

YISROEL PENSACK, 1947-2016
by Toby Lenihan, Stanfordville, N.Y.

Yisroel Pensack was born in New Jersey on 9/11/47, not only the date of the greatest terrorist attack on the west committed in the misguided twisted name of religion (among other things), it was also the date of the writing of Henry George's "Letter to the Pope" the greatest religious leader of the west, in retort to the pope's misguided twisted defense of landlordism in the name of religion



Yisroel Pensack was a very serious, uncompromising, unequalled, devoted, brilliant Georgist voice until the very end

I first heard of him in 1979 when, on my returning from the San Francisco Centennial Henry George Conference, my father Herbert Altschuler told me about him. At that time he went by his English name Richard Pensack and he was working for the New Jersey "Star Ledger". My father had come upon his wonderful article written in that paper, "A centennial of importance to economics".

My dad upon reading the great article immediately got in contact with Richard and that started a wonderful, deep friendship and correspondence that lasted until my dad's death. Yisroel graciously sent me, a few years ago, a box of all my dad's letters to him which I cherish deeply.

Even later on after he dropped his English name and went by his Hebrew name Yisroel, my dad still kept calling him Richard and my dad got away with it. Yisroel was always very respectful and never harsh with my dad. They were both brilliant devoted Georgists, keen observers of events and also scholars of Judaism, and very spiritual deep thinkers. They had a very special bond.

I first met him in 1980 at a holiday Bob Clancy Georgist function in New York City where I performed some of my original Georgist songs with guitar. He was very gracious, generous in praise and delightful to talk to. I also met him again not too long after at the NYC Henry George conference at the Henry George School, and he was just as nice.

He went to other H.G. conferences when his health and finances made it possible. He called attention to some problem at the grave of Henry George that needed being attended to back in the 1980s.

Yisroel told me that he first got into Henry George through his own research. He didn't learn about Henry George from college where he studied in a medical program and then changed his major to finance in which he got his degree, but through his own delvings

He then went to the San Francisco HGS and became active there under the mentorship of Cathy Orloff in the 1970s.

In the early 1980s Yisroel went back to S.F. and worked for the newspaper there until his health problems made that no longer possible. He said he had a congenital heart condition and had a heart transplant later in the '80s

which eventually necessitated two other transplants and very much suffering.

But still he was always working as hard as he could in his own way for the H.G. cause. The articles that he found and forwarded were very brilliant. I especially liked his showing up the article in the Times about how in Iraq the Taliban kicked out the "Pillars of Society", the landlords, and gave the land back to the working peasants. This is what gives terrorist groups like that power. And of course then we came in and kicked out the peasants and brought back the lazy oppressive landlords. And of course that's why we're so hated around the world.

I very much liked and often quoted his phrase that "the S.T. would open the vast internal frontier" and of course by that means raise the margin of production and thus raise wages and end unemployment etc. He always stressed that this was the essence of Georgism and should never be lost sight of.

He created his own very well written Georgist website, <http://www.arwep.org/alliance> to raise wages and end poverty) which has been taken over by Cathy Orloff.

Some years back he had a very lively facebook page that I believe was called "Ask Henry George" where he answered questions as though he were H.G. David Gieson from the SF-HGS was a devoted friend to Yisroel right up to the very end when Yisroel died in S.F. on Jan 13, 2016.

(Toby Lenihan may be emailed at toby11@optonline.net. Yisroel Pensack's funeral home obituary is on the web at <http://obits.nj.com/obituaries/starledger/obituary.aspx?page=lifestory&pid=177317027>) <<

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