



### *The Wit and Wisdom Of John Dewey*

*Quotations arranged under major topic headings. Edited by A. H. Johnson. Boston: The Beacon Press. 120 pp. \$2.*

John Dewey's 90th birthday on October 20, 1949, was celebrated virtually on an international basis. And while we cannot adequately pay tribute here to the matchless contribution he has made, we remind Henry George News readers that John Dewey is the honorary president of the Henry George School, who has provided some of our choicest quotable judgments about Henry George. "It would require less than the fingers of the two hands to enumerate those who from Plato down rank with him," is a frequently quoted statement among Georgists.

An excellent sample of the philosopher's views is afforded in *The Wit and Wisdom of John Dewey* where a "striking mixture of brilliant, stimulating insights and penetrating irony" are presented topically.

Brief statements on social philosophy and education, will be especially appealing to Georgists. Under the first of these topics we read: "We have talked a great deal about democracy, and now for the first time we have to make an effort to find out what it is." And again: "The only ones who have the right to criticize 'radicals' . . . are those who put as much effort into reconstruction as the rebels are putting into destruction."

In his field of greatest eminence, education, we find this clear statement from the philosopher who believes in action and integration as well as in thought: "It is as if no one could be educated in the full sense until everyone is developed beyond the reach of prejudice, stupidity, and apathy."

A volume much larger than the present one would be required to represent all facets of this vital American mind. Since Professor Dewey's views on political economy were omitted from this collection of *Wit and Wisdom*, probably in the interest of brevity, we take this opportunity to recall a few of them here.

Some years ago, speaking over a radio station in New York, John Dewey said, "I do not claim that George's remedy is a panacea that will cure by itself all our ailments. But I do

claim that we cannot get rid of our basic troubles without it.

In "An Appreciation of Henry George" written by John Dewey just 22 years ago, he stated that, "no man, no graduate of a higher educational institution, has a right to regard himself as an educated man in social thought unless he has some first-hand acquaintance with the theoretical contribution of this great American thinker [Henry George]."

John Dewey believes it is a poor version of George's ideas which insists only upon the material effect of increase of population in producing the material or monetary increment in the value of land. He sees in Henry George a thinker who placed "his emphasis upon ideal factors of life, upon what are sometimes called the imponderables."

In the closing paragraph of the "Appreciation," John Dewey summarized Henry George:

"There have been economists of great repute who in their pretension to be scientific have ignored the most significant elements in human nature. There have been others who were emotionally stirred by social ills and who proposed glowing schemes of betterment, but who passed lightly over facts. It is the thorough fusion of insight into actual facts and forces, with recognition of their bearing upon what makes human life worth living, that constitutes Henry George one of the world's great social philosophers."