

## Puzzles Concerning Progress and Poverty

Steve Sklar

Lecture given at Essex Ethical Culture, Prospect St, Maplewood, NJ on 09/27/2009

Good morning. So. Poverty. Progress and poverty, a puzzle. The economy. You must be a bunch of hardy and otherwise exemplary souls indeed to come out of a Sunday morning to consider the likes of that. And that reminds me of a joke:

A soldier, an engineer and an economist are stranded on a desert island. No food for weeks, they're starving, and then they find this can of beans. The soldier tries to open it first. He takes a rock and tries to crack it open. But the island's rocks are too soft, and he gets nowhere. The engineer drops it off a cliff, figuring soft or not, let gravity do the work. No luck there. So the economist sizes up the situation, and he says: "First, we must assume we have a can-opener..."

Hardy souls you are indeed, if you thought we would be talking about economics. Actually, though (as Sam Gamgee of The Lord of the Rings might put it), we will and we won't, if you take my meaning.

And actually, the important (and final, I'm sorry to say) joke of this talk, the one that'll be on the test, is this one:

These two guys, not the brightest - I'll tell no ethnic jokes this morning; supply the national origin yourselves - these two dumb guys are out deer hunting and they shoot a buck in the woods. They grab it by the hind legs and start dragging it back to their car. As they're dragging this thing, they run into another guy who sees them struggling and says, "You'll find it a lot easier if you hold it by the antlers while you're dragging it." So they start dragging it by the antlers. They're going maybe 20, 30 minutes when one of them says to the other, "Y'know, that guy was right. It is a lot easier this way." And the other one says, "Yeah. There's only one thing that bothers me. Now we're getting farther from the car."

Why do I mention this? I mention it because, when it comes to our ability, using the conventional wisdom, to solve the puzzle of why or how poverty persists and even deepens as civilization progresses - we are moving farther from the car.

At the moment, this wet Sunday morning in late September, it scarcely needs me telling you that we have a global economic crisis. Banks failing, huge accounting firms and other well established business concerns - rocks of stability we'd've thought would last forever - going under. Mass layoffs, ongoing. The question of the day is, given that the bills don't stop coming, if the income checks stop coming, what're you going to do? And for those who have been lucky enough to buck this trend, good luck bucking the anxiety of being caught up in it down the road.

And in light of the wealth-producing power our modern civilization enjoys in the Information Age, it is puzzling that poverty persists and deepens. We can find all manner of useful information on a personal computer in a matter of seconds, we can design and manufacture with greater ease than ever before, our transportation infrastructure is more streamlined than ever. But across the board, on the whole, for people in general it has long been the case, even before the current crisis, that you have to run harder and harder, financially speaking, just to keep from losing ground.

A hundred and forty years ago, the very puzzle of which I speak was described this way:

The present century has been marked by a prodigious increase in wealth-producing power. The utilization of steam and electricity, the introduction of improved processes and labor-saving machinery, the greater subdivision and grander scale of production, the wonderful facilitation of exchanges, have multiplied enormously the effectiveness of labor.

At the beginning of this marvelous era it was natural to expect, and it was expected, that labor-saving inventions would lighten the toil and improve the condition of the laborer; that the enormous increase in the power of producing wealth would make real poverty a thing of the past....

Now, however, we are coming into collision with facts which there can be no mistaking. From all parts of the civilized world come complaints of industrial depression; of labor condemned to involuntary idleness; of capital massed and wasting; of pecuniary distress among business men; of want and suffering and anxiety among the working

classes. All the dull, deadening pain, all the keen, maddening anguish, that to great masses of men are involved in the words "hard times," afflict the world to-day....

