

## Henry George Condensed

By LEO GREENWALD

**H**ENRY GEORGE was not an economist; he was not a fiscal or agrarian reformer; he was a social philosopher. He was interested in just one thing—justice. In that he was not alone—not the first—nor the last.

Everyone is interested in justice and each person has his own definition. Mine is: "When a man gets what he deserves, he is getting justice." Henry George was interested because he saw injustice and poverty all around. He knew men who worked all their lives and had nothing to show for it. Others were starving because they couldn't get jobs.

He analyzed this and found there was poverty because there was privilege. Some men were in a position to extract from others the fruits of their labor. There was monopolization of land. He found that was due to private collection of economic rent. What do I mean by rent? That is the big question and it has stumped all of us. Henry George saw that the only way to correct these evils was through the community collection of that rent. Without community collection of rent you can't have justice or freedom or a good stable society. The law of human progress depends upon association in equality, and you can't have that without collection of economic rent. This gives students a brief outline of George's philosophy.

Then I get back to rent. What is it? I say, "Rent is the measure of the desirability of land, regardless of the purpose for which it is used." Rent is part of the price you must pay for living in society. There are two requirements for living with our fellow men: cooperation and conformity. Every man has a right to live, but from society's point of view, this is a privilege. The story of the Savannah in *Progress and Poverty* gives the whole story about rent. The Ode to Liberty enlarges upon it. Henry George was a great believer in the rights of man. There was nothing communistic about him or his philosophy. Even if students fail to come back after the first lesson at least they should know we are not a communistic organization.