

HENRY GEORGE NEWSLETTER

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SANTO DOMINGO HOSTS 1992 CONFERENCE

Media Covers Meeting with President Balaguer

This year's annual conference of the Council of Georgist Organizations enjoyed a far higher level of visibility and prominence than Georgists are accustomed to! No, you didn't see coverage on



President Balaguer with Richard Noyes and Lucy Silfa

Mark Sullivan

CNN, but had you been watching the local TV stations in Santo Domingo, you would have seen Lucy Silfa, George Collins, and other Georgists interviewed on five separate occasions prior to the opening ceremonies on June 17th.

There were a number of firsts at this conference. The conference was listed in the official registry of national events marking the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's voyage. Most of the members of the City Council of Santo Domingo attended a seminar on land and public revenue. Three prominent visitors, George Collins, Richard Noyes, and Ed Dodson, were presented with mayoral proclamations naming them "Distinguished Visitors" to the city. The conference was covered prominently in all three of the capital city's three daily newspapers. And a delegation of Georgists was received by the president of the Dominican Republic, Joaquín Balaguer.

The credit for this hard-won prominence in the Dominican dialogue goes to Lucy Silfa, director of the Dominican *Escuela Ciencias Sociales Henry George*, who has worked incessantly since 1966 establishing the school in her troubled and impoverished home city. As George Collins reported in his article on the Santo Domingo HGS's 25th anniversary

celebration last year (see the Nov.-Dec. '91 HGN,) "...the school has educated thousands in every sphere of life on the virtue of Georgist land reform.... A devoted core of volunteers have reached out from the Santo Domingo school in every direction." Many of these volunteers attended Lucy's classes 20 or 25 years ago and have gone on to prominent positions in society. One distinguished alumnus is Pedro Bretón, General Administrator of the Agricultural Bank. Bretón authored an impressive op-ed piece in the newspaper *Hoy*, and was the conference's keynote speaker at its official public opening session.

My first encounter with Lucy Silfa's boundless energy came when I arrived, on the afternoon of Sunday, June 14th. As soon as we touched ground, HGS Director George Collins was whisked off to a TV studio for an interview. Doña Lucy (as she is called in her hometown,) was expected at the TV station, and she delivered. There was no time to relax, but they got the interview. Everywhere she goes in the city, Doña Lucy seems to receive the respect and admiration of a survivor, a mentor, and a tireless worker for economic justice.

On Tuesday June 15th, the day before most of the conferees arrived in the country, a special seminar was presented by George Collins at the National Library. The audience was composed of members of the city council, some of whom were graduates of the Henry George School. The seminar focused on the issues and implications of taxation and public revenue in an urban setting. New York HGS student Cyla Gurewicz shared translation chores with Lucy Silfa

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Gathering Extends the Georgist Family

A Georgist Conference serves many purposes. In addition to attracting others who are new to the paradigm of Henry George, the North American Conference serves as an annual reunion of an extended family whose binding ties are that of a common cause. That cause is well expressed in the motto of the conference sponsor, the Council of Georgist Organizations: *To liberate production from taxation, the earth from monopoly, and humanity from poverty.* The slogan was borrowed, in the spirit of common cause, from a member of the Council, the Intermountain Single Tax Association.

Most of the sessions at the June 1992 Conference in Santo Domingo reflected in some way this common purpose and motto. Thursday morning, June 17th, was taken up with an orientation on the history of the Dominican Republic - a history of taxation, monopoly, and poverty rooted in invasion, conquest, slavery and



foreign intervention. Dr. Fernando Perez Memen, friend of the Dominican *Escuela Henry George*, covered his subject with great skill, spanning five centuries beginning with the landing of Columbus on Hispaniola. (See page seven.)

How to better get the message across - to deal with these issues of taxation, monopoly, and poverty - underscored Thursday evening's gathering. Dr. Donald Hurford led a demonstration of

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(403) 242-4291**THE PROGRESS OF POVERTY: CONFEREES LEARN
ABOUT THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**

On Thursday morning, June 17th, Georgists from several countries, mostly the United States, gathered in an air-conditioned room in the Hotel Santo Domingo for a "Brief Orientation on the History of the Dominican Republic (1492-1992)." Dr. Fernando Perez Memem underscored the importance of Dominican relations to Haiti, which shares the island of Hispaniola (or *Quisqueya*, as the natives once called it), and to the United States, which cast more than its shadow upon the small struggling Republic.

