

## Answers to Critics

**HENRY GEORGE: DREAMER OR REALIST?** by Steven B. Cord, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1965. 272 pages. \$6.

In his preface, Professor Cord asks these questions: "Has an accurate image of Henry George and his ideas emerged from the pages of American history and economics? Does a tax on land values have a place in urban renewal today?" and in the book his answers may be boiled down to "no" to the first question and "yes" to the second.

He summarizes the views of economists and historians on Henry George, from the time *Progress and Poverty* was given to the world, down to the present. They are all here — Walker and Sumner, Taussig and Seligman, Beard and Parrington, Heilbroner and Rothbard, and many more.

While these scholars are quite diverse in their outlooks, most of them have one unfortunate trait in common — they have either misread or misinterpreted George. The most frequent misconception is that George wanted to nationalize land. Curiously, many of them have favored some degree of land value taxation; and, as brought out by Professor Cord, another peculiarity is that economists and historians have often privately sympathized with the Georgist philosophy while publicly denouncing it.

We may almost dismiss George's contemporaries, as they reacted with such shock and outrage as to prevent objective analysis. The following generation of academic figures assimilated George a little better, but also misunderstood and underrated him, their evaluation depending on their political stance: if they were "conservative," George wanted too much; if "progressive," he wanted too little.

In the present generation the "progressive" or "liberal" view seems to dominate — so George, instead of being regarded as a wild radical out to uproot the foundations of society, is criticized for expecting too much from a minor fiscal reform.

Professor Cord himself stops short of complete acceptance of the single tax; but he has studied George, does know what he said and didn't say, and strongly favors land value taxation. We may welcome the support of this newcomer to the academic ranks as heartily as we do the support of that "old-timer" advocate of land value taxation (but not single tax), Professor Harry Gunnison Brown.

What of the question implicit in the title of the book? The answer would appear to be that George was *both* dreamer and realist! —R. C.

(Copies of Professor Cord's *Henry George: Dreamer or Realist?* are available from the Henry George School at the special price of \$5 a copy.)

Nearly 100 friends heard Professor Cord on the occasion of the "unveiling" of his book (reviewed above), and many lined up to buy autographed copies. Steve Cord is a born-New Yorker, but he and his Austrian-born wife, who is teaching languages at the same university, enjoy their adopted state. Other visitors from Pennsylvania were George Collins, director of the Philadelphia extension; Wylie Young of the Erie Land Tax Association; and Paul S. Nix, Jr., a trustee of the HGS. Also present were trustee Bill Davidson; Mrs. Ezra Cohen, who established the annual essay contest award in memory of her late husband (see p. 3); Miss V. G. Peterson, executive secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation; and Dr. Henry Gross, Steven Cord's first teacher at HGS.