

BOOK NOTES

From Poverty to Prosperity By 2000

Review by the Editor

As the subtitle of this study indicates, it deals with *prospects for reviving West Virginia's economy*. Edited by Walt Rybeck, this 63-page large format paperback offers a Georgist perspective on this Appalachian state. The paradox, like that of progress and poverty, is "That an area so richly endowed with natural and human resources is so economically depressed."

In his preface, Rybeck makes a sobering observation in this era of cold war victory: "Many nations, after decades of mindless bureaucracies and centrally-dictated production, hasten to call for free markets. Then, as they take a closer look at capitalism, some ask if this means they must face the poverty and high unemployment seen, for example, in Appalachia. We can't sell what we haven't got. If we have no answer for the poverty of West Virginia, how can we sell an answer to Russians or anyone else?"

And so, in December 1990, in Charleston, seventy West Virginian economists, business people, labor leaders, public officials, religious leaders and community activists met with twenty national experts to examine the obstacles to progress and the steps to overcome them.

This thirteen-chapter account of the proceedings covers a wide and deep range of issues: the problems and strengths of West Virginia; the state's poverty in the midst of its rich natural resources; how subsurface wealth has been taxed and how to make appraisal more equitable; efforts to update property taxation; basic rules of good taxation and how to raise revenue from land and natural resources without depressing incentives for work and prosperity; and tax issues related to school funding, farming, timber and housing.

Among the ninety participants, several familiar Georgists are quoted in this study, including George Collins, Steve Cord, Ed Dodson, Mason Gaffney, Ted Gwartney, C. Lowell Harriss, Sein Lin, Richard Noyes, Arthur Rybeck, Erika Rybeck, and John Strasma.

This work is dotted with nine case studies, or success stories. For example, Success Story #6 by John L. Kelly tells

"How It Plays in Peoria: Everybody Knew Plan Would Not Work, But It Did". This, perhaps, sums up the experience of site value taxation over the years. Everybody knows it won't work.... This book explains how and why it does!

Trying to Change the World

Review by Susan Klingelhoef

"The mayor of New York City, David N. Dinkins, proclaimed Sunday, September 1990, as Henry George Day." This is the opening sentence in a chapter devoted to Henry

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can be purchased from the Center for Public Dialogue, 10615 Brunswick Ave., Kensington, MD 20895 (Tel: 301-933-3535). Prices are \$12.95 each; \$10 each for 10 to 24 copies; \$9 each for 25 to 49 copies; and \$8 each for 50 or more.

Trying to Change the World

is published by DorPete Press, released May 15, 1992. List price is \$14.95 in the US, and \$17.95 overseas. It will be distributed at a special price by the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, 41 East 72nd St., New York, NY 10021.

George in the new book by Peter M. Rinaldo, *Trying to Change the World*. The author, a graduate *Summa Cum Laude* of Bowdoin College, discusses the lives of George and other reformers as a way of introducing his own program for reform.

George is in good company in this book: Rachel Carson, Moses Cotsworth, Margaret Sanger, Frederick Douglass, Susan B. Anthony, Randall Forsberg, and Ralph Nader. "Would you like to follow in their footsteps?" asks Rinaldo.

Chapter IV, "Henry George: Tax Reform", is an accurately detailed biography of the son of Catherine Vallance and Richard Samuel Henry George, "the second child and oldest boy." Rinaldo sprinkles the history of young Henry's life with such details as, "He also started a program of self-education... as well as attending popular science lectures at the Franklin Institute." And in reference to his early writing career, Rinaldo cites

George's second published piece, "a stirring article about President Abraham Lincoln's assassination entitled 'Sic Semper Tyrannis.'"

Most of George's subsequent writings are named, with special attention to *Our Land and Land Policy, Progress and Poverty, and Protection or Free Trade*. Unfortunately, the author fails to mention the success of *Progress and Poverty* as a classic of political economy, but compensates by carefully citing dates and numbers with regard to George's 1886 New York mayoral campaign, and later, his funeral in 1897.

Rinaldo writes about the "Single Taxers" conference in New York City in 1890, and names the inspired supporters of late years: Joseph Fels, Carrie Chapman Catt, Oscar Geiger (founder of the Henry George School), and Robert Schalkenbach. At the end of the chapter, meritorious credit is given to George's ideas with citations as recent as the fall of 1990, including the recommendation "that the Soviet Union put into practice Henry George's theory."

Henry George School at Sixty

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both breadth and depth. Efforts to integrate the Georgist philosophy with professional economists are bearing fruit, e.g., this year's intensive seminar for a group of economists from Moscow. The school has survived depressions, doldrums, and divisiveness. Speaking to the 7th Henry George Congress on the founding of the school in 1932, Oscar Geiger said, "If truth were the goal of our Schools and Colleges, ...our task, as our master's, would have been done." That day has not come, but the HGS's longevity, and its current vitality, make it likely that the school will continue its work until that day arrives.

- Lindy Davies

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