Hispaniola was colonized by Christopher Columbus, whose brother in 1496 founded Santo Domingo as the first European city in the western hemisphere. African slavery, begun by Columbus to replace the dying native population, continued on Hispaniola until its abolition in 1809. At the time the Spanish colony, which had been ceded to France in 1895, had already been conquered by the forces of Toussaint L'Ouverture, the former African slave who led Haiti, formerly St. Dominique, in its struggle for independence from France. Santo Domingo proclaimed its independence from Haiti on February 27, 1844, under the leadership of Juan Pablo Duarte. A series of military-supported governments and struggles with Haiti and Spain ensued.

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the United States exerted an ever-increasing influence over the Republic, whose businessmen had gotten into deep debt financing several wars against Haiti. Between 1916 and 1924, the Dominican-American Conventions legitimized intervention on the part of the US President, who was empowered to pay the Dominicans' debts to various banks in return for one big debt payable by the DR to the US government. One method used was a customs duty on Dominican imports: 55% paid to the US government, 45% to the Dominican government. Civil war broke out, a legitimate condition under the Conventions for US military intervention. This left the DR with a higher debt than before, to pay for US supervised infrastructure, education, and health services. Poverty and unrest continued after the troops withdrew.

One result of the intervention was the rise to power of General Rafael

Leonidas Trujillo Molina, who had been trained in a US/DR military academy. Trujillo's "messianic inclinations", said Dr. Memem, led to his sacrificing freedom to order. He was the first and only Dominican President ever to pay off the national debt in full. Yet, at the time of his assassination in 1961, he had let the debt rise again, to \$11 million. Today the debt has grown to over \$4 billion, "so large as to be unpayable."

The unstable period following Trujillo's death fueled further intervention by a US government that feared a communist takeover inspired by Castro in neighboring Cuba. According to Dr. Memem, there was little basis for such a fear.

Critical of the US over-reaction, the Organization of American States sent in a peace-keeping force to replace US troops. Joaquín Balaguer was inaugurated president on July 1, 1966, and OAS troops had all withdrawn by September 21, 1966.

During the question period, Dr. Memem responded to Bob Clancy and spoke of how in 1850 and 1869 attempts were made by some Dominicans to interest the US government in annexing the Dominican Republic into the Union. The US dropped the idea when a study commissioned by President Grant indicated that annexation was sponsored by only a few Dominicans for selfish ends, and was opposed by most Dominicans.

On Friday morning, at the conference meeting at the Dominican Central Bank, up-to-date statistics were presented by Lucy Silfa, "World Bank confirms that the poverty levels have been increasing - 4.6 million classified as poor in this half, which they share with Haiti. 37% are very poor."

Half of all Dominicans now live below the poverty level; another 30% are classified as having unsafe drinking water, Ms. Silfa told us, and went on to say that, in spite of some improvements since 1989, poverty has increased: 24.1% have no access to radio; 34.8% have no access to a refrigerator; 71% have no telephone; 34.9% have no stove; and 83% have no vehicle of their own.

"Logical results of a system that was



Canadian Georgists have lost one of their leading lights. John Craig Cringan died on Tuesday, May 19, 1992 at 7:30 PM after suffering a massive heart attack. He was sixty-four years old. Craig had suffered from angina over the years and was in the hospital for a month before his death.

We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Craig's children and to Mary, his wife of forty-four years.

Craig served for many years as the Director of the Toronto branch of the School of Economic Science, a Henry George School affiliate in Canada. He was also active in other Georgist organizations, including Henry George Institute, International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, and Council of Georgist Organizations. Craig's family has invited friends to make donations in his memory to the Georgist organization of their choice.

Many of us came to know Craig and Mary by attending Georgist conferences over the years. At one conference Craig presented an intriguing approach to learning economic principles, a computer chessboard game he developed and called *LANDGAME*. The game could be played either with a land value (only) tax, or with a land-and-building tax. The tax used determined the best strategy to follow: to develop or to speculate.

Craig was in many ways an individualist among individualists. His letters and articles reveal an independent mind that valued free inquiry into truth, as these excerpts show.

