

Henry George News

Published by the Henry George School of Social Science/NY

Volume 64, Number 2

Feb. - Mar., 2000

The Earth is the birthright of all.

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A PRESIDENTIAL COMMENTARY

One might not consider the present the most suitable time to actively promulgate the Georgist economic philosophy, with its emphasis on solving the Problem of Poverty. *Poverty?* Business is thriving, unemployment is down, incomes are up, inflation is controlled, and Wall Street is more bullish than ever. Why rock the boat when we are apparently enjoying the best of times? Or are we?

Not all of us, it seems. If we look somewhat beyond the front pages of our journals, proclaiming the blissful prosperity enjoyed by those it comforts, another picture emerges. Smaller headlines and less exuberant reports reveal news not so welcome: that not all *boi polloi* (we, the people) share in the prevalent economic boom. Thoughtful observers point out that the division between so-called haves and have-nots keeps widening constantly.

Once those basking in luxurious living were millionaires; nowadays billionaires are no longer rarities. Meanwhile, those at the lower end of the economic order become less and less able to afford the necessities of life.

As long as so vast a difference exists between the affluent and the dependent, just so long does essential economic poverty prevail. This is the signal we must recognize, inspiring us to vigorously carry on the mission to which we are devoted: through extended education to teach, preach, and promote, as effectively as we can, knowledge of Henry George's economic principles. The need is urgent and the time is *now*. Let's continue the good work. Happy New Year!

SYDNEY A. MAYERS
President, Henry George School of Social Science

LVT at UN Forum

Bruce W. Oatman/HGS Instructor

The United Nations was the setting this past September for a well-received presentation of tax policy reforms by three Georgist organizations — the *International Union for Land Value Taxation*, the *Center for the Study of Economics* and the *Robert Schalkenbach Foundation*. The occasion was the annual gathering of up to 800 non-governmental organizations (NGOs), all of which are accredited to the UN.

Alanna Hartzok, of the International Union, presented some imaginative reworkings of various land-tax ideas by a wide range of contemporary groups. These included the imposition of "extraction fees" on such non-renewable resources as soil and minerals, "user fees" for hydropower

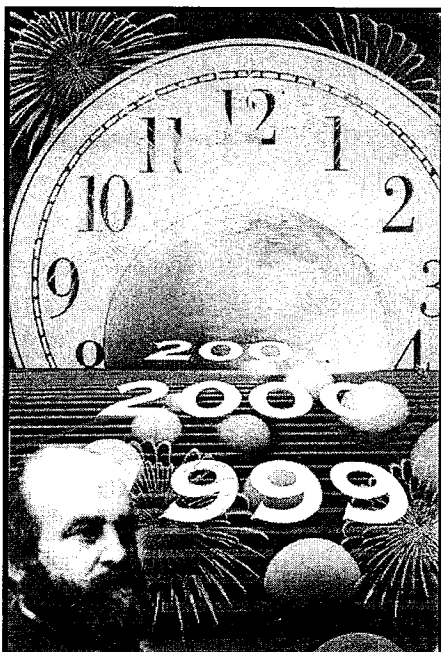
projects, and pollution permits for activities that sully the air, land and water. These fees and permits are intended to prompt industries to devise more efficient, and less intrusive, ways to create their products while maintaining an environmental balance; the fees themselves would also promote distributive justice by returning to the communities a larger share of land rent.



To me the most promising aspect of Alanna's presentation was her description of the degree to

which Georgist ideas are finding acceptance (albeit in sometimes attenuated form) by sectors of the environmental, or "green" movement. She cited such green groups as the *Sierra Club* and the *Northwest Environmental Watch*. I person-

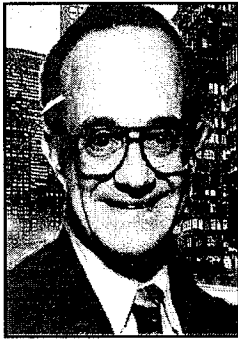
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Henry George School 3D Millennium Calendar - see page 8

Changing the World Seminar

On October 22nd Henry George School Member Trustee Steven Cord gave a seminar entitled *You Can Change the World*. The thesis of Dr. Cord's seminar was that there is an ever increasing number of municipalities that are defining the of tax-build-a-and prove- and increasing the tax burden on land itself.



growing number of municipalities that are defining the of tax-build-a-and prove- and increasing the tax burden on land itself.

Through this change in the tax structure, commonly called two-rate (see article, p.3), we can encourage construction and production while diminishing land speculation.

Dr. Cord, a leading exponent of this remedy, calls this approach "a real world application of Georgist theory."

