

Christopher Williams

4/9/02 6 pm

Speech for meeting with Cubans re HG's influence on Jose Marti

I'd like to welcome you to the RSF, and to thank you all for coming. I'd especially like to thank our distinguished guests from Cuba who flew in from Havana this weekend to be here tonight, so let's give them a warm round of applause.

That should make up for the FBI strip search.

Our guests tonight are Armando Nova Gonzales from the Center for Studies of the Cuban Economy in Havana, and Luis Marcelo Year of the National Institute of Economic Research also in Havana. They will speak about the influence of Henry George on Jose Marti, the Cuban writer, philosopher, and revolutionary.

Translating for our speakers tonight is Ms. Quisia Gonzales.

As you may know, next year marks the 150th year of Jose Marti's birth, which was in 1853. So, as usual, Georgists are ahead of their time in celebrating it, and Robert Schalkenbach Foundation shows itself once again to be a leader in the Georgist movement, with our gathering here tonight.

The world has changed in many ways since the birth of Jose Marti and yet, for better or worse, Georgists have not changed all that much. Sometimes they remind me of Mark Twain, who said, "When the world ends, I want to be in Minneapolis-everything happens there ten years later." Mark Twain, by the way, was another writer who found himself greatly influenced by Henry George.

So Georgism has had an influence on the world, and tonight we're going to learn about its influence on thinking in Cuba. Our speakers have prepared a paper, copies of which are outside and available to you free of charge. They also have prepared a Power Point presentation which has been put on paper so that you can use it to follow the speakers as they make their points. I will pass the copies of the presentation out to you in a moment.

I am hoping that tonight we can also widen the inquiry to include a discussion of land reform in Cuba today, and what is possible in Cuba today under Fidel Castro, or in a post-Castro regime—if that can even be contemplated.

You may recall that, in 1968—34 years ago—when American President Lyndon Baines Johnson declined to run for re-election, millions of Americans lost their identities ~~because~~ because he had given them identities as anti-Vietnam War protesters, as activists, as radicals whom he characterized as subversives because they opposed the Vietnam War. When he refused to run, who was there to hate? His presidency, his war-mongering defined them, and now that he was gone, who were they? *without him?*

For almost forty years now, Fidel Castro has defined Cuba and Cubans. He gave them a national identity. Certainly, he gave Cuba and Cubans an identity in the eyes of the United States government. Since the Kennedy Administration, that identity was founded on opposition to United States policy. In so doing, he gave many third-world countries in the Caribbean, in Africa, and in Southeast Asia, and around the Globe, an identity. When his time in office ends, how will Cuba be defined? How will Cubans define themselves without him?

I am sure that you, too, will have many questions for our speakers who have agreed to ~~take questions~~ *answer them* at the end of their talk.

One final note: Before you leave, please check out our Publications Section. We have many wonderful related offerings. If you wish to make a purchase, RSF Staff member Sonny Rivera will handle it for you.

Now, it is my pleasure to introduce to you the first of our speakers.

Lucas Manuel Yera
Armando Nova Gonzales
D. Trade and over translator

Questions at end of the talk:

Note: Please address your questions to Ms. Quisia Gonzales, who will translate them into Spanish and vice versa, so that everyone can understand the questions, as well as the answers.

My questions

① What does ~~Fidel~~ Castro think of ~~the possibility of~~ land reform along Georgist lines? What is the possibility of land reform in Cuba under Castro? Or in a post-Castro Regime?

② In order to promote the possibility of land reform in Cuba, who should Georgists be trying to reach? Intellectuals? Influential writers? Local politicians? Government ministers?

Reasons
2 ideas: Cuban ~~agreements~~ ^{agreements} not functioning was, I should be functioning: ^{Commission set up} ~~agreements~~ ^{agreements} units - now Yera participated to choose a tax on use on land. Rent is implied ^{value}.
Castro said in public need to separate ~~separate~~ ^{separation} of property. To do so in reality need rent - It is like Tax w/ a w/ ^{trade} - because.
- need to continue transformation - development of new measures - + some continuation + new to stimulate ^{some} development of means of production.