From a letter to Mark Sullivan, 4-4-91:

...my antipathy for land speculators is exceeded only by my hatred of taxes. I positively detest doing my income tax, comparing it to the sadistic orgies of a certain oriental potentate in old times who would entertain his guests by having one of the slaves commit hari-kari by disemboweling himself in everyone's view. To me the self-assessed income tax amounts to forcing an entire populace

Craig Cringan

to commit a similar indignity to itself. ...I still think that, within any reasonable limits, a shift of taxation from anything else to land values is not going to reduce land prices and it might even increase them...

The way I see it, any shift of taxes from production to land will cause rents to increase by the exact amount of the tax shift.... taking the brakes off production will produce increased business activity and a fairly constant proportion of the increased wealth will go into rent, producing an actual increase in land values.

In this scenario, the only way that land values would fall would be if the government both takes in increasing proportion of total wealth, and if it spends this wealth in ways which society finds to be of lower value than private expenditures.

From The Three Legs of Privilege, 11-90:

In the nineteenth century, the total taxes collected by all levels of government amounted to less than 20% of the economy. Now they amount to around 46% in the United States and 52% in parts of Canada. Cynics will remark, "Thank goodness we are not getting all the government we pay for."

Some government funds get given out to big companies in 50 million dollar chunks as bribes to relocate their plants in locations selected by political rather than economic considerations. Then there are the enormous "research grants" given to companies whose principal talent is being able to get these grants....

The land-tax solution proposed by Henry George is a technique rather than an economic fundamental. The fundamentals here are that privileges are abhorrent and that the resources of Nature are for everybody, for the people and other creatures, in this and in all future generations. When people learn to accept these fundamental truths, they will be ready for the techniques needed to implement a poverty-free society. The principal one of these techniques is a single tax on land.

in society. It is our duty to change... to apply the correct medicine. Henry George, in his masterwork *Progress and Poverty*, has shown the way."



The Editor wishes to thank Susan Klingelhoef of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation for providing some of the conference notes used in this report.

EDITOR'S NOTES

The 1992 Georgist Conference is the general focus of this issue. Lindy Davies and I hope we have been able to capture the essence of the 1992 North American gathering, giving some of the shining details a more in-depth focus. We by no means claim to have covered all facets, and we ask pardon of anyone who was not but should have been mentioned. Readers can get a more complete picture by supplementing our coverage with that in the latest issues of *The Georgist Journal* (Henry George Institute, 121 E. 30th St., New York, NY 10016) and *Groundswell* (Common Ground USA, 2000 Century Plaza #238, Columbia, MD 21044).

We congratulate all associates of *Escuela Ciencias Sociales Henry George* and the Council of Georgist Organizations for binding closer together Spanish and English-speaking students and advocates of Henry George. ¡Muchas gracias!

Dr. Jack Schwartzman continues to speak. Before delivering a thought-provoking talk on Columbus at the Santo Domingo Conference, Jack spoke to The Discussion Club of St. Louis, Missouri on May 21st this year, on "The Omelet and the Eggs: The Sequel." Georgist friend and stalwart Stanley A. Frederiksen, of the Public Revenue Education Council, helped arrange the engagement. Jack also appears in the 1992-93 edition of *Who's Who in American Education*. Latest news: Jack, abetted by Fannie De Noto, Oscar B. Johannsen, and Sydney Mayers (the latter two being HGS trustees and teachers), is planning to revive the individualist review, *Fragments*.

Dr. Oscar B. Johannsen, meanwhile, has had a letter to the editor published in the May 13, 1992 edition of *The Star-Ledger*, his local paper in Roselle Park, New Jersey. Under a cartoon of a skeletal horse-and-rider over flaming Los Angeles ruins, headlined "Opportunity denied breeds unrest," is Oscar's letter:

Over 100 years ago, Henry George in his magnum opus "Progress and Poverty," asked "whence shall come the new barbarians? Go through the squalid quarters of great cities, and you may see, even now, their gathering hordes! How shall learning perish? Men will cease to read, and books will kindle fires and be turned into cartridges!"