...[J]ust as ... a community realizes the conditions for which all civilized communities are striving, and advances in the scale of material progress -- just as closer settlement and a more intimate connection with the rest of the world, and greater utilization of labor-saving machinery, make possible greater economies in production and exchange, and wealth in consequence increases, not merely in the aggregate, but in proportion to population -- so does poverty take a darker aspect. Some get an infinitely better and easier living, but others find it hard to get a living at all. The "tramp" comes with the locomotive, and almshouses and prisons are as surely the marks of "material progress" as are costly dwellings, rich warehouses, and magnificent churches. Upon streets lighted with gas and patrolled by uniformed policemen, beggars wait for the passer-by, and in the shadow of college, and library, and museum, are gathering the more hideous Huns and fiercer Vandals of whom Macaulay prophesied.

So wrote Henry George in the book entitled, coincidentally enough, Progress and Poverty. So, what can we and do we expect from conventional thought on either the left or the right to solve the riddle? As to what can be expected from the left, I put it to you that the failure of the grand Soviet Experiment (totalitarianism, anyone? unliveable society?), or the inadequacy of Federal funding (that is, collective funding) to have prevented or to reassuringly even address the current collapse should suggest that from that quarter there may not be an effective answer. And the worldview from the left seems to me the best, that is, most compassionate, that is now available in conventional thinking on social problems. On the right, well, we need only reflect on the legacies of the Bush Administration (how do you like the environment now, gentlemen? global economic collapse, anyone?). Perhaps that's unfair to conservatives; perhaps the seeds of the current economic climate were planted back in the Clinton era. But even so, we have long had what is proclaimed to be the strongest example of so-called free market enterprise, or so-called capitalism, and look how we are doing with it. And as for up-to-the minute official commentary, in the last week or so our leading experts have told us only these two things about the current global crisis: 1) the

economy has at last bottomed out, but 2) the layoffs will continue.

As I said, then, with respect to the global economy, we are getting farther from the car. That being the case, this year as we enter that season when I have taken to addressing people at Ethical Culture, I say to myself, what better topic than the life and thought of the man whose writing I have just quoted?

Henry George's personal history is the story of the transformative impact of an insight on a life. And at the heart of the transformation, a puzzle and a solution.

Before the insight, George was a venturesome Philadelphian who'd tried his hand first at merchant seamanship, then at prospecting out West, then as a printer's apprentice, and had finally settled into a career as a California-based journalist, an editorial writer and an editor. It's true that he had been gaining a certain amount of attention from his writing about social problems, but it was a revelation of sorts that served as a kind of turning point in his life. In 1869, on behalf of the small newspaper he wrote for and edited, he'd gone to New York City to try to secure decent news wire service from the big telegraph companies. The trip was a failure on that score - the bigger papers and the telegraph companies had a relationship that papers of his type could not break in on.

But, the trip was valuable to him in another way. As his biographer George Geiger put it, "It was in New York that George saw at first hand an example of the bewildering coincidence of progress and poverty that he had been vaguely conscious of. Here in that mighty city of the East - where wealth and prestige were written on every brownstone front and the very air seemed charged with power - misery and wretchedness were already smugly accepted and the slums were beginning to fester." In New York, George vowed to himself to solve the puzzle. The solution to the puzzle, or at least the seminal insight which would make a committed reformer out of him, would come to him later, back in California.

But let's hold off on that insight for just a moment, to fast forward to the facts of his life after that revelatory moment. Working out, over the next nine years, a body of thought based on the seminal insight, he produced what remains his best-known work, Progress & Poverty. It sold in the millions of copies, more than many a bestseller of its day, and

this in the days before mass advertising; it was translated into French, Spanish, German, Dutch, Hungarian, Swedish, Russian and Chinese. Speaking and writing further about the ideas set down in that book, George amassed and inspired many followers, among them a good number of prominent figures - Tolstoy, Sun Yat Sen (a rare example of a statesman revered by both the People's Republic of China and Taiwan), the young Winston Churchill, the young Clarence Darrow (who began his own public speaking career at a rally for George), the young George Bernard Shaw. George went on to debate some of the leading figures of his time - Pope Leo the XIII, the Scottish Duke of Argyll (himself a prominent writer of that day), and, as debate was declined in this instance, he criticized, in a provocative book entitled "The Perplexed Philosopher," the social thinking of the philosopher Herbert Spencer. His followers nominated him to run, twice, for Mayor of New York. When he died in the middle of his second mayoral campaign, 100,000 people turned out to mourn him. He was eulogized by, among others, Felix Adler, the founder of Ethical Culture.

