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Prints Article

Praising George

"... *Progress and Poverty* deserves to be revived ..." states Peter Barnes in a recent article in *The New Republic*.

Despite faults of reasoning and the erosion of the relevance of ideas through the passage of time, this book remains surprisingly pertinent, Mr. Barnes declares—and should be used as the starting point for a new political economy.

Mr. Barnes argues that American economic thought has "regressed" in that economists no longer turn attention to the distributive system. Instead they are enchanted by the functioning of the national economy and how the government can and should control it.

The economists' failure is reflected by the "brainwashing" of the public, which may care profoundly that poverty increases apace but which has been taken in by a myth of individualism. In George's day the Robber Barons were visible and notorious; today monopolies, unions, and advertisers are more subtle. They inculcate the Horatio Alger myth, the true villain: economic inequality arises not from some flaw in the system, but from personal inadequacies. Here Mr. Barnes cites George's famous paragraph to the effect that any runner in a race might win, but not every runner.

Although it is not fashionable to question the distributive system and to do so with "passion and compassion," Mr. Barnes would have the economic debate in this country become both radical and humane.

He chooses three points: whether land and perhaps capital are not public resources and should be appropriated from

Three New Courses in Spring Semester

The Spring semester is slated to show the same course relevance and expansion of the student body as the Fall semester. Three new courses are being presented, and two are being extended to a second semester because of student interest.

One of the new courses is Leonard Rubin's "The Environment: Problems and Solutions." Mr. Rubin is an instructor at Baruch College and has taught courses in *Progress and Poverty* at the School. His new course begins with the land policies of the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans and early Europeans. Subsequent sessions deal with the population problem and pollution; Mr. Rubin leads the students through a sequence he titles "what pollutes, who pollutes, what can and should be done about it," for air, water, and land. He then turns to environmental problems such as slums, crowding, education, and transportation; garbage and waste, and chemical destruction of the balance of nature. Finally, Mr. Rubin brings these together with a discussion of citizen action and individual contributions toward the solution of environmental problems. Citizen action entails defining the public's rights in land and asserting them through land value taxation, among other ecology-saving measures.

The second new course is "Critique of Political Economy," presented by Janusz

private hands; whether earned income should not be taxed at a much lower rate than unearned income; and at what points does the economic system permit wealth to be diverted to the few.

George wished to reconcile the ideals of liberty and individualism with the goal of economic justice. This is an unfinished task. "American political economy should get on with it."

Wisniewski, an instructor at Lehman College. "Critique of Political Economy" is a radical reassessment of the reigning schools of economic thought. Mr. Wisniewski looks critically at the way economics has developed into logical systems that fail to explain social and economic reality. Part of the course is examination of Samuleson's famous text and discussion of problems that academic economics does not or cannot elucidate.

The third new course is called "Individualism," taught by Henry Epstein, the Hunter College instructor who last semester presented "Reform, Revolution, Utopia." His new syllabus charts the course of individualism from John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham to de Tocqueville and George, from economic individualism to political and social individualism. The question asked is whether in today's technological world, with today's mass society, the concept of the individual is meaningful, and if so, in what way. Mr. Epstein draws upon the recent work of the psychiatric establishment and the anti-psychiatric establishment, too.

The two courses to be expanded into a second semester are "Economic Policies for America's Cities" and "Man vs Society." "Economic Policies for America's Cities" will probe further into poverty and poverty programs, slums and urban renewal, land use and taxation, and other urban problems that have become structural—and what various governments are trying to do about them. This semester Dr. Ralph Kaminsky, Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Public Administration at New York University, will lead the group.

"Man vs. Society," taught last semester by Dr. Lester Hoffman, instructor at C.W. Post College, is being developed further for the Spring semester. This course

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