He pointed out that men "must have liberty to avail themselves of the opportunities and means of life; they must stand on equal terms with reference to the bounty of nature. Either this, or Liberty withdraws (continued on page seven)

initiated in our country five hundred years ago when Christopher Columbus brought men with no mentalities," Lucy commented to the televised session. "We are now Georgists in the Dominican Republic.... In Rio de Janeiro, they said the earth is sick, but it is us, the men and women who are sick, and it is us who have to straighten our minds to cure the illness

Flying in, over transparent waters, and lush green hills, one notices very few paved roads. I saw one main highway, which amounted to a two-lane blacktop: that was it. My seat-mate on the flight was an American businessman who provided a micro-cosmic look at inter-American trade. He runs a specialty-feather plant in the Dominican Republic; his employees dye, cut, and glue feathers, mainly for costumes in the U.S. Because of the country's infrastructure problems, this type of low-tech industry is representative of those American companies that set up shop here. There are advantages: top pay for a line worker is 75¢ an hour. Safety or pollution regulations? There are none at all. "We supply them with dust masks, but many don't use them," he said. This gentleman, who visits his plant every week or two, used to keep a two-bedroom apartment in Santo Domingo for about \$60 a month, but he gave it up, and now stays at hotels. "After a hot, sweaty day in that place," he said, "I wanted to be sure I could have a shower."



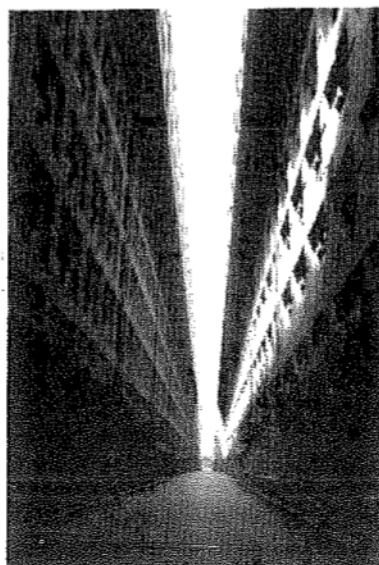
Show up at any beach where tourists gather, and meet the peddlers! At *Juan Dolio* I was offered the following goods and services: Jewelry. T-shirts. Sunglasses. Coconuts. Fresh shellfish. More Jewelry. Leather belts and sunvisors. Carved Dolls. More Jewelry. Fresh mangoes. To have my hair beaded and braided. Still more jewelry. Because there are so many people selling essentially the same goods, persistence must replace personability as a sales technique. But the peddlers I met were not without either charm or ethics, and on the whole rather seemed to enjoy the challenge of their work. There certainly are established protocols. The fresh shellfish guy interrupted the woman trying to sell me her hairstyling. She excused herself, and proceeded to dress the poor fellow down for interrupting. Accepting his error, the man apologized - to her - and went on his way.

A VISIT TO



Although the quality of its housing is often appallingly poor, Santo Domingo has no homeless people sleeping in its streets. People can find enough lumber to nail together some sort of a shelter, squatting on marginal urban land. Electricity and running water are harder to come by, but the capital city is notorious for its unreliable public services anyway. Even though a considerable amount of repair work has been pushed through in preparation for this year's Columbus anniversary celebrations (and the travel brochures promise that water, electricity and roads are all up to snuff,) Santo Domingo rarely spends a full day without some large-scale power outage.

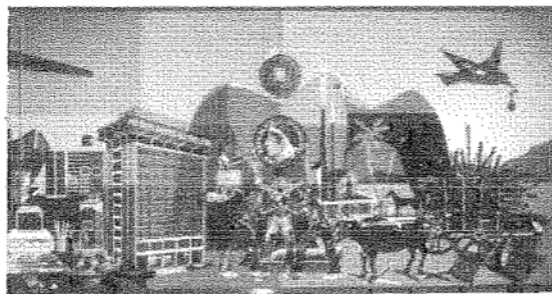
The "Columbus Lighthouse" cost over fifty million dollars; had it been built in a better-paid labor market it would have cost four or five times that. The government of Italy contributed a \$15 million solar-powered lighting array - to ensure that the lighthouse would be a perpetual beacon, without having to depend on the municipal power system. There are no parking lots around the monument. Then again, busloads of foreigners don't require parking lots, just paved strips for buses to unload on, which the monument does have. Apparently the designers do not expect great numbers of local visitors. The "Dominican Tourist Newspaper" notes that the Lighthouse "is in an area well-suited to tourist and recreational uses...right in the center of the *Mirador East Park*, the second-largest park in the city...." Local citizens can be seen using the park. Unfortunately there are no other park facilities, just a stand of evergreens. Many people were resting in the shade of those trees; I guess that qualifies as recreation.