And now let's return to that moment of insight. The time is the late summer of 1870, not that long after the end of the Civil War. The country is still in the throes of what would come to be known as the Panic and Depression of 1869, the transcontinental railroad has just been completed. The place is the hills just outside San Francisco, which is to say, the site, more or less, of the closing of the frontier, and with that closing and the joining of coasts by the railroad, land values in the San Francisco area have skyrocketed. George has gone out riding, and remembers the revelatory moment thus:

...Absorbed in my own thoughts, I had driven the horse into the hills until he panted. Stopping for breath, I asked a passing teamster, for want of something better to say, what land was worth there. He pointed to some cows grazing off so far that they looked like mice, and said: "I don't know exactly, but there is a man over there who will sell some land for a thousand dollars an acre [which in those days was a huge sum]." Like a flash it came upon me that there was the reason of advancing poverty with advancing wealth. With the growth of population, land grows in value, and the men who work it must pay more for the privilege. I turned back, amidst quiet thought, to the perception that then came to me and has been with me ever since.

What comes in that moment to George, then, is this: The growing prosperity of the San Francisco area has mostly benefitted, not the people of that area on the whole, but the owners of land there, and particularly the owners of large and/or particularly valuable tracts of land, in the form of increased land values and the rise of rent. It is based on this insight that he works out, in his head, and in a number of writings, that it is the institution of private property in land that is responsible for the increase of want with the increase of wealth. Similarly, he concludes that it is only the products of labor, directly or indirectly - that is, wages or interest - that are and ought by right to be subject to private ownership, while land cannot justly be privately owned.

The constituent ideas which together make up George's thinking on social problems differ markedly, in important respects, from the tenets of the conventional wisdom, both left and right. I can do no more, in a talk of this length, than describe them fairly briefly, but I will do at least that.

George clarifies that the three factors of wealth production - three elements as necessary to the creation of wealth as heat, oxygen and fuel are for the creation of fire - are land, labor and capital. By itself, this does not seem particularly revolutionary. Nor do his definitions of terms. He defines wealth, quite sensibly, as "natural products so secured, moved, combined or altered by human labor as to fit them for the satisfaction of human desires." And he defines capital as wealth that is used, not directly to satisfy human desire by consumption, but for the purpose of obtaining more wealth. (Think of a person who finds a fruit tree and expends labor in picking the fruit. The result of that labor - the picked apples - can then be applied directly to satisfying desire, by being eaten; or the picked fruits can be held for sale or exchange. In the first instance, there is wealth consumed, in the second, wealth held for use as capital.) From these definitions it is clear enough that wealth can only be produced by the operation of labor (human exertion) on land (the natural universe).

But this analysis of wealth production differs in two respects, at least, from other analyses. First, George is clear and consistent in defining wealth, where other thinkers in the field, those preceding him and those coming after, are inconsistent, sometimes adopting the meaning just mentioned, sometimes confusing the term with the term value - and after

all, land, too has value - and virtually always giving it a meaning that is vaguer or shifting or both. Second, and similarly, George draws a clear distinction between land and capital, where others do not. John Stuart Mill and virtually all others who have considered the subject, essentially confuse and mingle the two terms. And it is the ramifications of those fairly simple differences in thinking that are tremendous.

For one thing, if land is distinguished from capital or from any other wealth produced by human exertion, and if it is understood that labor, whether by itself or with the use of capital, must act upon land to produce wealth, the Wages Fund Theory, which persists in popular economic thought, is shown to be a fallacy. And that in turn has huge significance, where thought on social problems is concerned.