Dr. Cord's main point is "it is better to tax the locational value of land rather than discourage producers by levying taxes on them. The yearly locational value of land is expressed by the market-determined annual rental of land, or land rent for short."

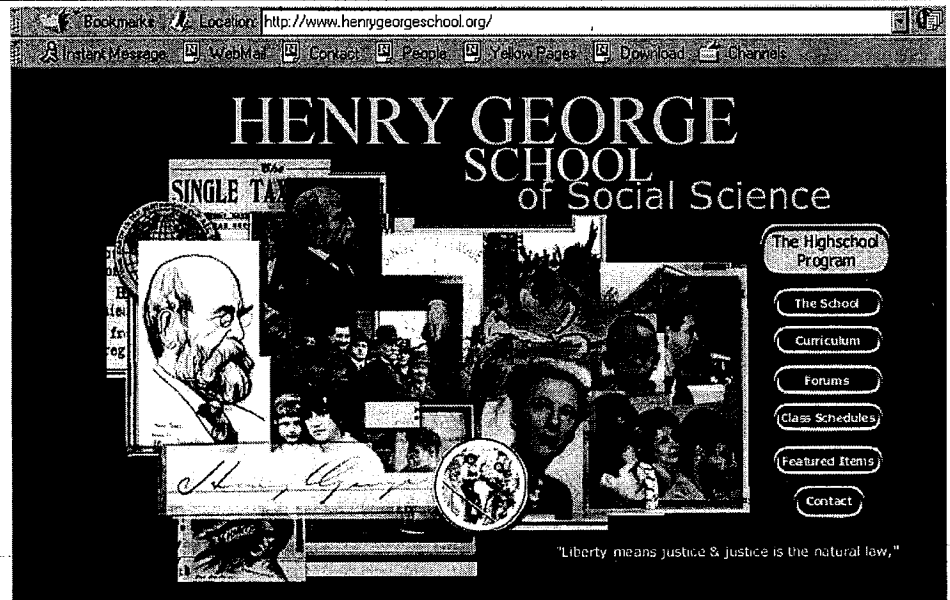
Henry George News

The Henry George News is published four times a year and is available free to contributors. The opinions expressed herein are the sole responsibility of the Henry George School, a non-profit institution of adult education.

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Screenshot of Our New Web Page at www.henrygeorgeschool.org

News & Notes

Henry George at Rutgers

Dr. Oscar Johannsen, former President of the Henry George School and its current treasurer, recently gave a talk on Henry George, entitled *Henry George - Dreamer or Realist*. The talk, given October 5, was presented at the Rutgers University Academy for Lifelong Learning (RU-ALL).

According to Dr. Johannsen, "RU-ALL is a four-year old non-credit continuing education program for New Jersey residents - people over 50 years of age who want to study topics in depth, including contemporary issues."

Dr. Johannsen, who continues a life-long involvement in the Georgist Movement and the School, began his talk by giving a sketch of the life of Henry George as a prelude to George's involvement in social issues. Seguing from the life to the work, he next spelled out the the problems of George's day and showed how George's remedy still has contemporary relevance.

By all accounts, the talk, given in front of about 40 people, was very enthusiastically received. "They were definitely interested and asked many pointed questions," said Oscar.

www.henrygeorgeschool.org

Our new Website, which we told you about last issue, has started off successfully. If you are a regular reader of these pages, you already know that the School has transferred its High

School Program to the website, offering the same teaching materials that it formerly offered by mail. Last summer we mailed special large-size postcards to 5,000 teachers across the country, introducing the original program in its new incarnation. The *High School Newsletter* also has a full page "ad" announcing the availability of the lessons in downloadable form.

To date, a suprising number of teachers have gone to our site, signed on and occasionally offered their comments. The majority of teachers downloading our lessons list *economics* as their primary area of interest. A close second is *history*, followed by *social studies*. We regard this as a good beginning and a sign that we are reaching our target audience.

Towers of Babel?

Speaking of the *High School Newsletter*, the next issue reprints a story from *Barrons* about the so-called *Skyscraper Index*, a theory that puts forth the idea that "there is an uncanny correlation over the past 100 years between financial crises and attempts to construct the world's tallest building." The author cites the Empire State Building, which seemed to presage the Great Depression, the Sears Tower in Chicago, which was quickly followed in the '70s by years of "stagflation," and the Petronas Towers in Malaysia, built just before the crash of the Eastern Tiger Economies. Now, Chicago wants to top them all with a new 1,537 ft. tower. Perhaps they should be called *Towers of Bubble!*

Town Adopts LVT as Key to its Future

HIGHER LEVY ON LAND THAN BUILDINGS SEEN AS INCENTIVE TO DEVELOP UNUSED PROPERTY reads a recent headline of *The Patriot-News*. The headline banners a recent change in the tax assessment laws of Steelton, Pa., which switches the tax burden from improvements to the land itself, in a move to what is popularly called a "two-rate" system.

