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LAND, FREEDOM & SOVEREIGNTY:
Seminar Examines Reform Prospects in Pakistan and Estonia

The New York HGS held a special globe-trotting seminar on November 20th, in which two experts acquainted their American audience with the real prospects for land value tax reform in two very different nations.

Javed Malik, a staff correspondent with the News International of Rawalpindi, Pakistan, came to New York to cover the U.N. General Assembly session. Having enriched his understanding of the land-struggles in his native country through correspondence courses with the Henry George Institute, Mr. Malik contacted HGI President Bob Clancy and offered to speak on Pakistan's land-tenure systems during his visit.

Serendipitously, Mr. Olaf Klasen arrived in New York at the same time. Mr. Klasen is an emigré Estonian, a real estate assessor in Vancouver, B.C., and a Georgist who has participated in advisory visits to Russia and eastern Europe over the last two years. Of all those meetings, the greatest receptivity and chance of success came in Estonia. Mr. Klasen's speaking engagement at the school was facilitated by Prof. Steven Cord, who also participated in various Eastern Europe advisory teams.

The economic situations of Estonia and Pakistan probably resemble each other as little as either resembles our own, but the fascinating subtext of the evening's presentations was that the vitality of Henry George's insight is being recognized in both places. People in wildly disparate circumstances are coming to the conclusion that public revenue ought to come from land values. A **most** thought-provoking evening! - *L.D.*

Pakistan: Survival of Feudal Serfdom in the 20th Century

Incredible as it may seem, reported Javed Malik, "In Pakistan we still have a feudal system. It has suffered setbacks, but the process of change has been very slow." Land ownership is exceedingly concentrated, and landowners wield the lion's share of political power. This, in turn, is the major factor which inhibits both social reform and industrial development.

Javed Malik

Olaf Klasen

Pakistani landlords got their land in three distinct historical waves. The first large landholdings were accumulated by Islamic clerics who migrated to the country from central Asia. Local rulers and even common people donated lands to religious leaders, to provide them with a means of support that was free from secular concerns. Land was plentiful in fourteenth century Pakistan, and large tracts were given. Over the years, large Islamic schools became established and ran on income from these lands. But in modern times, Mr. Malik reports, "There is a strong paradox: most of the people who have inherited the lands are not holy men; they do not even practice religion."

The second wave of landownership came when local agents were given land in exchange for services under British rule. The British had authority to cede lands to whomever they wished, as long as only peasants were displaced. The third, and somewhat smaller, class of landlords emerged when elite military and civil servants were rewarded with land after independence in 1947. *(continued on page 6)*

LVT in Eastern Europe: Prospect or Pipedream?

Olaf Klasen began his remarks by asking how many in his audience knew Estonia's location; a surprising percentage (he thought) of this audience did know. Nevertheless, it does not surprise Mr. Klasen that Americans know little about Estonian history; like so many other nations, his native country was subsumed by the Soviet state for most of the 20th century.

In fact, Estonia has known foreign domination for a very long time. Over the years, its land has been held by Danes, Swedes, Finns, Germans and Russians. The name of its capital, Talinn, means "Danish City." In World War II Estonia fought against both the Nazis and the Soviets. Nevertheless, Mr. Klasen stressed that all the ethnic groups in Estonia (many of whom represent former occupying forces) live peaceably together, all participating in free public education, and even in the tense present climate, there have been no abuses of human rights there. Out of a population of 1.6 million, Estonia is home to about half a million ethnic Russians. While it is true that the Russians are currently denied suffrage, the only requirement for gaining the right to vote is to learn the Estonian language. This makes perfect sense, Mr. Klasen asserted, considering Estonia's beleaguered history. For the most *(continued on Page 7)*

This fall brought to a close a long and fruitful collaboration between the school and Dr. Albert Alexander, who, along with Stan Rubenstein, ran the High School Urban Workshop. Al, a retired New York City high school teacher of economics and Executive Director of the New York City Council of Economic Education, which co-sponsored the Workshop, retired after 20 years.

The High School Urban Workshop is a venue for young adults to learn about college opportunities and the job market. Those attending the workshop leave with a more comprehensive idea of the "real world" and are better equipped to enter it. Every Workshop has had one or more guest speakers from the professional world and a speaker from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The Workshop, which for the last five years has been held in conjunction with Baruch College, has provided a valuable place for students to make contacts with the world of business and get an accurate reading of the economic climate.

During the last Workshop, held at the school on December 10, Stan Rubenstein, who, besides co-chairing the Workshop is also a board member of the Henry George School, presented Al with a placque honoring his many years of service and dedication. "Al has been one of the most cooperative individuals I've ever worked with. His general knowledge and contacts with speakers throughout the city has given the Workshops the success they have had over the years", said Stan. - *David Domke*