

George was a devotee of Jeffersonian democracy. That, when one thinks about it, is less a theory of democracy and more a theory of natural rights. Human nature encompasses certain basic desires. In the *Declaration of Independence* Thomas Jefferson enumerates them as "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness".

**Natural rights are those rights which allow human beings to express or fulfill their nature. George believed in a society which achieved happiness and fulfilment through the provision of those rights.**

Now eco-taxes and other behaviour management regimes — called social engineering — are a far cry from this. They work from an entirely different basis. They work 'from above' and not 'from below'. Here the happiness of society comes from ever more extensive social control. The clever and inventive devices of experts (eco-taxes, tradable rights, etc) rest upon an appeal to selfishness not to unselfishness.

Such an approach is not Georgist. One is again reminded about the joke from Stalinist Russia in the 1930s of someone who is told about all the delights of life under the Five Year Plans. He agrees it will be paradise but says he would not want to live there! We are fast approaching that situation in the West.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Without a painstaking absorption of first principles alien ideas enter more easily. The current renaming of the movement as *Geoism* can help to take it

farther away and faster than ever from its first principles.

But this leads us to ask why not make the first principles of Georgism the strategy? Certainly Georgists have to be aware of them. When Georgism first appeared the best way of defeating it was, as Tolstoy suggests, to ignore it. How much worse is it when Georgists ignore Henry George? If asked when they had last read a work of Henry George, his biography or an authoritative study of his philosophy, almost all Georgists would have to say decades ago, or never!

But why not give the tax case a bit of a rest and give some attention to the basic principles of Georgism? After all, most opponents of Georgism are opponents not because they cannot accept land value taxation, but because they reject its underlying principles. Plying the tax case gives opponents an opportunity to conceal what they are really rejecting.

Do most social problems come from our claim to own land? Is this claim wrong? Then why not say so? After all, slavery was not removed by talk of its "externalities". It was wrong in principle and abolitionists said so!

**While ever teaching is subsumed under some promotional strategy we are going to have Georgists who are not in touch with basic principles — and who may in fact not accept them. How easy it is for such people to end up running the movement!**

## **LIONEL BOORMAN'S PASSING**

It is still hard to accept that one of our closest associates, Lionel Boorman, has passed on. Lionel died on 4 March, 2003, aged 92. The son of a country school teacher, he joined the Georgist movement in 1939 while working as an intelligence officer (Warrant Officer) at the Cowra POW camp.

As well as advising those who made a television mini-series *The Cowra Outbreak* — the largest in history — his close connection with events drew military historians to his doorstep. It might be said that, by virtue of playing chess with some of the Italian inmates, he became aware of the impending outbreak and informed the camp commandant. Unfortunately, beyond bringing in much-needed equipment the warning was disregarded.

Lionel was admitted as a solicitor in 1938 and was a life member of the Law Society. He became a partner in the city law firm of Booth and Boorman after the War and served as honorary solicitor to both the Association for Good Government and the NSW Henry George Foundation Ltd for over 50 years until his retirement in the early 1990s. Lionel also served as honorary solicitor to the Eastwood Bowling Club for 27 years. Lionel was also a long time member of

Amnesty International. Lionel passionately believed and was a keen advocate of the philosophy of Henry George, principally writing letters overseas to colleagues and to the newspapers. He supported Fred Harrison's Russian campaign and, recently, land reform through the Scottish Parliament, sending much information to Scotland about our rating system.

Lionel contributed a long Affidavit to the NSW Attorney General regarding the origins of the NSW Henry George Foundation Ltd and was interested in the outcome of the Carr Trust case. The judgement in favour of the charitable status of that trust owes much to Lionel's efforts.

Lionel loved music, his favourite composer was Beethoven. He also composed music — one of his pieces was played at his funeral. Lionel had a full and happy life though the loss of his wife May and of his daughter Nancy at a relatively early age were blows which struck him hard. Throughout his life he valued a sense of humour and once told me that he was always a little wary of someone who had no sense of humour.

I am indebted for much of the information above to

the fine address given by Lionel's surviving daughter, Judith. She concluded her address this way to the large gathering who attended the funeral. "Of Lionel Brownhill Boorman, who was a husband, a father,

*father-in-law, grandfather, great-grandfather, a brother, an uncle, colleague, adversary and friend, may your memories be happy ones."*

— Richard Giles

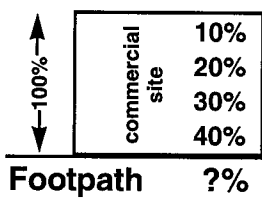
## FOOTPATH DINING FEES

by John Collins

The following short article was originally in the form of a letter to members of the Gosford Council 10 February, 2003:

Cafe owners have lobbied Gosford City Council to reduce the fees for footpath dining. Councillors must decide in the public interest what is the appropriate revenue council receives from the Australian and foreign wholesalers and retailers who profit from the commercial exploitation of prime public land.

As the guardian of public assets, council has a duty to the public to charge at least the full market rent per square metre at commercial rates for commercially exploited public space. Any competent valuer can estimate the rental value of a commercial site bearing in mind its location and other factors such as relative advantages provided by the community. When estimating the rental value of *public land* adjacent to commercial premises, it is helpful to consider the relative value of different sections *within* the commercial site.



This diagram gives an approximation used by valuers for this purpose. One hundred per cent equals the total rental value of the whole site.

Relative advantage puts the rental value of the front quarter of the shop at 40 per cent of the rental value of the whole.

It follows from this that the rental value of a square metre on the footpath far exceeds the rental value of the best square metre in the shop. Most cafe operators concede this and some even openly admit (or claim) their businesses would not be viable without a publicly funded subsidy in the form of cheap or *nil* rent.

Such subsidies encourage further encroachments and give the recipients an unfair advantage over their competitors who provide *al fresco* dining on their own private land. It would be wrong for council to reward those who enclose the common for private profit.

When a council gives the owner of commercial premises "rent assistance" to exploit public land for private profit, it is making a gift that enhances the resale value of the commercial premises. The tax office might be interested in the accountability of this unearned windfall.

## REAL ESTATE PRICES SOAR

by Frank Pinder

At the present time "advisors" aplenty are alive with their seminars inviting you to secure your financial future by investing in real estate.

The price is escalating, stimulated by the banks and moneylenders advancing up to 100 per cent of the purchase price. The constantly escalating real estate prices brought on by this avalanche of credit helps to safeguard their loans.

Those desperately optimistic people moving into home ownership seem blissfully unaware that future job uncertainty in the ongoing years of mortgage repayments may leave them victim to the banks and moneylenders, the mortgagees.

Johnny Howard's jubilant statement that 'Never was there a time so opportune for people to own their own home for now the interest rate is so low' avoids the mention of the alarming rise in real estate prices.

***"I believe that Henry George was one of the really great thinkers produced by our country."***

— Franklin D. Roosevelt