QUISQUEYA



In the poor *barrios*, hundreds of the knocked-together houses have become local taverns: all that is required to start such an enterprise are some bottles of liquor, some glasses and some stools. Obtaining a liquor license is not a problem. There seems to be a kind of informal, homespun democratic spirit at work in this country. The wealthy live in fortified luxury with their own generators, and drive well-appointed automobiles; but they are very few. The masses of people cram into their rattletrap cars (or ride the crowded, careening buses,) take inexpensive beer and plantains at local stands, and congregate on stoops with the entire neighborhood, listening to music on somebody's boom-box, exchanging news.



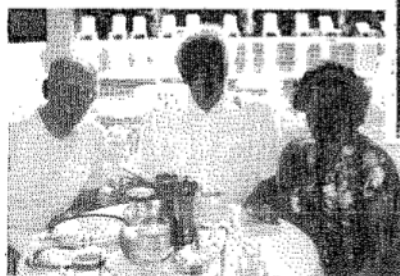
Georgists usually expect their conference lodging to be in a rather spartan dormitory. How ironic to find ourselves in an enclave of opulence: a five-star hotel with room service, nightclub, casino, mini-bars in the rooms, and olympic-size pool! It only costs a little more to go first-class - but the fact is that a five-star hotel was the only place we could have been housed in any semblance of comfort. Looking after a sizable group of foreign visitors, and moving them from place to place, is a herculean task. Whenever we rode a yellow schoolbus, an HGS volunteer came along in a car. This allowed a few Georgists to be spared the discomfort of the bus, but the real reason for the car became evident the morning our bus ran out of gas. Silvio was not really surprised when that happened. "Accomplishing a conference, here," he said, shaking his head, "is very precarious."



A military presence is evident in every public facility; including the airport. Uniformed soldiers stand guard at the doors of the cavernous room that houses the customs lines. Everyone (unless they have some sort of official status) waits outside, lining a guardrail for an eighth of a mile, waiting for their people to emerge, one by one, from the guarded doorway. It is difficult for a visitor to determine whether uniformed personnel belong to the army or the police. In any case, guards in fatigues, bearing rifles, also stand guard at the Library, at the Central Bank, and even in the street outside the hotel. Many are quite young. There doesn't appear to be much reaction to these military guards, pro or con - they are just always present.



PRACTICE RANDOM KINDNESS
AND SENSELESS ACTS OF BEAUTY.



Toward the end of the conference week, Lucy Silfa got a call from the wife of one of her stalwarts, asking when she might be able to see her husband again. The Henry George School of Santo Domingo is fortified by a spirited, patient, dynamic and committed group of volunteers, and although no one is as indefatigable as Doña Lucy, much depends upon their work. Whether it was putting in a backbreaking day receiving incoming Georgists at the airport, running to get fuel for a stranded bus, chasing a last-minute P.A. system, or acquainting the souvenir-shop personnel with Georgist ideas while chauffeuring the visitors about, these folks were always there. It was truly a privilege to meet and work with Lucia Vasquez, Silvio Cabrera, Tirsia Castellanos, Andres Abreu, Ligia Pereyra, Fifi Dominguez, Wilson Diaz, Miladys Carvajal, Annamarina Mendez, and many others.

- Lindy Davies



Media Covers Meeting with President

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(who occasionally broke in to further explain a point or two in her own language). Responses and questions from the audience indicated considerable interest, and those who came to the



Ligia Pereyra, Dr. Nelson Frias, George Collins

seminar unfamiliar with land value taxation left wanting to know more.

The opening reception on Wednesday evening took place at the National Library.

There, City Council President Dr. Nelson Frias presented proclamations of Distinguished Visitorship to HGS President Ed Dodson, CGO Chairman Dick Noyes, and George Collins - who reciprocated with HGS certificates, which were gratefully accepted by the council members who had attended his seminar

the day before. The reception concluded with a delightful performance by the Ballet Folklorico dance troupe - and some impromptu folk dancing with the visitors.