According to the Wages Fund Theory, the ultimate source of wages paid to the laborer is the fund of capital devoted to and set aside for that purpose. That being the case (so the theory would have it), the more laborers there are, the smaller the wages that will be available on the average to each laborer. Under this view, in other words, capital being likened to the pie that feeds all, the more mouths, the less pie for each mouth. (This, incidentally, is the strongest source of anti-immigrant sentiment, something I am well aware of from my day job as an immigration lawyer, and many of my fellow immigration lawyers are ideologically torn by their dedication to the cause of immigration and their belief in the validity of the Wages Fund Theory.)

George shows the Wages Fund Theory to be erroneous. He points out that the ultimate source of wages is not capital but the labor that produces wealth, that the operation of the production and distribution of wealth depends, not primarily upon the pre-existence of a fund of capital unrelated to labor, but far more fundamentally upon the exertion of labor itself: business, whether simple or complex, is fundamentally hand to mouth, and the flow of wages back to the laborer is siphon-like, ultimately depending on the wealth produced by labor. Or in pie-eating terms, what the theory mistakenly leaves out of account is that with each new mouth that comes into the world, there is also a pair of hands - hands capable of labor and thus wealth production - that come with it. George also points out that if labor and capital are naturally opposed to each other, as the Theory mandates, wages would be expected to be high where interest (the return to capital) is low, and vice-versa, whereas

the truth is that wages and interest rise and fall with each other, and not in inverse proportion.

According to the Wages Fund Theory, Labor and Capital (or laborers and capitalists, so-called) are natural antagonists, what is good for one being bad for the other. This bears repeating because it is, essentially, the thinking that is central to Marxism. But George, developing and improving upon the thought of earlier thinkers (for example the French Physiocrats of the 18th Century, such as Turgot or Francois Quesnay), makes it clear that, where land is subject to private ownership, it is in effect land, or more properly speaking, the holders of large tracts of land, rather than capital or capitalists, that are the natural antagonists of labor, and in fact of labor and capital both. Again, this is made clear from the central idea that labor must have access to land in order for wealth to be produced.

Another and similar consequence of George's thinking is that it debunks the Malthusian theory. According to that theory (ascribed to David Malthus, an Englishman of the 18th century), increase of population brings about the conditions of poverty because increase of population has a natural tendency to outstrip the ability of nature to produce the wealth that is needed to support population. But George points out that in fact, population tends to increase the efficiency of wealth production. His thinking also makes clear that there is another, and entirely man-made (as opposed to natural) dynamic that depresses wages and makes poverty persist and deepen as civilization progress. And once again, that is private property in land, both in and of itself as a wrongful monopoly and insofar as it must bring with it land speculation.

A word or two about land speculation is in order, because of the role it plays in George's understanding of social problems. The value of land increasing as a community develops and progresses, where land may be privately held it is tempting - even inevitable - that some - many - and some on a grand scale - will hold it strictly for speculative purposes, against some future day when it can be expected to be worth more than they bought it for. And that dynamic will tend to hold land out of use, that is, will tend to keep it out of the access of labor. The more that process goes on, the farther people will have to travel from any given center of population to get access to land and the more land will be worth, being needed as much as ever but harder to get access to.

Two very local examples may be useful here. In 1991 or so, my wife and I bought a house on Ridgewood Road in Millburn for \$175,000. Five years later, after putting about \$20,000 of expenditure into it, we sold it for around \$300,000. The market value of houses in Millburn, as in so many towns and cities throughout the country, had climbed steadily, and in Millburn in particular in those years it had climbed precipitously. Now, we did not buy the property in order to turn it around at a profit, and we might like to think (and at least one of us does think) that it was our cleverness in choice of interior paint color or rather basic, tan, affordable new wall-to-wall carpeting that netted us this handsome return, but the truth is that it was the market for land in Millburn, and the introduction of New Jersey Transit Midtown Direct service, which brought resident commuters within one rather pleasant 40 minute train ride of midtown Manhattan, that put that windfall into our pockets, and had we sought to time it better and been able to do so, two or three years between purchase and sale of that property probably would have netted us the greater part of that gain. Considering the money we made from one deal to the next, we had expended little to no labor of our own (I know my wife would disagree with me here, but I did virtually all of the painting that wasn't done by an outside guy, and besides, I'm giving the talk here, so who are you going to believe). Rather, it was the growth of value due to the growing desirability of living in Millburn - the progress of the community, the development of the community infrastructure - that increased market value.