"It's an important issue in a borough that is unable to expand geographically," says the article, "but has a great deal of under-used land. A land value tax, which would tax idle property at a higher rate than buildings, would provide an incentive for landowners to develop vacant property..." The story goes on to cite a report to the Borough Council compiled and presented by Josh Vincent, Executive Director of the Center for the Study of Economics Tax Policy and Research. The story quotes from Vincent's report which states that 70% of home owners would pay less tax under LVT. "The homeowners who would pay more would see their bills increase only a few dollars per year." Vincent's report, which took Harrisburg, Pa., as its model, cited that town's positive land-use changes since it went two-rate.

Since going two-rate, Harrisburg reduced its number of vacant structures from 4,200 in 1992 to "fewer than 500 today." Vincent went on to say that the new tax structure would "give a tax break to almost all the homeowners and working business in Steelton at no loss to the borough, and it would put more of the tax burden on vacant land." The largest increase would be on land that has idle structures or buildings that had been demolished. The hardest hit by the new changes would be Bethlehem Steel, which is the largest landowner in the city.

The tax has just been implemented with the year 2000 budget following which the precise tax rates will be determined. Borough officials plan to gradually phase in the higher tax rates on land over the next five years.

"I think this is a critical step for Steelton," Mayor George Hartwick was quoted as saying. "Obviously, we have made plans for development and diversification of our industry, and this is going to be our tool."

We thank Alanna Hartzok, NGO delegate to the UN, for bringing this story to our attention.

From the Archives

by Vesa Nelson

In last issue's article, I shared some of the research I have been doing into the role of land ownership and speculation in the development of what became the United States of America. In this article, I'd like to delve a little deeper into our country's past, seeing what can be dug up researching earlier struggles over frontier land in the Americas.

In the last article I quoted the historian Stewart H. Holbrook to the effect that the romantic view of our country's history, as it is presented in most school books, in the movies and on television, is far from an accurate history. To refresh our memory, the quote stated, "For generations we have cherished the romantic idea that in colonial times, and early days of the republic, all a man who wanted land had to do was to strike out in any direction into the wilderness to cut himself a clearing, build a cabin, then lay a fence..." Holbrook went on to say that "the pleasant myth of the solitary squatter" had little substance in fact for usually "the land sharks had got there ahead of him... in the form of a grantee-lord of whom he's never heard, or of a corporation he did not know existed."

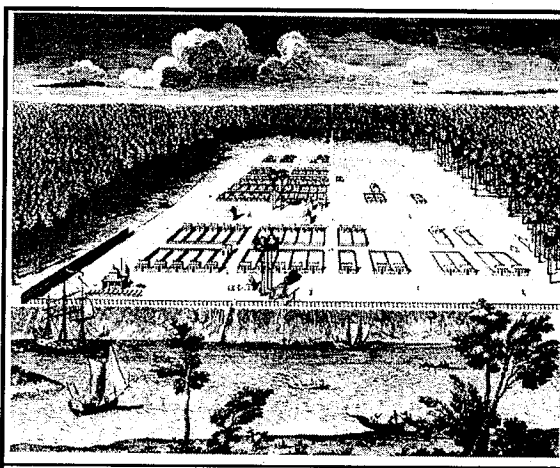
Let's meet some of the grantee-lords and corporations of whom the early settler in the Americas never heard. First, General James Oglethorpe of the British Army. He and a group of trustees received, in 1732, a grant of land between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers from George II. Ownership of the area was already contested by the major European powers: Britain, Spain and France.

It seems that Spain had laid claim to the land as far north as present day South Carolina as part of what they called 'la Florida.' They based this claim on expeditions led by

Hernando de Soto in 1540 and Juan Pardo twenty-six years later. In 1686, Spain commanded her troops to destroy isolated outlying British settlements in southernmost Carolina, as a way of enforcing their claim. And later, in 1701, Spanish authorities incited the Yamassee Indians to make raids across the Savannah River against the British. Both outbreaks of hostilities mirrored the geopolitical struggles in the European theater, between Britain, Spain and France.