The official public opening was held on Friday morning

at the Central Bank. Excerpts from the opening remarks by Lucy Silfa and the keynote address by Pedro Bretón were also carried on the evening news. A panel discussion ensued on global development and free trade. Panelists were Ed Dodson, HGS alumnus and Economic Professor Dr. Marcelo Puello, Richard Noyes, New York HGS teacher Nibaldo Aguilera, and Cayman Islands attorney Ian Lambert. The event was attended by some two hundred people, and simultaneous translations were provided by Santo Domingo HGS associates Ligia Pereyra and Fifi Dominguez.

After the Central Bank came the most notable event of the conference, which was covered, with photos, in the daily newspapers *Listin Diario* and *El Siglo*. A Georgist delegation met with President Joaquín Balaguer. The meeting was not lengthy or detailed, but it was fruitful. President Balaguer received the group warmly, and expressed great appreciation for the work the Henry George School has done over the years. According to *El Siglo*, Balaguer "repeated his admiration for [Lucy Silfa] and recognized her perseverance and skilled work." Balaguer also "showed his support for the application of the Georgist doctrine concerning land and its economic rent."



Pedro Bretón, Marcelo Puello



On the presidential steps

Conference Extends Georgist Family

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Toastmaster's "Table Topics". Six volunteers were each given a different question and two minutes to respond without having prepared ahead of time. Like any extended family, opinions varied, and so did reactions from the listeners.

Ben Sevack, Canadian family member from Montreal, Quebec, followed with a slide presentation of a trip he took with fellow Georgists to Russia and Estonia. Several of the familiar

faces in the slides were also in the audience that night - including a

new family member, Russian filmmaker and Tolstoyan, Radi Kushnerovich. Ad hoc humor was provided by John Burger of Minnesota while Ben and several others busied themselves adjusting and readjusting the screen and projector. Yet underlying

even this informal meeting of our extended family was the shared mission of spreading ideas of economic liberation - in this case, to Eastern Europe.

A Dominican-style barbecue on Friday evening at the Arroyo Hondo Social Club was clearly and simply for the fun of being together. If the themes of taxation, monopoly, and poverty were discussed, they were discussed over picnic tables loaded with good food and drink. And the more-than-loaded schoolbus that took us to and from the barbecue brought us, needless to say, even closer together.

Then there was the family business: the annual meeting of the Council of Georgist Organizations. The main function of the Council is to foster this "family spirit" of cooperation among the various Georgist groups, principally via annual conferences. It is the umbrella for Georgist organizations in North America, with ties to the Georgist Council of Australia, its "sister umbrella."

Chairman Richard Noyes of New Hampshire guided a packed agenda to completion in an hour and a half before lunch on Saturday. Reports were heard from Secretary-Treasurer Mark Sullivan, conference host Lucy Silfa,

conference co-ordinators Sue and Scott Walton, 1993 conference host Marion Sapiro of the Los Angeles area, 1994 conference representative Dian Arnold of the Fairhope (Alabama) Single Tax Corporation, Council advisor Bob Clancy of New York, Council affiliate Ian Lambert from Grand Cayman, and Hanno Beck from the Maryland office of Common Ground USA. Marion Sapiro was elected a Council advisor for the coming year. The feeling in the room was of a group of people genuinely interested in being of service to one another, sharing what they knew and making valuable suggestions. One person remarked afterwards to HGS Director George Collins that the



Ben Sevack



Radi Kushnerovich



At Arroyo Hondo



Scott & Sue Walton

WHERE POLITICAL ECONOMY & SPIRITUALITY MEET

One area where students of Henry George can make a positive contribution is that of religious social concern. This was brought out at the Santo Domingo Conference on Sunday morning which began with an ecumenical gathering led by Rev. James W. Dawsey, Professor of Religion at Auburn University. Dr. Dawsey spoke of how the scriptures presented the living Jesus as a suffering servant who called others to follow his way - while Christopher Columbus saw Christ as a ruler with power.

Earlier in the conference, Prof. Jack Schwartzman gave a stirring presentation on Columbus - a "Georgist Appraisal" of his life. Jack presented us with the person whose voyage to the western hemisphere brought death to the native population. Columbus, who returned from his voyage with natives bound and muzzled as slaves, remedied the

meeting reflected a more unified spirit than the previous year.