We did not engage in these transactions in order to speculate in land; we needed to cut down on our carrying costs, and when a broker told us what we could get for that house, we jumped at the opportunity. But it was the easiest \$100,000 dollars we ever made, and it's a sore temptation to do the same thing over and over again. Financially speaking, it beats the hell out of the practice of immigration law, so far, anyway.

Now consider a second local phenomenon. About 3 miles from here, down Millburn Avenue past Millburn High School and before you get to Morris Turnpike, on a large lot, stands the old Saks Fifth Avenue building. You have probably passed it many times even if you don't go there that frequently, because the large vacant building and the vast, vacant parking lot on which it is situated have been a-standing there, vacant, for at least 15 years, if not more. Recently, aware that this property had always intrigued me, if only on Georgist grounds, and knowing

that the date for this talk was coming up, I took it upon myself to do a little research. Really, it was a little research. I simply Googled about the property. A search phrase of "Saks Fifth Avenue building Millburn, NJ" or the like turned up some links, those links led to others, and pretty soon this picture emerged: It seems that the property has for the past 15 years been owned by a company called the Ahold Corporation, which is a European conglomerate that owns, I assume among other things, supermarket chains. And for at least some of that time, if not all of it, development of the property has been tied up in a kind of three- (or four-) cornered wrangling between Ahold, the Townships of Millburn and Springfield (the property being on the border between them) and, somewhat but not entirely *sotto voce*, Kings Supermarket in Millburn. It seems that Ahold has been desirous of putting up a supermarket on the property; the people of Millburn and Springfield (or perhaps the developers among them who attend town board meetings) are against that use of the property; Kings is against that use of the property. And so nothing has been done. But I say to you: fifteen years? Every so often, someone, a town resident, will look at the vacant property and propose to the town, or to anyone who will listen, "why don't we at the very least use the place for parking? Let's do something with it. There's a parking shortage in town." And, they might well also add, space is tight in Millburn and goes at a premium, whether for residential, or commercial purposes; a lot of that size, that centrally located, represents a lot of use - a lot of access to land, if you will, and the holding of it out of use inevitably forces would-be users of that land, whether shoppers or residents or office space users, that much further out; at the same time and for that very reason it keeps the cost of the use of land in Millburn, already high, that much higher than it would otherwise be. But, as I well know, and as a real estate lawyer in the offices I share reminded me recently when I discussed this situation with her, there's nothing the town can do to force Ahold to sell the property. That's the law. Ahold owns it.

A few years of wrangling, I could understand. That happens. A small space, who cares. But THAT much space, and FIFTEEN YEARS? There's no excuse for it. An explanation, in my view - my guess is that at this point this can only be land speculation - an explanation, a guess at best, but no excuse. In any event, you do not have to know the first thing about political economy to know that there is a serious sin against the public interest being committed here in keeping that much property in that location that long out of use.

Ahold and the old Saks Fifth Avenue property are but one example, and relatively speaking, not a very big one. The landscape is full of them. Sometimes you find vacant properties even in the heart of New York City, held for increase, or the depression season variant of these, newly erected ghost buildings asking rents which people now just can't afford and which landlords refuse to lower. New York City, where people are so desperate for even miniscule apartments (those professionals who can afford them; forget being a cobbler and living in the City these days) that they scan the obituaries for rental opportunities. Look around main street, here in suburban U.S.A., and you will find more ghost vacancies, stores and offices held for rents we can no longer afford to pay. Look at great parts of the landscape across the country. Try this experiment, the next time you are flying. Look down at the outskirts of even the most densely populated areas; scan the ground from the air. You will notice how quickly congestion (apparent overpopulation) gives way to great, unpopulated stretches, and only the smallest fraction of that is public parkland. I saw this over Puerto Rico this summer. San Juan, a city of more than a million people, many of them packed together in the *barrrios* that are famous for crime and poverty. But the island of Puerto Rico on the whole, seen from the air - verdant, luxurious, like one great nature preserve. Can the people of Puerto Rico use that land, even if (as is apparent from the air) no one is doing so? They cannot. It is privately owned.\*

