

## A Big Bite but an Important One

**JOHN DEWEY IN PERSPECTIVE**, by George R. Geiger. Oxford University Press. New York, 1958. 248 pages. \$5.50

Reviewed by WILLIAM JOCHER

"Whatever may be said for any other kind of knowledge, philosophy is self-enclosed. It has nothing to do beyond itself; it has no aim or purpose or function — except to be philosophy — that is, pure self-sufficing beholding of ultimate reality."

Thus does John Dewey describe philosophy, and in so doing, imply the problems involved in evaluating any philosophical work.

George R. Geiger begins his volume admirably by clearing away many of the nonsensical and often contradictory charges that have been leveled at John Dewey.

It soon becomes evident, however, that the bite which the author has chosen to take is an enormous one: *viz.* the long and prolific creative life of John Dewey. Dr. Geiger lists twenty of Professor Dewey's works in his bibliography; but the space allotted for chewing that large bite is very small indeed — a little over 200 pages.

John Dewey was Honorary President of the Henry George School from 1932 until his death in 1952. George R. Geiger is the son of Oscar Geiger, founder of the Henry George School. For his first book, *The Philosophy of Henry George, John Dewey*, who had long been his friend, wrote the frontispiece. George R. Geiger is at present a professor of philosophy at Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio.

To read John Dewey is to have a world of orderly thoughts, lucidity and insight, revealed to one. Whereas Dr. Dewey, in his many books, took an ample amount of space to develop his thoughts and relate them, the author of this biography merely sets them down one after the other in rather rapid-fire fashion. The result is that the reader has the impression of being force-fed.

Because of the very concise synthesis of Dewey's works offered by Dr. Geiger, appreciation of his book becomes a very personal matter. For a layman, the rather dogmatic exposition might become trying at times.

The value of this book will depend therefore upon the reader's background and capacity to understand and relate what is being offered. While that is true of nearly all serious books, it is exceptionally true in this case for the reasons given. Just the same this is an excellent book and definitely worth reading. The going may be a bit rough at times, but anyone wishing to make the acquaintance of John Dewey's work will probably expect to discipline his mental processes to a considerable degree.

Special Travel Memorandums have been mailed to HGN subscribers, with specific information and prices for those who have not yet requested reservations for the Georgist safari (July 25 to August 1st) in Hanover, West Germany, otherwise known as the Tenth International Conference on Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade. All you have to do is make up your mind and take the plunge — after that the Bankers and Merchants Travel Service, 511 Fifth Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. will make everything easy and pleasant for you.