HENRY GEORGE NEWSLETTER

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SPRING SEMINAR TO EXPLORE ECONOMIC CRISES

The New York School has announced plans for its annual seminar series beginning May 2. Every Wednesday evening for six weeks, "Economic Crises in the Eighties" will present a panel discussion on a basic issue in the news. These programs are free and open to the public.

The series kicks off with a session on world hunger -- focusing especially on the ongoing African famine which has received scant attention in the media. Meghan Keita of Church World Service, and Ken Hackett of Catholic Relief Service's Africa Division will examine the questions of trade vs. aid and how conditions can be improved beyond shipping care packages.

The following Wednesday, May 9, the deregulation of American industries will be explored, with a primary focus on the airline industry. John Kerrigan (Transport Worker's Union) and Noah Furman (Consumer Cause, Inc.) will debate the pros and cons of deregulation; whether lower prices now mean unemployment later.

The feasibility of a national industrial policy will be the topic of the May 16 program. A number of presidential candidates have espoused the wisdom of such a plan, often referring to Japan's emergence in high-tech industries as a prime example. Others have maintained that the government is already meddling too much in the marketplace. Steven Wooley of the United States Chamber of Commerce and Dr. Edwin Reubens of the City University of New York will offer differing views on the subject.

On May 23, Mark Bazin and Dr. Oscar Johannsen will examine the international debt crisis. Mr. Bazin represents the World Bank at the United Nations. Dr. Johannsen is the vice president of the HGS and a banking expert.

The question of how to finance the restoration of our crumbling infrastructure is the topic of the May 30 program. Tony Shorris of the New York City Office of Management and Budget and the author of the city's ten-year-plan for financing public works will share the podium with Dr. Lowell Harriss, the distinguished Columbia University economist.

The last program, June 6, will present alternative solutions to many of the problems explored in the previous programs. HGS Director Stan Rubenstein will speak at the finale.

Additional speakers may be added as program details are finalized.

The spring seminar series is offered to help HGS graduates further their understanding of our economy and the basic social problems of our day. It is also of considerable interest to the members of organizations concerned with the above topics.

A complete schedule of the series is on page four.

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EDITORIAL

Our editorial column, during the past several years, has attempted to analyze and evaluate the important issues of the day. Although our interpretation of the news has, at times, bred disagreement, it has invariably shown light on the unlimited scope of the Georgist philosophy.

During the same few years, newspapers, television programs and news magazines have carried aspects of our concern, but have not conveyed our major concepts. Other ideologies, possessed of limited value, received better coverage than important aspects of Georgism. This pattern has been duplicated in books, in conversation and in the political arena. How can we become more effective, improve our techniques and attract more leaders?

In order to spark a dialogue on this subject among Georgists, we will devote this column, from time to time, to "guest editorialists". We have reiterated our message here often enough. Now, how do we get it beyond our borders?

We invite you to spell out any plans you feel the movement should pursue -- a blueprint, if you will. Let your ideas be the topic at various board meetings and conferences. The Henry George Schools and related organizations have, collectively, several hundred years of experience. That we have survived is as much a tribute to the dedication of Georgists as it is to the ideas we espouse.

We'd like to hear from Georgists who have given some thought to the following: Are there projects that Georgist organizations can develop together, so that we can, perhaps, pool our resources? Can we, as individual Georgists, cooperate effectively with programs not developed by ourselves?

How healthy is it for the movement if groups and individuals continue to work scattershot in many different directions? What is the record of our accomplishments and how ready are we to face the challenges of the computer and video age? Although limited in number, our skills and talents are varied -- how can we make better use of them?

Tough questions that require tough answers.

Guest editorials that speak to these questions and others that pertain to our future and direction will appear in this space. Are we laying a firm groundwork for the next century -- only 16 years away? Let us hear from you.

--Stan Rubenstein

School Notes

NEW YORK

The New York State Council for the Social Studies will hold its annual meeting at the Nevele Hotel, April 2 - 4. The New York School will offer a seminar entitled, "Henry George, the Working Man and Taxes." Faculty members Barry Smith and Dave Norflus will conduct the seminar, which deals with George's ideas as they relate to the working class, homeowners and taxpayers.

LONG ISLAND

As a result of the response the New York School has received from an outreach program which sent Georgist materials to more than 200 religious leaders, the Long Island extension has targetted a number of influential clergymembers in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Al Fink will be coordinating these activities, which will include mailing literature now being developed for this purpose in New York, as well as the information packets sent out in the first November mailings.

The Long Island program differs from previous religious outreach efforts in that it is attempting to connect with individual clerics, with an eye toward eventually focusing on the land question from the pulpit.

BOSTON

Director Mitch Chanelis recently participated in a week-long conference sponsored by the Institute for Community Economics. The conference focused on community land trusts. Chanelis was a panelist during the conference's most important presentation, Housing: The Need for Reform, responding to a paper presented by Chester Hartman, the well-known advocate of housing reform.

LOS ANGELES

The initial "Final Friday" debate, on the rights of animals, attracted more than 100 people to the Los Angeles Press Club last month. Plans have been announced to continue the series throughout the spring. The next program will be held on March 30, at 7:15. Call (213) 352-4141 for further details.

PHILADELPHIA

Board member Edward J. Dodson published an article in the January 4th issue of Focus. Entitled "Creating a Better Model to Solve Urban Ills," the article examined alternative urban strategies in our current "zero sum" economic environment.

"The clear zero sum strategy for the urban center," Dodson writes, "is to greatly reduce tax levels to a point where they have a comparative advantage over suburban competitor communities."

Dodson contends that the location values of urban land offers a viable tax base for needed revenue. Moreover, it further tilts the scales away from the suburbs.

Owners of centrally-located sites, Dodson writes, would realize substantial benefits by putting their land to intensive use. In addition:

--New employment opportunities would be created.
--Land taxes would be capitalized into lower land prices.
--The cost of tax collection would drop significantly.
--Properly-assessed land would attract development based on its best economic use.