On the subject of "private property in land," by the way, the provenance of private land ownership is itself a kind of interesting one. As George points out, if you go back in history in any region far enough, you find that land was held in common for public access; consider the concept of the commons, or the view of land tenure held by many native American tribes. Even in feudal times, it was held by the landholder, to some extent, in trust for the public; feudal tenure carried with it public obligation, including but not limited to the obligation to provide for the public defense by fielding a fighting force. There are still vestiges in law (albeit meaningless ones) of the difference between real property (that is, land) and personal property, in the archaic practices of the conveyance of land, which once were meaningful and connected with the public nature of land tenure. The point being, land has not always been subject to private ownership as it is today. Moreover, chains of title, if you trace them back far enough, originate either in conquest or theft. There came a time in England, centuries ago,

when the public obligations of even the feudal lord gave way to private landholdings; the commons were long ago fenced in and reduced to private ownership, most of them; at some point, or so I remember reading, great estates were carved out of the landscape and doled out by the English monarch as private gifts to his favorites. In this country, we can look back to genocide that dispossessed the aboriginal inhabitants in order to start many chains of title, and, particularly out west, to claim jumping and other ruthless practices of land grabbing.

As to Malthusianism, I put it to you that we are too ready to blame the sheer presence and increase in number of people on the planet for the existence of poverty. Rather, I think the true usefulness of the theory is a pernicious one: from the point of view of great landed interests, it's a wonderful diversion from the true source of economic problems. It puts the blame on nature, and what better way to keep it off of the entirely man-made institution of private property in land?

Well, all of that brings me, finally, to the second puzzle I was going to talk about today: if George's thinking is so compelling and the wrong he analyzed so glaring, why has that wrong not met with greater opposition, and why is George by this day relegated to virtual obscurity?

George's influence has, in its time, been greater abroad than in this his native country. It has extended to Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, Ireland for a time, England, Vancouver. It is true that there are still societies, to judge by Internet listings, promulgating George's ideas and reform proposals. And even here, there are still the last vestiges of so-called Single Tax communities. Fairhope, AL. Arden, DE. Free Acres, a small pocket about a 15 minutes drive from here at Berkeley Heights. The residents of those communities may have heard the name of Henry George but nearly all of them are wholly unfamiliar with his works. Vestiges, too, perhaps, have been left in the form of property taxes, even in this State, but those fall on improvements as well as land, and in any event vie for our funds with plenty of other taxes that, to a Georgist way of thinking, are wrongheaded and harmful. Given the very real and considerable excitement George stirred up in his day, here and elsewhere, how have the ideas he debated receded into obscurity? There have been several suggestions:

One explanation I have read has to do with a shift in the academic approach to the study of economic problems. That study

used to be known by the term political economy. Thinkers in the field, such as Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill, David Ricardo and the French Physiocrats, attempted, as George did after them, to discover economic laws by analyzing the workings of society using logic, common sense and thought experiment. But political economy began during George's lifetime to be replaced in the colleges with the study of economics as we know it today. This has included the so-called Austrian school, and monetarist theory, and now has a fair emphasis on statistics and mathematical modeling. To the Georgist way of thinking, a science has been replaced with a kind of metaphysical casuistry, as if in the place of natural philosophy you now have the study of how many angels can dance on the head of a pin. (As a Georgist might put it, the economist can tell you, with charts and graphs, how many poor people there might be in a given area, but of insight into why wages fall and unemployment rises, why there is poverty, there is none.) But what explains the disappearance of a once vibrant and fascinating study with a jargon-filled, hypertechnical and essentially entirely different one? It has been suggested that the change has to do with the influence of wealthy interests in Academe. The Rockefellers, for example, stand to wield great influence over Columbia University; they owned the land and for all I know still own the land on which the university sits. And, through endowment, other similar examples of influence are common enough.