France based her claim to the territory on Jean Ribaut's 1562 (failed) settlement attempt at Port Royal Sound. France also made threatening gestures by manning Fort Toulouse (in modern Alabama) from 1715 onwards. George II resorted to the standard prescribed strategy — plant a buffer colony

that would be obliged to defend itself in the path of any rivals. This was a colony to be composed of the London poor, who were supposedly to be given a chance at a new life in a new land. They were, however, ex-



A view of Savannah, Georgia in the early 1700s

pected to provide for their own defense against any counter claims to the territory. A careful reading of the charter granted by George II confirms this:

Whereas we are credibly informed, that many of our poor subjects [in England], through misfortunes and want of employment... would be glad to settle in any of our provinces in America... we think it highly becoming our crown and royal dignity, to protect all our loving subjects... by reason of the smallness of their numbers [settlers in Carolina]... to extend our fatherly compassion... accomplishing those ends, that a regular colony of the said poor people [in England] be settled and established in the southern territories of Carolina...

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London Journal**My Discovery of Henry George - in the UK**

Lori Osnow, HGS student

Last year, on what I thought would be an innocent two week jaunt in and around London in springtime, doing research at the British Film Institute, I unexpectedly discovered one of history's best kept secrets. This discovery turned a supposedly innocuous trip into something of a mission.

I was sitting in Regent's Park, two days after arriving in London, reading the entertainment and events listings of a weekly magazine when a notice under the heading "Political Activities" caught my attention. It read "The Green Economics Society of the LSE (London School of Economics and Political Science) meets Mondays at 6:30 pm. Room E-108."

The reason this caught my attention is that for years I have had an interest in ecological economics but realized I lacked comprehensive information of how the economic machine really worked. Since I lacked this knowledge, I was also unaware of any viable alternatives to the present system. As a consequence, I had pretty well given up my quest to understand "the dismal science." I had made countless attempts on my own to reach such an understanding, but inevitably wound up frustrated.

So sitting in a London Park and coming upon this simple notice, I figured I had nothing to lose and might actually learn something — perhaps they knew something on this side of the Atlantic that was unknown or unacknowledged at home. Perhaps it was the fact that this group at the London School called itself a "society" that impressed me. I figured if they were calling themselves a society, well, they just might know their stuff. At the time I didn't realize that almost every group in Britain calls itself a "Royal" this or that or a "Society" of such-and-such. It must be part of their whole pomp and circumstance thing. Anyway, I felt at least a semblance of enthusiasm — despite having more or less resigned from my personal pursuit of economics. I really didn't know what to expect, except perhaps some interesting discussion.

After arriving at LSE and sitting in room E-108 for some time, into the meeting walked an elderly gentleman who looked like everyone's stock image of an economics-wizard. He had frazzled white hair and wore a frumpy blazer; he carried the requisite manila folders under one arm and surveyed the room looking somewhat askance. This was the man of the hour and, I would later learn, the leader of a one man crusade to keep alive the dream of Sidney and Beatrice Webb. *Who?*

Well, Sidney and Beatrice Webb were asso-



Sidney and Beatrice Webb

ciates of Henry George and were significantly influenced by George's economic thought. They were also the founders of the London School of Economics. Though they were Fabian Socialists, they credited Henry George with, in their words, "arousing the British social and political conscience as no one else in this period" (the latter part of the 19th century).

Their original aim for the School was "to contribute to the improvement of society by promoting the impartial study of its problems and the training of those who would translate [economic] policy into action. Today the School stands as one of the most prestigious of graduate schools, recognized as the Harvard of the UK in business and finance circles. It has, however, strayed quite far from the Webb's original intentions for it.

After the meeting in room E-108, I asked a recent graduate of the School whether the history of the School itself ever came up in all the

classes he had taken and whether in the course of his studies the students had ever considered analyzing social problems from a "progressive" point of view. "No," was his answer.

After learning the history of the LSE, I was in equal measure inspired and disturbed. Inspired because I thought I had found what I had been searching for — a school that had, at least at one time, a comprehensive approach to the study of social problems from an economic point of view. Disturbed because I had learned how far the School had strayed from its original mission. Nevertheless, I decided to become involved in the activist wing of the student body and the Green Economics Society.

Some weeks later the coordinator of the Green Economics Society, Janos, announced that the Society had a few hundred pounds left in its budget for the year. It was decided to spend this money wisely by organizing a forum/reception with the aim of publicizing the work of the Society, as a way of reaching out to the rest of the student body and the public at large. We also got two well-known Georgist/green economists, James Robertson and Helena Norberg-Hodge, to speak.

