed achieve that, for the selections are not edited. There are however, some descriptions of George's ideas and interpretations of his statements in the introduction and in other essays preceding various chapters which may represent a misreading of his work. Georgists are said to have "...for instance, a potent belief in God and community ownership of land." George is as well said to have had "...a steadfast belief in the perfectibility of man..." and was "reticent" about noncompensation to land owners.

However much supporters of George may have favored community ownership, George was unalterably against any communal or socialized ownership. He spoke always of equal rights to and individual decisions over the use of land. He refuted all arguments for land nationalization and rejected confiscation or public purchase as methods for establishing common rights. Far from proclaiming his perfectibility, George saw man as being virtuous or villainous depending on the degree of opportunity and equity afforded him. And nowhere nor in any way does George ever countenance compensation to land owners.

But, as Dr. Wenzer says, "For the most part, George's words speak for themselves." Carefully read, this admirable compilation would, as Dr. Wenzer hopes, "answer some questions inherent in his political economy" not clear to the reader of his seven books.

If I were to wish for anything more it would be to see a chapter devoted exclusively to rights. George's supreme concern was the individual and his rightful entitlement. Liberty, he said, is justice and justice is the natural law. While that principle is everpresent and a repeated theme throughout the contents of this work, there are so many marvelous gems that could make up a separate chapter that it seemed a natural category within this structure. Its absence, however, does not render the volume deficient in its organization or purpose. Volume 1, *An Anthology of George's Thought*, available from the Schalkenbach Foundation for \$35.00, is a welcome exposure to George's broader public debates and private thoughts. It should leave every reader eagerly anticipating Volumes 2 and 3 of *The Henry George Centennial Trilogy*.

(continued from page four) a pollution tax is, as he says, "we use taxation from other sources now to deal with pollution, taxes on wages and production, for instance."

"What we would be actually taxing would be the hidden costs of pollution, the costs to society as a whole," Mr. Roodman went on to say, "and this path can be good for the economy in general. For example, the Netherlands began a set of water pollution taxes in 1970. Rather than straight regulation, the government there decided to adopt rather stringent taxes as a disincentive to pollute and an incentive to come up with their own ways of reducing pollution. Some of this tax was passed on to consumers, who reacted by switching their consumer allegiances to those companies who polluted less. This in turn produced a growth industry based around finding new technologies to lower pollution levels. A tax on pollution, rather than regulation, seems to be the path of least economic resistance. One company in the Netherlands has since become the world leader in producing one kind of this technology."

Mr. Roodman further stated, in summing up, that these sorts of taxes would bring our economy "much closer to a natural eco-system; a system that would be self-renewing, self-cleansing and naturally efficient. Ideally, all materials would be recyclable, allowing the economy to be self-regenerating and our society independent of the inefficiencies built into a system based on disposable products and non-renewable sources of energy."

(continued from page five) the fact that land values are created by the society, though only the landowner benefits from such values, and that all taxes save a land value tax should be eliminated. Also, according to George, he writes that "...a land-only tax also would force development of unused land and, by abolishing taxes on buildings, encourage construction as well as improvements of existing buildings." And no one would disagree with George Collins' claim that "There's so much distortion and dysfunction in the system now, nobody understands it", arguing for the simplicity inherent to a land tax system. Hardly a developer, financier, or tenant would not take interest in these words, though certainly such proposals may seem

## Springtime in New York

### Basic Courses

#### Fundamental Economics

Monday, Dan Kryston, Esq., 6:00 - 8:00  
Tues., Mr. George DeShields, 6:00 - 8:00  
Weds., Mr. John Alexander, 6:00 - 8:00  
Thursday, Dr. Paul Kahane, 6:00 - 8:00

#### Understanding Economics

Tues., Mr. George Collins, 12:30 - 1:30

#### Progress and Poverty (in Spanish)

Thursday, Ms. Melba Campbell, 6:00 - 8:00

### Advanced Courses

#### Applied Economics

Tuesday, Mr. Alton Pertilla, 6:00 - 8:00

#### Economic Science

Monday, Mr. George Collins, 6:00 - 8:00

#### A Philosophy of Life

Monday, Mr. Vesa Nelson, 6:00 - 8:00

#### Great Decisions '97

Tuesday, Mr. Jim Brian, 6:30 - 8:30

#### US History & Government (in Spanish)

Weds., Mr. Manuel Felix, 6:00 - 8:00

#### Public Speaking

Weds., Mr. Sydney Mayers, 6:00 - 8:00

#### Classical Analysis I

Thurs., Gerald Paone, Ph.D., 6:00 - 8:00

### Friday Forums (7:00 to 9:00 pm)

#### Land in the Movies

April 11th, Howard's End — Anthony Hopkins and Emma Thompson star in E.M. Forster's moving saga.

#### How Wall Street Works

May 30th, Frank Sposato — Sources and methods to help you understand investment decision-making.

#### The Determined Doctor:

#### Social Reform and Catholic Doctrine

June 6th, Rev. Alfred Isaacson — The author of a new scholarly biography of famous Georgist Priest Edward McGlynn.

### Saturday Seminars (1:00 - 3:00 pm)

#### Mongolia: Survival in a Changing World

May 17th, H.E. Enkhsaikhan Jargalsaikhan — The UN Ambassador reviews the development challenges that face the fiercely independent people of his country.

#### The Monopoly Experience

May 3rd, Mr. Lindy Davies — A very realistic economic simulation game for workers, landowners and capitalists of all ages.

#### New Strategies for Urban Revitalization

June 21st, Mr. Alton Pertilla — Why does the market tide flow against affordable housing? How can we go with the flow?

too good to be true to some New Yorkers, especially considering the generally increased cynicism around tax time. And the piece does suffer somewhat by not providing any concrete examples of speculative land ownership and its corresponding effects throughout the city.

But the nature of the column tends toward human interest stories, which in this case is the story of Henry George and

land value taxation - a name and an idea now more familiar to as many as 730,000 daily New York readers. Perhaps this will offset what Mr. Bell discovered to be the only problem that Lindy Davies could find in the body of George's ideas: "I set out to find flaws in his theories... the only flaw I found is that not enough people know about him."

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