One all-pervading feature of this year's North American gathering was its bilingual nature. Had the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade not had other plans, this conference would have been the second International Union conference in Spain. The very first International conference was held in Ronda, Spain, May 26-28, 1913. It was the fact of the Ronda conference that had inspired Bob Clancy of the Henry George Institute to propose a Spanish-English conference for the Columbus Quincentennial Year. What the IU rejected, the CGO adapted to fulfill its mandate to hold an annual conference in North America in 1992.

With more Georgist Dominicans than Yankees, the family that gathered felt, to this writer, ever more extended in its embrace. The conference banquet on Saturday evening included, at the beginning, a moment of silence for our departed family members Bob Scrofani of San Francisco and Craig Cringan of Toronto (see page three). It concluded with a moving personal tribute paid to Lucy Silfa by the students and volunteers of the Dominican School. Referring to Henry George as the father of their movement for social justice, they called Dona Lucy their mother. Indeed, one can say Lucy Silfa and the Santo Domingo Gathering has indeed given birth to a new pan-American spirit within the Georgist extended family.



Jack Schwartzman

situation by beginning the importation of African slaves to the Caribbean. The discussion that followed was heated. NY-HGS Assistant Director Lindy Davies asked about the various religious quotes from Columbus adorning the new Columbus monument in Santo Domingo. And New York School Trustee Si Winters expressed strong disagreement with Dr. Schwartzman, stating that one should understand the social forces that led to Columbus's voyages and their aftermath.

At the Sunday ecumenical, it was inspiring to hear Si relate that further discussions with Jack led to a common understanding between them over the Columbus controversy. Si also told of a personal spiritual experience: a response to an immigrant worker whose silent gesture over his dinner spoke louder than scripture - or economics.



Hector Sandler

The relevance of Georgist economics to socially-engaged spirituality goes back, of course, to George himself, whose *Progress and Poverty* and other works are filled with scriptural allusions. Many who took up the Single Tax banner, for example, joined the Anti-Poverty Society, which was founded by Dr. Edward McGlynn, the controversial Roman Catholic priest in New York.

Today, the message to the churches has been proclaimed once again in a new book co-authored by Dr. Dawsey with Dr. Robert V. Andelson, also a professor at Auburn University. *Wasteland to Promised Land: Liberation Theology for a Post-Marxist World* was featured at the conference following the ecumenical. (See Alanna Hartzok's review, on the back page.)

While a local reporter covered the presentation, Dr. Dawsey was joined by two distinguished speakers: Walter Rybeck from the Center for Public Dialogue, in the Washington, DC area; and Dr. Hector Raul Sandler, from the *Instituto Capacitación Económica* in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Dr. Dawsey made the telling point that, in our interdependent world, "my wealth is tied in with others"

EDITOR'S NOTES (from page three)

her light! Either this, or darkness comes on, and the very forces that progress has evolved turn to powers that work destruction."

Today we are reaping the harvest he predicted as we have done nothing to make the opportunities of the land available to all on an equal basis.

The letter, along with George's "Ode to Liberty" and John M. Kelly's "The New Barbarians: The Continuing Relevance of Henry George," was recently mailed out to many by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.

The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation has just published its latest catalogue, listing several new books of interest to students of Henry George. Contact the Foundation for your copy, at 41 East 72nd Street, New York, NY 10021 (212-988-1680.)



James Dawsey

AIDS & B-2: Did you know that the entire US budget devoted to the AIDS health crisis is less than the cost of one B-2 bomber? And did you know that George Bush wants twenty B-2 bombers, and wants to cut the AIDS budget by 25%?

"Live Rent Free!" So said a flyer someone handed me on the street the other day. "The housing shortage is so severe and the rent is getting so high..." I continued to read. Turns out, according to the flyer, you can live rent free because "Jesus already paid the bill!" The flyer concluded: "Need a place to live? With a life long lease,...and more? Let Y'shua live in your heart and you'll always know that your place in heaven is reserved." But as Henry George pointed out a century ago, this same Y'shua taught us to pray "Thy kingdom come... on earth as it is in heaven." Advocates of what used to be called "pie in the sky when you die" need to read up on the strong current of social justice running throughout the Judeo-Christian tradition. They can start with *From Wasteland to Promised Land*, reviewed in this issue.