The result was a success. We increased the number of regular members of the Society, from fewer than five to forty-two. For me personally it was a success — I had found a comprehensive approach to economics and social problems. And I was learning more about Henry George and the Georgist approach to those problems. I had discovered answers to my seemingly unanswerable questions about the nature of poverty. And I acquired a sense of hope that there is much that can be done about it.

On returning to the U.S., I enrolled at the Henry George School of Social Science, where I plan to continue my studies — which began with a chance glance at an announcement in a listings magazine in a London park. Sometimes you have to go far afield to find something that's been in your own backyard all along.

The Genesis of Modern Economics - A new college-level course

David Domke

The Henry George School's Social Science Forum has recently completed the development of a new college-level course entitled *The Genesis of Modern Economics*. The course, the first of its kind to trace the history of economic thought from the perspective of the land question, was taught during the fall semester at the School by Dr. Paul Kahane, a professor of economics. Dr. Kahane himself is developing lesson sheets which will eventually be made available to students. Teachers will also receive copies of the extensive research which is the basis of the course.

The Genesis of Modern Economics' basic historical premise is that the study of economics, since its inception as a science in the 18th Century, has developed in proportion to its ability to conceptualize land as a separate and unique factor of production. This course surveys the world's major economists from the perspective of their recognition or suppression of land rent as socially created wealth.

Two years in development, the course was written by educators with Doctorates; Professors of Economics, Dr. Mason Gaffney, Dr. Paul Kahane, Dr. Michael Hudson, Dr. Jerome Heavey and Dr. Ken Wenzer, a professional historian and academic researcher. We should also acknowledge the contributions of Dr. C. Lowell Harriss, Dr. Robert Andelson and the late Dr. William Vickry (Nobel Laureate).

The guiding light of the course, however, has been Simon Winters, Henry George School Member Trustee and founder of the Social Science Forum, who has overseen the production of the course from its beginnings. Indeed, the class was initially Mr. Winters' inspiration, and he has spent countless hours over the past two years compiling and editing the work of the

above mentioned economists and historians.

Mr. Winters long ago realized that a university level course in the history of economics from a *Georgist* point of view was very much needed, lest we entirely cede the teaching of economics to those who merely provide the theoretical justification for vested interests.

While the historic and economic role of land is central to virtually every aspect of human social affairs, it is either ignored or left undeveloped in the standard college curricula. *The Genesis of Economics* was specifically designed to address this critical gap in the understanding of society and its production of wealth.

The course focuses on this crucial issue and further elaborates this theme by showing how land rent is stolen from the community, perpetuating poverty and low-wage bondage and inhibiting the creation of wealth and its just distribution among the factors that produce it.

Modern economics, as this course surveys the subject, has been largely an ideological endeavour, created to buttress the economic *status quo* and provide the intellectual formalization of the principles of its injustices. When land is under the sway of special interests, and this appropriation is given an official imprimatur by career-oriented academic economists, the true relations between the factors of production become obfuscated. When land, a separate factor of production, was subsumed under the general economic category *capital*, its actual role in economic life became obscured and therefore easily misconstrued. Only by returning land to its rightful place as a pivotal factor in the process of production, can a proper economic balance be maintained - both in theory and in practice. *The Genesis of Modern Economics* is a course designed to accomplish this rectification and is the first of its kind to address the academic problem at the university level.

In conjunction with this class, Mr. Winters

is also completing a related course, covering the rise of urban civilization from 3,000 B.C. to the 16th century.

Prior to the French Physiocrats and Adam Smith, economic precepts were consigned to

the realms of religion and politics. Ancient religious texts, especially the Judeo-Christian scriptures, contain numerous references to land use

and its impact on the economic life of the people.

A main thesis of this course is that the Judeo-Christian holy books' laws regarding poverty, debt and land distribution, grew out of a substantial body of knowledge and experience stretching back to ancient Mesopotamia.

This new course clearly presents the case that the decline or prosperity of societies, both ancient and modern, can be expressed as a function of their land use policy.

In ancient times, financial debt was directly tied to the land. Those who went heavily into debt eventually had to forfeit proprietary right to the land they worked. This would soon have led to large accumulations of landed property in the hands of the few and left a large part of the population landless. Recognizing the detrimental effect on society of this accumulation and its consequent social stratification, lawmakers in ancient times decreed times of debt forgiveness, redressing the imbalance and returning forfeited land to its original workers.

The "economists" of ancient times recognized the unique position of land and land-rights in the process of production. Both new Social Science Forum classes were designed to redress the theoretical imbalance.

