

Jack Schwartzman

1912 - 2001

David Domke

Noted scholar, author, editor, college professor and Henry George School Member Trustee Dr. Jack Schwartzman passed away on November 30. Jack, who had taught for 30 years at Nassau Community College, had a scholarship established in his name, the Dr. Jack Schwartzman Learning Disabled Award, in 1991. Jack also had a long and distinguished association with the Henry George School for more than 60 years, where he taught for many years and was elected a Member Trustee. Jack was also Editor-in-Chief of the scholarly publication *Fragments*, an individualist review inspired by such thinkers as Henry David Thoreau, Leo Tolstoy and Albert Jay Nock. Three other School Board members, Sydney Mayers, Oscar Johannsen and Irving Starer also sit on the review's editorial board.

As a young child, Jack and his family fled revolutionary Russia, and this experience left an indelible mark on him and was behind his fervent commitment to individualism and freedom. One of Jack's most popular writings was *Henry George, Emma Lazarus and Liberty*, an essay, published in pamphlet form, outlining the precepts of Henry George and comparing them to the 19th century American poet Emma Lazarus, whose words are quoted on the Statue of Liberty.

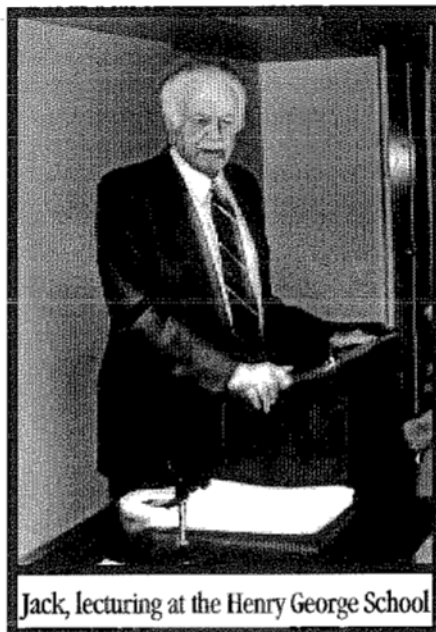
The essay, still available from the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, was written in 1997 in commemoration of the hundredth anniversary of the death of Henry George. Jack wrote that George and Lazarus, who both "achieved fame and international recognition for their association with the concept of liberty" were "voices of Liberty, dreamers of justice, symbols of Eternal Hope." Jack went on to compare both writers' views on immigration, seeing both of them as anti-Malthusian.

Jack, biographical entries on whom appear in *Who's Who in the World* and other editions in the *Who's Who* series, was born in 1912 in Ukraine, which was then part of Rus-

sia. His family fled Russia in 1922 and later settled in the U.S. in the late '20s.

Jack also served in the U.S. Army during World War II, rising from private to captain and receiving an Army Commendation Medal for what the army termed "extraordinary skill and application to his task."

In 1949, he wrote *Rebels of Individualism*, of which a reviewer in the *Chicago Daily News* claimed "[it is] as powerful an appeal for individualism as I have ever read." He was also known for the much acclaimed and often reprinted



Jack, lecturing at the Henry George School

prose poem *Lilacs*.

Jack had two doctorates to his name, a Ph.D. from NYU and a law degree from Brooklyn Law School. He practiced law in New York State for 55 years, retiring in 1993. He was professor of English at Nassau Community College, N.Y., and in 1974 won the New York State's Chancellor's Award for Excellence in Teaching. In 1975, he was appointed to the state-wide Distinguished Professorship Review Committee. Jack retired from teaching at the age of 82 with the rank of Professor Emeritus. "Upon your retirement, you rightfully assume the designation Legend" wrote the president of Nassau Community College, Dr. Sean Fanelli.

Jack taught numerous classes at HGS, initiating a one year course on the great economic thinkers. Long time HGS student Don LeVor, who became a student of Jack's after the 2nd World War and remained a lifelong friend, recalls, "Jack was

sort of the St. Paul of the Henry George Movement. He really kept it going." Don also remembers Jack for his prodigious feats of memory. "He had a terrific memory. He could memorize an entire page of the New York City telephone book. He'd study it for two minutes then hand it over to someone. That person could ask Jack the phone number of anyone one on that page and Jack would remember it," Don recalls. Don also says that Jack's classes were so popular at HGS "they had to be held in the auditorium on 69th St., which was considerably larger than the one the School has now."

Mike Curtis, the School's Director of Education remembers, "When I first started teaching at the Henry George School, there were a few very bright students who said they weren't interested in the moral aspects of political economy, only the economics — only cause and effect. And to that Jack Schwartzman declared: 'they won't be around this movement very long.' Well, 30 years have come and gone since I heard him utter that prediction, and I can't think of anyone who has been active in this movement for more than a couple of years, who wasn't motivated by moral principles. Jack was right."

Fellow Member Trustee Simon Winters remembered Jack's intellectual prowess: "His was an aspiring and principled intellect that would not be compromised by his physical being."

Such was Jack's renown that in 1991 Thomas S. Gulotta, County Executive of Nassau proclaimed March 22 (Jack's birthday) of that year Jack Schwartzman Day. A similar proclamation was issued on Jack's 85th birthday in 1997.

Jack will be sorely missed by the Henry George School, the Georgist movement, and all who had the privilege of knowing him.

To summarize the moral and economic philosophy of Henry George: Ethics is not merely a polite injunction of behavior, such as etiquette; or a rigid commandment of obedience... It is the Golden Rule itself. Without the adherence to the eternal principles of proper economic distribution; without conformity to the time-honored precepts of justice and natural rights, the Georgist philosophy becomes meaningless. "Single-Tax," "LVT," "communal collection of rent" - these are merely methodological phrases; they are but means to the end itself; and that end is justice. Jack Schwartzman - *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 1986