

WHERE POLITICAL ECONOMY & SPIRITUALITY MEET

One area where students of Henry George can make a positive contribution is that of religious social concern. This was brought out at the Santo Domingo Conference on Sunday morning which began with an ecumenical gathering led by Rev. James W. Dawsey, Professor of Religion at Auburn University. Dr. Dawsey spoke of how the scriptures presented the living Jesus as a suffering servant who called others to follow his way - while Christopher Columbus saw Christ as a ruler with power.

Earlier in the conference, Prof. Jack Schwartzman gave a stirring presentation on Columbus - a "Georgist Appraisal" of his life. Jack presented us with the person whose voyage to the western hemisphere brought death to the native population. Columbus, who returned from his voyage with natives bound and muzzled as slaves, remedied the

meeting reflected a more unified spirit than the previous year.

One all-pervading feature of this year's North American gathering was its bilingual nature. Had the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade not had other plans, this conference would have been the second International Union conference in Spain. The very first International conference was held in Ronda, Spain, May 26-28, 1913. It was the fact of the Ronda conference that had inspired Bob Clancy of the Henry George Institute to propose a Spanish-English conference for the Columbus Quincentennial Year. What the IU rejected, the CGO adapted to fulfill its mandate to hold an annual conference in North America in 1992.

With more Georgist Dominicans than Yankees, the family that gathered felt, to this writer, ever more extended in its embrace. The conference banquet on Saturday evening included, at the beginning, a moment of silence for our departed family members Bob Scrofani of San Francisco and Craig Cringan of Toronto (see page three). It concluded with a moving personal tribute paid to Lucy Silfa by the students and volunteers of the Dominican School. Referring to Henry George as the father of their movement for social justice, they called Dona Lucy their mother. Indeed, one can say Lucy Silfa and the Santo Domingo Gathering has indeed given birth to a new pan-American spirit within the Georgist extended family.



Jack Schwartzman

situation by beginning the importation of African slaves to the Caribbean. The discussion that followed was heated. NY-HGS Assistant Director Lindy Davies asked about the various religious quotes from Columbus adorning the new Columbus monument in Santo Domingo. And New York School Trustee Si Winters expressed strong disagreement with Dr. Schwartzman, stating that one should understand the social forces that led to Columbus's voyages and their aftermath.

At the Sunday ecumenical, it was inspiring to hear Si relate that further discussions with Jack led to a common understanding between them over the Columbus controversy. Si also told of a personal spiritual experience: a response to an immigrant worker whose silent gesture over his dinner spoke louder than scripture - or economics.



Hector Sandler

The relevance of Georgist economics to socially-engaged spirituality goes back, of course, to George himself, whose *Progress and Poverty* and other works are filled with scriptural allusions. Many who took up the Single Tax banner, for example, joined the Anti-Poverty Society, which was founded by Dr. Edward McGlynn, the controversial Roman Catholic priest in New York.

Today, the message to the churches has been proclaimed once again in a new book co-authored by Dr. Dawsey with Dr. Robert V. Andelson, also a professor at Auburn University. *Wasteland to Promised Land: Liberation Theology for a Post-Marxist World* was featured at the conference following the ecumenical. (See Alanna Hartzok's review, on the back page.)

While a local reporter covered the presentation, Dr. Dawsey was joined by two distinguished speakers: Walter Rybeck from the Center for Public Dialogue, in the Washington, DC area; and Dr. Hector Raul Sandler, from the *Instituto Capacitación Económica* in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Dr. Dawsey made the telling point that, in our interdependent world, "my wealth is tied in with others"

EDITOR'S NOTES (from page three)

her light! Either this, or darkness comes on, and the very forces that progress has evolved turn to powers that work destruction."

Today we are reaping the harvest he predicted as we have done nothing to make the opportunities of the land available to all on an equal basis.

The letter, along with George's "Ode to Liberty" and John M. Kelly's "The New Barbarians: The Continuing Relevance of Henry George," was recently mailed out to many by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.

The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation has just published its latest catalogue, listing several new books of interest to students of Henry George. Contact the Foundation for your copy, at 41 East 72nd Street, New York, NY 10021 (212-988-1680.)



James Dawsey

AIDS & B-2: Did you know that the entire US budget devoted to the AIDS health crisis is less than the cost of one B-2 bomber? And did you know that George Bush wants twenty B-2 bombers, and wants to cut the AIDS budget by 25%?

"Live Rent Free!" So said a flyer someone handed me on the street the other day. "The housing shortage is so severe and the rent is getting so high..." I continued to read. Turns out, according to the flyer, you can live rent free because "Jesus already paid the bill!" The flyer concluded: "Need a place to live? With a life long lease,...and more? Let Y'shua live in your heart and you'll always know that your place in heaven is reserved." But as Henry George pointed out a century ago, this same Y'shua taught us to pray "Thy kingdom come... on earth as it is in heaven." Advocates of what used to be called "pie in the sky when you die" need to read up on the strong current of social justice running throughout the Judeo-Christian tradition. They can start with *From Wasteland to Promised Land*, reviewed in this issue.