Similarly, it is possible to see in the influence of great wealth over large media, in this age of ever more concentrated corporate ownership, another factor in the relative obscurity into which George's thinking has fallen.

However, as much as I find these conspiracy theories attractive, I must admit that I don't think they are the whole story.

I think there are ideological trends that have also contributed to the virtual disappearance of George's thoughts from the popular mental landscape. The advent and relative vitality of Social Darwinism - the view that the important law, and probably the only important law, that applies to the workings of human society as it does to the rest of the animal kingdom is survival of the fittest, the law of the jungle, dog eat dog - is a perennial opponent of any proposal for reform that is based on considerations of justice and fairness. The strain of relativism or subjectivism, in modern intellectual thought - that is, the view that there is no such thing as

truth, that there are no absolute principles worth adhering to - is another natural opponent to thinking like George's, particularly as we are talking about the field of social problems, an especially fertile ground for relativism.

And beyond that lies the difficulty of getting people to think for themselves. Even the type of thinking that George valued most, which is to say, thinking that eschews jargon and does not depend upon technical training - does take some time and some energy. And as we are pressed to run harder and harder just to stay in the same place, most days time, even for fairly simple thought, is harder to come by. My life is as much an example of that as anybody's. Introduced to these ideas in my youth, I consider how long it has taken me to take them up again and spend some thought on them.

So it is that nowadays George is, in this country at least, all but forgotten. When I was 18 (many moons ago), I went to England with a friend of mine and met a 90 year old ex-Labour-Party Member of the House of Commons, Sir Andrew MacLaren, who could speak of the Georgist Movement (wrongly, I think) as if it were still the hot, going thing. He has passed on, needless to say. And now, even at the annual convention of what is left in the way of Georgists, you are as likely as not to have those in attendance there pass the time by playing a board game, for the nostalgic value that's in it. (Monopoly is the game, it having been, and this is no joke, originated many years ago by followers of Henry George). People sitting around playing Monopoly. That, in this country at least, is what the once vibrant Commonwealth Land Movement (also called the Single Tax Movement) has come to.

But dormant as they may seem, the ideas, like certain tenacious seeds, have a way of living on.

This talk is only an introduction, and the ideas I've mentioned, many of them, anyway, do require (and I think deserve) more attention if you want to be in a position to evaluate them properly. I am, of course, ready to teach a ten session course on this stuff, if there is enough interest in it either now or in the future. Just give me contact info on the sheet that is floating around here somewhere, and if there's enough interest, I'll set up a course.

Remember those two dumb guys in the forest, lugging that deer by the antlers? If, when it comes to our understanding of

social problems, we have been moving in the wrong direction - and we have - I believe that the thinking I speak of today is what's needed to get us moving back to the car. In any event, I commend George's writings to your attention.

[A brief question and answer session followed the lecture.]

\*I have researched the subject of land tenure in Puerto Rico somewhat, though not exhaustively, since giving this talk, in an attempt to confirm my belief that much of the apparently unused land I saw from the air over Puerto Rico is privately owned. Land tenure in Puerto is a bit of a tricky research matter. It seems that, particularly in the first half of the twentieth century, a great part of the land of Puerto Rico was owned by absentee corporations located in the mainland U.S. Now, however, my research so far suggests that the system of land tenure on the island may be a bit of a legal morass, if it is true as reported that registration of land ownership is spotty and incomplete. It continues to appear to me that much of the land in Puerto Rico (and accordingly, much of the land I saw from the air) is privately owned, but by whom and in what sizes of holdings is (as it is elsewhere) not so easily ascertained without some deeper digging. It also appears that land tenure itself has been the subject of controversy in Puerto Rico during its history.