

## SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA NOTES

"Depression - Why do we have it?" was the question under discussion at the February (7th) Friday Dinner of The Alumni Group. Gathering at Gustav's Jagerhaus in Anaheim reflected a new approach of regional supper clubs instead of centrally located meetings. This month was Orange County's turn. Cover charge for the program was \$3, with participants free to choose a dinner suitable to their palate and wallet.

Dinner and discussion were chaired by board members Margil Wadley and Frank Titlon, respectively. In addition to discussing what went wrong with the "Reagan Revolution", a topic basket was introduced. Before the main discussion, questions put into the basket were laid on the table for consideration.

On Monday, March 30th, an Alumni gathering at Gustav's discussed "Overpopulation" versus "All Devouring Rent Theory." Was Henry George correct in positing that ever-increasing land-rent was the true cause of poverty with progress, rather than Malthus's theory of ever-increasing population? A special guest at this evening's gathering was Mr. Harry Ball Wilson, an English Georgist who is a strong advocate of proportional representation - a method of voting that gives value to every vote, not just the majority.

Most recently, on Monday, May 6th, HGS Director Harry Pollard was the featured speaker at the Albert J. Nock Forum & Southern California Supper Club. His topic was *No Barriers! No Borders! The Case for Radical Free Trade.*

## KOREAN LAND SCHOOL TEACHES GEORGE

Dr. Wong-In Koh reports from Seoul that the training materials sent by the New York HGS have proven to be "very adequate" for use by the Henry George Association of Korea's Land School. Every Saturday twenty regular participants gather for a four-hour seminar and workshop, studying the unabridged *Progress and Poverty* and reviewing homework they have done using the materials sent by the HGS. A Korean dubbing of the HGS videotape economics course is expected to be completed and ready in a few months.

A threefold approach is being employed in Korea. Theoretical understanding and development is the task of the HG Association; the Land School trains experts for Habitat for Humanity, which is the third organization involved. In addition, the Association has strong

## IS "BIG BROTHER" WATCHING?

On May 8th, as part of its Friday Evening Forum series, the School was host to award-winning investigative reporter Dennis King, who conducted a seminar entitled *Is Big Brother Watching?* King, most recently the author of *Get the Facts on Anyone*, began by outlining the ways in which most people leave a "paper trail", a semi-public record consisting of personal and background material about their private lives. This information, gathered on people from court records, credit agencies, federal tax lien indexes, even the Department of Motor Vehicles, is collated and fed into what King called an "elaborately organized data network." This network, made up of various organizations, the Federal Government, large corporations and private investigating companies, works through "information broker firms" which sell and trade information to anyone, including private citizens.

The amount of information and its easy accessibility is staggering. For instance, King says, the credit company TRW has data "on just about everyone in the US." Whenever a county court house updates its computer file system "there are people with portable computers lapping it all up." So intensive and up-to-date is the information gathered by corporations and private investigators, that Federal agencies like the FBI and CIA often plug into these sources for the latest info on people and organizations.

*Practice random kindness  
and senseless acts of beauty.*

King's take on all this is rather benign. Taking what might be described as a laissez-faire approach to the constant circulation and exchange of personal histories, King sees a sort of equilibrium of surveillance-- if some one can get the facts on you, you can turn around and get the facts on them, providing of course you have the time and money to do so. If your landlord or local politician is engaging in some unseemly activity directed against you or your community, you can, according to King, turn the tables on them, access the darker side of their private life and threaten to make it more widely known. You can now, following King's reasoning, fight any potential information adversary to a draw -- a kind of mutual deterrence based on blackmail. King sees this state of affairs as "democratic."

In line with this commodification and marketing of information both public and private, King's book, *Get the Facts on Anyone*, is a how-to manual that promises to teach you how to gain access to just about anything about anybody-- "even the phone number of your favorite celebrity", according to the backcover. While stating in the introduction and in a few chapters that these techniques can be put to good and effective use by individuals and public interest groups fighting the abuse of public trust, much of what is actually being offered is how to pry into peoples' medical and welfare records; chapter 11 even has a sub-heading entitled "Subject's Garbage".

While none of these techniques may be objectionable in a particular moral or legal sense, one may wonder if the encouragement of widespread information-hacking doesn't lead to a general surveillance-ambience, a culture of mutual distrust. --David Domke

roots in the Christian community in Korea, and half of their students are members of the clergy. Christian perspectives are offered on Biblical Politics, Korean Reunification and the Land Problem,

and other related themes. For example, Reverend Archer Torrey, founder of HGAK, recently delivered a speech on the Global Land Problem.

With the land market

cooled down, "due to government policy resembling Georgist means" reports Wong-In Koh, "we believe it is proper time to start our activity again to be prepared for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula."

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