(continued on back page)

FROM WASTELAND TO PROMISED LAND: Liberation Theology for a Post-Marxist World

Review by Alanna Hartzok

Robert V. Andelson and James M. Dawsey present a penetrating analysis of the root causes of poverty on earth, and extend astute theological insights through a veil that is rarely pierced. Unlike many who look to biblical precepts for solutions to 20th-century problems, Andelson and Dawsey have gone deeply to the source of perennial wisdom and come forth with precise and compelling recommendations for economic policy.

Although the marriage of Marxism and Christian activism was never sanctified by the majority of theologians and laymen in Latin America, the compassionate concern for the conditions of the poor voiced by liberation theologians has received laudable recognition throughout the world. Their movement pointed out that the dilemma of maldistribution of wealth is the Achilles' heel of current capitalist arrangements. A political democracy cannot survive the divisiveness created by an economic aristocracy.

From Wasteland to Promised Land is infused with this same heartfelt urgency, but offers a true third-way approach by showing how wealth can be fairly distributed within a system of free-market rewards to human effort. Furthermore, the book is startling in its revelation that the increasing economic distress of the American lower and middle classes has the same fundamental cause as the plight of the Third World poor.

Underneath the veneer of market economics lies the old Roman land law of *dominium* - the legalization of title to land originally obtained by conquest and plunder. By juxtaposing biblical precepts with the current reality that massive amounts of the land and natural resources of the planet are "owned" by the few to the exclusion of the many, *From Wasteland to Promised Land* irrefutably concludes that solving the "land problem" is the next great challenge to democracy.

Andelson and Dawsey urge the implementation of a highly practical public finance policy which is based on the Judeo-Christian ethic of *Koinonia* - the spiritual perception that the land and material resources of this earth are to be understood as gifts of God to be carefully used for the benefit of all. A quote (from page 104:)

Let those seeking genuine social uplift realize that it takes radical bedrock ethics - not mere poetic fluff - to reaffirm

with all the strength that can be mustered the inspiring words from Psalm 24: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

That the "economics of evil" can be redressed by developmental policies that merely increase the GNP is one of the great economic myths of our times. On the other hand, *From Wasteland to Promised Land* gives a number of encouraging examples of countries which have experienced both an internal regeneration of their economic base and a resultant fairer distribution of wealth. In all cases cited, economic justice in land has played a major role.

Another contribution of this book is to precisely show why Keynesian policies and pump-priming programs must be jettisoned in favor of economic arrangements truly worthy of an advanced democracy.

The policy approach described here will not end all human suffering - but if fully implemented, it can lead us to the promised land of material sufficiency for all. The attainment of this goal is within the grasp of the current world civilization. I must, however, offer one cautionary note to theologians and others who may be interested in this book. Make sure you are ready to take bold action - for once the essence of its message is grasped, there can be no further cause for delay.

From Wasteland to Promised Land, by Robert V. Andelson and James M. Dawsey, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY (Shepherd-Walwyn, London). To order: Robert Shalkenbach Foundation, 41 East 72nd St., New York, NY 10021 (\$16.95 + \$1.50 postage).

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poverty." George's message, that people have the right to the fruits of their own labor, and that the earth belongs to everyone together, can be rephrased in religious language: the land belongs to God, and God intends it for the benefit of all people, who are called to be stewards, not owners, of the land.

Dr. Dawsey quoted Will Durant, saying that the only true revolution is that which changes minds and hearts. He related this to Georgist tax reform, which will become a reality only upon a revolution in the way people think. And that is the whole point of the book he co-authored with Robert Andelson. Only in recent times, for example, has the church in Latin America sided with the poor, dispossessed, and oppressed. Now is the time to present George's most workable of land reforms. Marion Sapiro sparked a heated but productive discussion on how to promote and best use *From Wasteland to Promised Land*. Copies were sold out at the conference by the Robert Shalkenbach Foundation (which has more in stock in New York). Those interested were also urged by Mark Sullivan to contact the New York HGS for a free copy of *Ethical Land Tenure - Interreligious Resource Directory*, put together by Alanna Hartzok.

Dr. Sandler captured and moved the audience with a very personal narrative of his escape from political repression in Argentina. However, many of the young priests and liberation theologians, who advocated revolution, did not escape, and suffered death at the hands of the state. While the political climate is a bit friendlier today in Latin America, much remains to be done. In Argentina and the Dominican Republic, active Georgists are heeding the call.



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