As Mr. Winters sums up: "So little is taught of the democratic aspirations in the ancient world. Historians have generally ignored those who have produced the the wealth of society. In the past they were suppressed by the rulers for whom they labored. Today, we see the same sort of suppression - the labor, the wealth-creating activity of the majority is expropriated by a comparatively small class of people in the form of socially created land rent. It is my deep belief that only *Georgists* understand the underlying mechanism of this social theft."

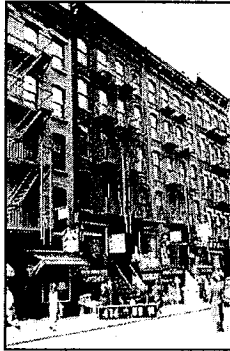
Modern economics was largely created to buttress the status quo and provide the intellectual formalization of the principles of its injustices.

The basic historical premise is that the study of economics as a science has developed in proportion to its ability to conceptualize land as a unique factor of production.

School Alumni Museum Trip?

The Henry George School is interested in forming an Alumni Association and, as a first activity, is offering former and current students a tour of the Lower East Side Tenement Museum as a possibility.

The Lower East Side Tenement Museum guides visitors through the 1864 structure at 97 Orchard Street and all of the trappings of life among New York's working poor during the second half of the nineteenth century. Museum chaperons draw on extensive genealogical and historical research to evoke every detail of how life was lived within those tenement walls, which housed over 10,000 souls



until withdrawn from residential use in 1935. The School may arrange a group tour on a Saturday in March for interested readers, to be followed by discussion over a light meal in a neighborhood restaurant. Discussion could include the role of European economic policies in displacing hundreds of thousands of Italian farmers or starving similar numbers of Irish poor to the point of emigration or on the fact that the title to 97 Orchard changed hands some thirty times in the space of a decade (during which Henry George made his first mayoral run).

If you are interested, please contact the School.

WINTER CLASS SCHEDULE

Progress and Poverty

(Fundamental Economics)

PART I: Principles of Political Economy

(All classes 6-8 pm)

Mondays: Dan Kryston
Tuesdays: Vesa Nelson
Wednesdays: Alton Pertilla
Thursdays: Paul Kahane
Thursdays: Tito Ortiz (in Spanish)

- ◆ Learn how our economy is structured to ensure an imbalance in the distribution of wealth and opportunity.
- ◆ Make a distinction between the natural opportunities of the Earth and those values produced by human labor.
- ◆ Explore the relations between the individual and society and principles of private and public property.

Applied Economics

PART II: Principles of Political Economy

Wednesdays: George DeShields 6 to 8pm
Wednesdays: Manuel Felix (in Spanish)
 Beneath political problems often lie social problems caused by the maldistribution of wealth. This course confronts those problems directly and examines the current global economy and free trade initiatives. Will the WTO and NAFTA increase your wealth or reduce your wages?

Economic Science

PART III: Principles of Political Economy

Mondays: Paul Kahane 6 to 8pm
 This course enables students to understand and evaluate economic theory and demonstrates how economic behavior is the engine of civilization's development. This class may be taken as the second part of the three course program.

Current Events

Mondays: Bruce Oatman 6 to 8pm

The daily newspaper is the "textbook" for each session of this course. This will demonstrate the timeliness of the economic and social philosophy of Henry George over a wide range of issues, and serves as a means of updating his proposals. This course will depend heavily on student participation in seeking to establish a logical means of coping with today's problems.

Speculators, Monopolists & Reformers

Thursdays: Vesa Nelson 6 to 8pm

This class looks at the early working class land reform movement - which had its peak in the anti-rent struggles of 1840s New York. The generation just before Henry George was already demanding land reform on both sides of the Atlantic. Against what and whom were they reacting? We will re-examine the usual suspects, and add some new ones. More than a historical approach, we will apply our critical faculties to the psychology behind both speculative fever and reformist counter-reactions.

Great Decisions

Tuesdays: John Bruschi 12:30 - 1:30 pm

The *Great Decisions* program features eight broad-based issues currently challenging U.S. policymakers. Through a range of teaching materials, the program explores the issues, historical contexts, and implications for the future. All *Great Decisions* materials are non-partisan and balanced.

Economic Geography

Thursdays: Simon Winters 6 to 8 pm

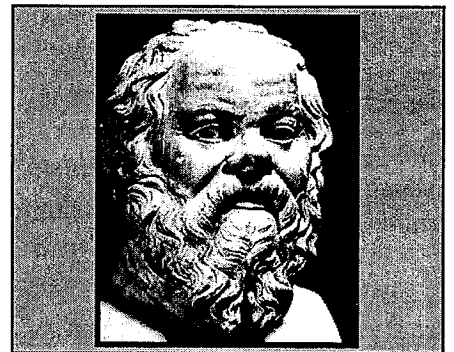
This class will focus on the influence of the natural environment on the development of civilization. Students will study the importance of geography, climate, resources and land ownership in determining relative conditions of freedom. Who is entitled to what rights? How do land rights impact on human rights?

