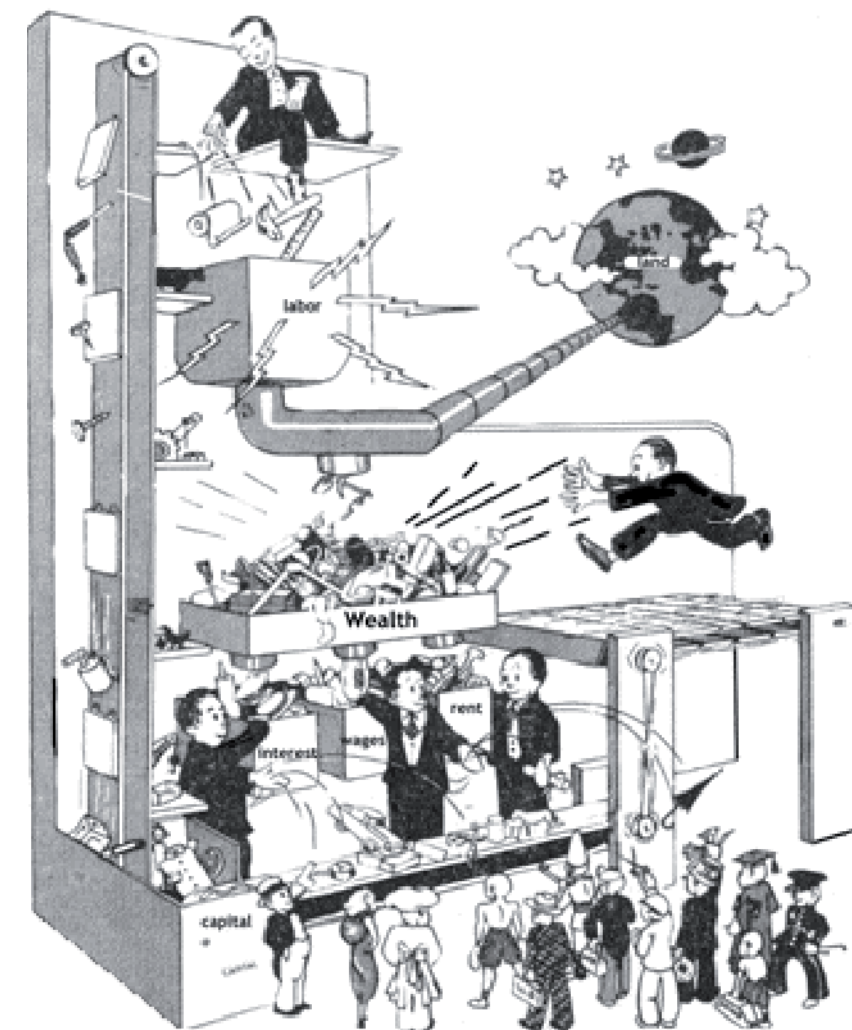


Wealth

Wealth the primary term of political economy...
Some explanation and definitions, and some comments.

Besides, as long as poverty remains possible we shall never be sure that
it will not overtake ourselves.

GB Shaw



The Wonderful Wealth Machine

Recommended reading for all participants:

1. Progress & Poverty. Henry George. (Condensed edition)
2. The Wonderful Wealth Machine. Phil Grant.

This series of leaflets "Wealth" "Land Labour & Capital" "Rent Wages & Interest" and this "Ethics" have been produced by the Melbourne School of Economics, 27 Hardware St., Melbourne, Victoria.3000

The Creator has made the Earth for the living, not the dead.
Rights and powers can only belong to persons, not to things.

Thomas Jefferson.

It is enough for the economist that desire exists, that the external thing attracts; thereby it is a "good" in the mere sense that it is desired: one wants it.

H.J. Davenport

But how can it be wealth of which a man may have great abundance yet perish with hunger?...

Aristotle

What is this thing called WEALTH?

Is it Dollars (\$)?

Is it valuable land?

Is it guns (or other weapons)?

Is it GOLD?

Is it Natural Resources?

Is it food?

Notes:

- Things to remember about Wealth.
- 1. It is produced.
 - 2. It is produced for a purpose.
 - 3. There are no moral or ethical considerations in its definition.

There are few words in more common use than this word wealth,

The original meaning of the word wealth is that of plenty or abundance; that of the possession of things conducive to a certain kind of weal or well-being. Health, strength and wealth express three kinds of weal or wellbeing. Health relates to the constitution or structure, and expresses the idea of well-being with regard to the physical or mental frame. Strength relates to the vigor of the natural powers, and expresses the idea of well-being with regard to the ability of exertion. Wealth relates to the command of external things that gratify desire, and expresses the idea of well-being with regard to possessions or property. Now, as social health must mean something different from individual health, and social strength something different from individual strength; so social wealth, or the wealth of the society, the larger man or Greater Leviathan of which individuals living in civilization are components, must be something different from the wealth of the individual.

H.George Science of Political Economy

This word wealth has been the bane of political economy. It is the bog whence most of the mists have arisen which have beclouded the whole subject. From its indefiniteness and the variety of associations it carries along with it in different minds, it is totally unfit for any scientific purpose whatever. It is itself almost impossible to be defined, and consequently can serve no useful purpose in a definition of anything else. . . . The meaning of the word wealth has never yet been settled; and if political economy must wait until that work be done as a preliminary, the science will never be satisfactorily constructed.

Professor Perry. "Elements of Political Economy" (1866):
As quoted in SPE.

Definition:

Thus wealth, as alone the term can be used in political economy, consists of natural products that have been secured, moved, combined, separated, or in other ways modified by human exertion, so as to fit them for the gratification of human desires.

It is, in other words, labor impressed upon matter in such a way as to store up, as the heat of the sun is stored up in coal, the power of human labor to minister to human desires. Wealth is not the sole object of labor, for labor is also expended in ministering directly to desire; but it is the object and result of what we call productive labor—that is, labor which gives value to material things. Nothing which nature supplies to man without his labor is wealth, nor yet does the expenditure of labor result in wealth unless there is a tangible product which has and retains the power of ministering to desire.

Henry George. Progress & Poverty