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FROM WASTELAND TO PROMISED LAND: Liberation Theology for a Post-Marxist World

Review by Alanna Hartzok

Robert V. Andelson and James M. Dawsey present a penetrating analysis of the root causes of poverty on earth, and extend astute theological insights through a veil that is rarely pierced. Unlike many who look to biblical precepts for solutions to 20th-century problems, Andelson and Dawsey have gone deeply to the source of perennial wisdom and come forth with precise and compelling recommendations for economic policy.

Although the marriage of Marxism and Christian activism was never sanctified by the majority of theologians and laymen in Latin America, the compassionate concern for the conditions of the poor voiced by liberation theologians has received laudable recognition throughout the world. Their movement pointed out that the dilemma of maldistribution of wealth is the Achilles' heel of current capitalist arrangements. A political democracy cannot survive the divisiveness created by an economic aristocracy.

From Wasteland to Promised Land is infused with this same heartfelt urgency, but offers a true third-way approach by showing how wealth can be fairly distributed within a system of free-market rewards to human effort. Furthermore, the book is startling in its revelation that the increasing economic distress of the American lower and middle classes has the same fundamental cause as the plight of the Third World poor.

Underneath the veneer of market economics lies the old Roman land law of *dominium* - the legalization of title to land originally obtained by conquest and plunder. By juxtaposing biblical precepts with the current reality that massive amounts of the land and natural resources of the planet are "owned" by the few to the exclusion of the many, *From Wasteland to Promised Land* irrefutably concludes that solving the "land problem" is the next great challenge to democracy.

Andelson and Dawsey urge the implementation of a highly practical public finance policy which is based on the Judeo-Christian ethic of *Koinonia* - the spiritual perception that the land and material resources of this earth are to be understood as gifts of God to be carefully used for the benefit of all. A quote (from page 104:)

Let those seeking genuine social uplift realize that it takes radical bedrock ethics - not mere poetic fluff - to reaffirm

with all the strength that can be mustered the inspiring words from Psalm 24: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof."

That the "economics of evil" can be redressed by developmental policies that merely increase the GNP is one of the great economic myths of our times. On the other hand, *From Wasteland to Promised Land* gives a number of encouraging examples of countries which have experienced both an internal regeneration of their economic base and a resultant fairer distribution of wealth. In all cases cited, economic justice in land has played a major role.

Another contribution of this book is to precisely show why Keynesian policies and pump-priming programs must be jettisoned in favor of economic arrangements truly worthy of an advanced democracy.

The policy approach described here will not end all human suffering - but if fully implemented, it can lead us to the promised land of material sufficiency for all. The attainment of this goal is within the grasp of the current world civilization. I must, however, offer one cautionary note to theologians and others who may be interested in this book. Make sure you are ready to take bold action - for once the essence of its message is grasped, there can be no further cause for delay.

From Wasteland to Promised Land, by Robert V. Andelson and James M. Dawsey, Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY (Shepherd-Walwyn, London). To order: Robert Shalkenbach Foundation, 41 East 72nd St., New York, NY 10021 (\$16.95 + \$1.50 postage).

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poverty." George's message, that people have the right to the fruits of their own labor, and that the earth belongs to everyone together, can be rephrased in religious language: the land belongs to God, and God intends it for the benefit of all people, who are called to be stewards, not owners, of the land.

Dr. Dawsey quoted Will Durant, saying that the only true revolution is that which changes minds and hearts. He related this to Georgist tax reform, which will become a reality only upon a revolution in the way people think. And that is the whole point of the book he co-authored with Robert Andelson. Only in recent times, for example, has the church in Latin America sided with the poor, dispossessed, and oppressed. Now is the time to present George's most workable of land reforms. Marion Sapiro sparked a heated but productive discussion on how to promote and best use *From Wasteland to Promised Land*. Copies were sold out at the conference by the Robert Shalkenbach Foundation (which has more in stock in New York). Those interested were also urged by Mark Sullivan to contact the New York HGS for a free copy of *Ethical Land Tenure - Interreligious Resource Directory*, put together by Alanna Hartzok.

Dr. Sandler captured and moved the audience with a very personal narrative of his escape from political repression in Argentina. However, many of the young priests and liberation theologians, who advocated revolution, did not escape, and suffered death at the hands of the state. While the political climate is a bit friendlier today in Latin America, much remains to be done. In Argentina and the Dominican Republic, active Georgists are heeding the call.



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