UPCOMING SEMINARS



FRIDAY FILM FORUM

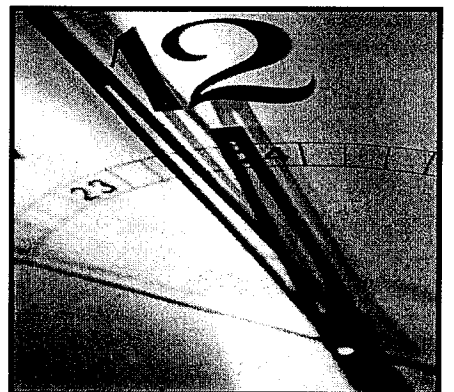
Friday, Feb. 4 (6:30-9:00 pm)
 Based on a true Los Angeles land scandal in the last century, this hardboiled detective/film noir features Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway. In this film, two puzzling mysteries are masterfully interwoven by director Roman Polanski. Discussion follows.



SOCRATES

Friday, Feb. 18 (7-9 pm)

Socrates turned Greek attention toward questions of ethics and virtue and away from those of the heavenly bodies. At the age of 70, he was convicted of atheism, treason and corruption of the young. He was given the sentence of banishment from Athens, but instead chose to drink poison. Speaker: Don LeVour.



MILLENNIAL OUTLOOK FOR THE ECONOMY

Friday, Mar. 17 (7-9 pm)
 Dr. C. Lowell Harriss, a retired professor of economics at Columbia University, puts forth his reasoned observations of where economics takes us in the new millennium.

continued from p. 1

ally believe that Georgists with an activist bent might do well to become involved with the green movement, if only to offer these groups a more systematic appreciation of the rich legacy of the land-value tax idea.

Next, Josh Vincent of the *Center for the Study of Economics* told us of the tragic story of the ways in which 18 Western Pennsylvania communities were ravaged 20 years ago by the wholesale closing of factories and the inevitable consequence of rising unemployment rates and population losses. These communities, including Pittsburg, were revived by a subsequent adoption of a two-rate tax system, shifting the burden of taxation away from buildings and onto land values.

The CSE has amply documented the dramatic rise in productive economic activity in those communities that went two-rate compared to those communities that did not. Thanks to the success of this Pennsylvania experiment, five state legislatures are presently considering similar shifts in their tax policies.

Next up was Ted Gwartney of the *Schalkenbach Foundation*. Ted capped the previous presentations by painting a picture of a world in which all public finance proceeded from Georgist principles.

In such a world, far different from our own, low inflation and high employment could co-exist; private incentives could be pursued within the general context of social equity; improved public services and lower taxes would not be ideas in contradiction. Public spending on infrastructure, such as bridges and subways, would no longer create a public-debt burden. User fees and rent collected from the increased land values that would be created by such improvements in transportation could cover the entire cost of these services. Infrastructure could easily be made to pay for itself.

Ted then expanded the scope of this picture by including the beneficial effects of land value taxation for other countries. However poor, any country could become self-sufficient in providing private investment capital from its own internal resources — simply by removing taxes on productive capital, income and savings and shifting them to land values.

Ted, who has been to Russia several times as a consultant, concluded by recounting the results of trips there and the chances of that country adopting Geo-fiscal land policies. His assessment: the chances of that happening are the best they've been since Leo Tolstoy hailed Henry George as the guiding spirit of his age!



Archival Illustrations
Stained Glass Window, 1901
 at the house of William Trueman, President of the Single Tax Club, New Haven.



Official Badge, 1916
 of the New Zealand Single Tax League for an international conference.

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A list of prior failed attempts to develop Georgia includes Sir Robert Heath (a 1629 grant from Charles I), eight wealthy Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas (a 1663 grant from Charles II), and Sir Robert Mountgomery (a 1717 grant from the Lords Proprietors). This was *contested* land, indeed.

Now... James Oglethorpe and a group of trustees would manage a chartered corporation-but not for profit. Their revenues would come from contributions, subscriptions and their own personal fortunes. None could own any land in the new colony named after the king.



