

Sydney Mayers

VIEWS THE NEWS

Intrinsic to the philosophy of Henry George is an abhorrence of war, and it is revealing that the late General Douglas MacArthur, though primarily famed for his military genius, shared this sentiment, saying: "I know war as few other men now living know it, and nothing to me is more revolting." Yet he also said: "In war there is no substitute for victory," a slogan even the most pacific can fervently apply to the War Against Poverty.

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The terrifying earthquake recently experienced in Alaska reminds us that, every once in a while, as if by design, Nature impressively demonstrates how puny are man's efforts against its might and power. Let us remember that among Nature's laws are those affecting political economy, and that we cannot violate these natural economic laws any more successfully than we can quell a terrestrial tremor.

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It is interesting to peer into smoke shop windows and see the attractive variety of new pipes, tobaccos, cigars and the like that tobacconists are happily supplying to meet the demand of those whom scary headlines have deterred from using the pernicious weed in the form of cigarettes. Even more intriguing (at least to the student of economic phenomena) is to observe how quickly and certainly the production of satisfactions follows an effective desire for them.

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The export of caviar is so important to Iran's national economy that the production and sale of this delicacy is a strict government monopoly,

which to some extent accounts for its high cost. However, as with many less glamorous commodities enjoying a brisk demand, black is not only the color of the finest roe, but also of a thriving market on the banks of the Caspian Sea, where astute buyers can acquire the tasty product at half the government price.

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For the first time in many years, more Puerto Ricans are returning to their native island than are coming to the continental U. S. A. Apparently the reason for this reverse migration is that new industrial and commercial activities have brought prosperous times and bright opportunities to Puerto Rico and its people—which is reason enough to board the first plane for sunny San Juan.

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By an odd coincidence, Soviet economists have proposed a new planning system for the U.S.S.R., based on rigid cost accounting instead of "arbitrary decisions," at the same time Congress has passed a law requiring all television sets made or imported in the U.S.A. to be equipped for 82 channels, even though a vast majority of TV viewers have access to only twelve, and will have to pay extra money for something they cannot use. It seems droll that America should thus adopt a practice which our Soviet friends, after decades of trial, now concede to be economically unsound.

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A New York Times statistician reports that the average taxpayer works 117 days a year to meet federal, state and local taxes. We eloquently refrain from comment.