

YOUTH & NEW YORK'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

Your Economic Future in New York was the theme of the 19th annual High School Urban Workshop cosponsored by the Henry George School and the New York City Council on Economic Education. Over 90 students participated from all five boroughs, more than filling the School's auditorium, on the morning of December 14th. The program opened at 9 AM with a welcoming statement from George Collins and introductions to the program by Stan Rubenstein, Director of the HGS High School Program, and by Dr. Albert Alexander, Executive Director of the NYCCEE.

The first invited speaker was Samuel M. Ehrenhalt, Regional Commissioner of Labor Statistics, on Youth and the Future of the New York Economy. He stressed over and over again that future jobs in the city will require better-educated workers: "How you shape up - whether you succeed - will depend on if you're on the right (educational) track: if you're learning the skills to make it." He presented various graphs and statistics to bring his viewpoint home. For example, from 1979 to 1988 manufacturing jobs in the city dropped from over 500,000 to less than 400,000. During the same period jobs in finance, business and professional services, education, cultural, media and communication activities rose from under 750,000 to about 1,000,000. Other figures reflected the fact that more women (171,000) entered the NYC workforce than men (83,000) between 1979 and 1988; and that the non-white racial minority (Black, Hispanic, Asian, etc.) now constitutes

49.5% of the NYC population, and will soon become the majority.

Students then heard three experts on Persistent problems facing the new administration. Gary Caplan, Director of Budget, Metropolitan Transit Authority, addressed the problem of Transportation. According to Mr. Caplan, 15% of the active fleet of subway cars are always under repair. All needed and wanted improvements to the system make the new subway-fare increase (from \$1.00 to 1.15 a ride) "absolutely necessary."

Taxation was tackled by C. Lowell Harriss, Professor Emeritus, Columbia University. Professor Harriss, a political economist, stressed the theme: "If you want service, you must pay for it." The earliest taxes were on property, he said, other taxes followed. New Yorkers are taxed more than anyone else in the country, paying a greater percentage of our income than other Americans. Of the city's 8.25% sales tax, one half goes to the city, one half to the state. Real estate taxes are underassessed and undercharged, especially on one- and two-family homes in the city: "They do not cover the cost of the services which the occupants receive." Prof. Harriss advocated a higher tax on land to pay for the creation and maintenance of housing. "Revenue raising problems facing the new mayor are not insuperable," he concluded, "but they are unpleasant."

Roger Starr of The New York Times gave the last presentation on Housing and the Homeless. Housing in New York City is so expensive for several

reasons: astronomical construction costs (\$140,000 to build one new apartment); high wages for unionized workers; high maintenance costs (water, electricity, heat, cleaning, repairs, etc.), and high taxes: "Henry George had the right idea: We should tax the land heavily and the buildings less as an incentive to build and create housing for people."

The Workshop concluded with a combined lunch/wrap-up session which included feedback from the students and comments by Dr. Alexander and Mr. Rubenstein.

SEEING GREEN

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featured a brand of Georgian decentralism since its inception. Its Fall '89 issue contains a feature article by Pittsburgh's land-tax/land-trust activist Dan Sullivan. Dan criticizes certain left-over ideas still held by some Greens, such as protectionism: "While the Green movement is focused on transcending national boundaries, protection makes it difficult to even cross boundaries.... Free trade is a natural process that would work quite well in the absence of manipulative central authority. Free trade presents problems only because other perversions of the marketplace have not been remedied." Dan also points out how our tax system has fostered this centralized, monopolized economy at the expense of small-scale producers. And, since "small is beautiful" in Green eyes, we can expect increasing Green support for fundamental tax reform. For a copy of *Green Revolution* write to School of Living, RD1 Box 185A, Cochranville, PA 19330.

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Tuesday 5:30-7:30

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