Engraving of Oglethorpe

Despite the standard histories which characterize Georgia as a debtors colony, only eleven such families ever were released from debtors prisons to settle there. The first one hundred and twenty-five settlers were English and Scot artisans and tradesmen, who possessed the desperately needed colonizing temperament and skills. They were soon followed by persecuted European protestants, Saltzburgers and Moravians. Significantly, the emigres came in groups,

not as individuals striking out on their own. And they settled on tracts of land already selected and laid out for them.

The standard histories do, however, correctly cite the fact that a dear friend of Oglethorpe had died in debtors prison and Oglethorpe subsequently called for an investigation into conditions within British jails. The histories also mention that Parliament appointed Oglethorpe to investigate two prisons, Fleet and Marchelsea in England.

The corporation paid for the transportation and establishment of the first settlers. Soon General Oglethorpe found it wise to establish Fort Frederica and fight Spanish troops at the Battle of Bloody Marsh — using his personal fortune to fund the campaign — in order to secure the settlement for the British Empire. As a result, Spain abandoned its ambitions north of St. Mary's river (which had become the de facto northern boundary for Spanish Florida). Thus after 1742, the Crown had achieved its strategic goal at no expense to its own treasury.

Before the Trustee period the grant changed hands as successive schemes failed.

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And this was always so because the proprietor(s) failed to find willing settlers. Large land grants that lacked the labor to work them would only make the proprietor "land poor" - with lots of acreage but no income flow. The Trustees competently overcame the barriers to the supply of labor - by their recruitment policies and vital transport aid received from the Crown - but did not fare so well in developing the colony economically.

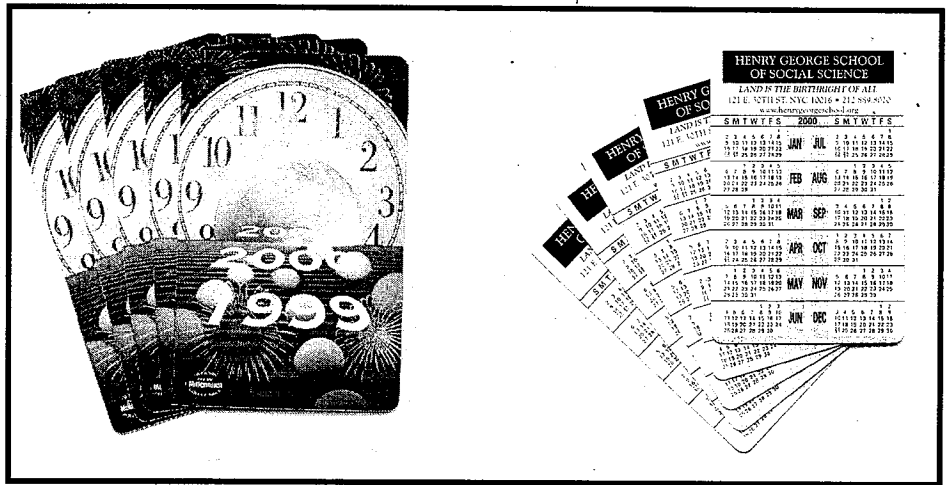
By policy there was a limit to landholding to discourage speculation or selling out to move out. Blacks (free and slave) and Catholics were prohibited - to prevent wartime insurrection or collusion with a rival contender for "the debatable lands." Indian trade was rigidly monitored, with rum trade being prohibited to avoid "incidents."

The produce of the small farms was not competitive. Indigo, for instance, grown on plantation scale was more profitable because of British subsidies through bounties. And the idea of importing mulberry trees for the silk market turned out to be wishful thinking when the anticipated "rich" export trade never materialized.

Instead, aspiring planters from southern Carolina surreptitiously established plantations within the Georgia Charter. Land jobbers accumulated large tracts through illegal buyouts of Georgia settlers and sold them to those ambitiously seeking to enter the "minor aristocracy" status of planters. Less scrupulous jobbers resorted to accumulating fraudulent headrights for sale.

Without policing and law enforcement of the Trusteeship policy, a spreading plantation economy became a *fait accompli*. The colonists soon demanded the right to buy and sell land - and slaves. They won on the land issue. But they were denied "the one things needful" that they cited in their petition - Black slaves, the source of labor 'necessary' to the success of any colony in those days. They had to wait until 1751 to gain that 'right.' Finally the Trustees had enough and turned Georgia over to the King in 1752.

As can be seen from this scenario, the struggle for ownership of land in the early years of what would become America took place in the upper echelons of the European powers. Land charters were granted and revoked at the whim of the State and there were few "solitary squatters" striking out to forge a clearing for themselves in the sylvan wilderness of the New World.



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