

LAND VALUE TAXATION IN PENNSYLVANIA FOCUS OF 1982 GEORGIST CONFERENCE

The 1982 Joint Georgist Conference, scheduled for Friday, July 16 to Monday, July 19, 1982 at Chatham College in Pittsburgh, PA, begins with a seminar on Incentive Taxation in Pennsylvania, which focuses on recent developments in Pennsylvania cities, such as McKeesport, New Castle, and Pittsburgh, where land value taxation has been used effectively to stimulate the local economies. Steven Cord, who has been instrumental in getting land tax legislation through in these and other cities, will introduce officials and councilmen who will report on the success of the land tax in their areas.

The theme of the conference is Effective Communication and Action for Land Value Taxation. The Chatham campus will be the scene of three days of panels, workshops and seminars sponsored by members of the Council of Georgist Organizations.

Workshops on Georgist Education, Media Strategies, Organizing Local Groups, and Assessing Land Values will be held on Saturday. Sunday's program includes discussion of nuclear war, a guided tour of Pittsburgh and the annual banquet, with Congressman William Coyne of Pittsburgh as keynote speaker. On Monday, the Council will meet to discuss plans for next year's conference.

A complete schedule and conference information appears on pages 3 and 4 of this issue. Travel directions to the conference site appear on page 6.

SCHEDULE OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN HOLLAND ANNOUNCED

The schedule for the International Conference to be held at Woudschoten Conference Center in Utrecht, Holland, Sunday, July 25 to Friday, July 30, 1982, has been announced by the International Union for Land Value Taxation in London.

The first two days will feature talks on The Legacy of Inflation and Land Monopoly in Britain by V.H. Blundell, Land Tenure and Taxation in Belize by Fred Harrison, a debate on Neo-Georgism led by Robert Andelson, and Georgist Progress in Holland given by Jan Pot.

Group meetings and future activities of the Union will be featured on Tuesday, and Stan Rubenstein will speak on The Dutch, the Patroons and the New World, and Steven Cord will address the issue, Rights: From Nature or Reason? on Wednesday.

The final two days will be filled with regional reports, with Arch Woodruff reporting on Land Reform in Taiwan, Mary Rawson on Resource Revenues in Canada, G.R.A. Dunkley speaking on Local Taxation in South Africa, and Raymond Crotty outlining Taxing Land and Economic Development in Ireland. Philip Finkelstein will address the question, Who Owns Earth?, before the conference banquet, on Friday, July 30.

PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL HEARINGS ON LAND TAX RESCHEDULED

The Philadelphia City Council has rescheduled hearings on a land tax proposal, originally set for May 20, to Tuesday, June 22. The bill will be considered for the 1983-84 budget, since the budget for 1982-83 was passed May 31.

DISARMAMENT

Henry George Newsletter
published by
Henry George School
of Social Science

Lancaster M. Greene
Chairman
Publications Committee

Philip Finkelstein
Director

Louise R. Pulini
Assistant

Subscription \$5 yr
For change of address
5 E. 44th Street
New York, NY 10017

AFFILIATES

LONG ISLAND
63 Cedar Drive
Plainview, NY 11803

PHILADELPHIA
413 S. 10th St.
Phila., PA 19147

NEW ENGLAND
80 Boylston St. #1106
Boston, MA 02116

CALIFORNIA
Box 655
Tujunga, CA 91042

3410 19th St.
San Francisco, CA 94110

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Isabel La Catolica #66
APO #758 S. Domingo

SCHOOL OF ECO. SCIENCE
(CANADA)

215 Lakeshore Blvd.
Toronto, Ontario M5A 3W9

3017 25 St SW
Calgary, Alberta T3E 1Y2

This month, and for a good part of the summer, while Georgists expound our remedy at conferences in California, New Hampshire, Pittsburgh and Holland, many other good and sincere people are meeting to demonstrate their concern with what is commonly regarded as the most terrifying prospect for the planet, a nuclear holocaust.

It is hard to take issue with such an outpouring of genuine belief in a noble cause by so many well-motivated people. Their cause, nuclear disarmament, specifically, or a general halt to the futile arms race world-wide, needs no iteration from those of us who have long understood the futility of production of non-goods, whose use we would all fear.

Yet before we are all swept up in the clamor of protest, let us examine its ultimate relevance. Is it possible that by banning nuclear weapons, we are legitimating the use of others? Are tanks and missiles, planes and ships in the South Atlantic and the Near East more acceptable because they kill more conventionally? Is it the efficiency or the wrongful use of a weapon that should engage our protest? There is indeed a Luddite tinge to the movement which sees its target as the technology of destruction rather than the fact of it. They are at one with the medieval opponents of the crossbow and some of the current critics of the computer, all railing against the excesses of which these newfangled instruments are capable, without seeking to eliminate the all-too-human cause of their misuse.

No rational argument can really be made for the increasing production and stockpiling of weapons, exotic or conventional, and we can, without a qualm, support efforts to halt, reduce or even eliminate such waste in favor of investment to meet human needs. Georgists can even add to the argument by pointing out the monopoly aspect of arms in which government is the only customer and producers compete, not against each other, but for markets regulated and controlled by national authority. Perhaps there is something of a free market in second-hand arms, the international grey or black market, which consumes the products so quickly made obsolete by technology. But the volume of arms production and sales is enough to distort whatever is left of a free economy, wherever it exists, including our own. Witness the shortage of engineers and technicians for military production employment and the massive unemployment in civilian goods and services.

Georgists should not confuse our own contribution to the disarmament protest with our more lasting concerns for peace, justice and freedom. We must be careful to distinguish between the causes of conflict in unjust distribution of access of the resources of earth, from the horrifying manifestations of conflict, either conventional or nuclear warfare. We must be careful too, not to mistake pacifism for passivity. There may well be some things worth fighting for, including life itself and the enhancement of human dignity. Those of us who enter the fight for disarmament should remember the underlying concerns that remain the true target.

Philip Finkelstein

1982 JOINT GEORGIST CONFERENCE
PROGRAM

DATE: Friday, July 16-Monday, July 19, 1982
PLACE: Chatham College, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

FRIDAY, JULY 16

Afternoon Registration

7:00 PM Incentive Taxation in Pennsylvania: Steven Cord, Chairman

SATURDAY, JULY 17

9:30 AM Who Owns Appalachia?: Dan Sullivan, Chairman

How to Get Results: Steven Cord

2:00 PM Reports from Georgist Organizations: Edward Dodson, Chairman

Teaching the Moral Argument: Stan Rubenstein

Workshops:

Assessing Land Values: Philip Finkelstein, Chairman

Georgist Education: George L. Collins, Chairman

Media Strategies: Richard Noyes, Chairman

Organizing Local Groups: Mitchell Chanelis, Chairman

7:00 PM Land and the Federal Government: Craig Cringan

The Meaning of Political Action: Richard Biddle, Chairman

SUNDAY, JULY 18

9:30 AM The Nuclear Holocaust: Mark A. Sullivan, Chairman

2:00 PM Guided Tour of Pittsburgh (optional)

5:30 PM Social Hour

6:30 PM Banquet: Philip Finkelstein, Chairman

Congressman William Coyne

Professor Carl Cooper, University of Pittsburgh

Presentation of Media Foundation Award

MONDAY, JULY 19

9:30 AM Meeting of Henry George Foundation: Steven Cord, Chairman

10:30 AM Meeting of Council of Georgist Organizations; Conference

Evaluation and plans for next year: Robert Clancy, Chairman
Adjournment

RESERVATION FOR PARTIAL ATTENDANCE (see over to reserve Full Conference)

Please reserve ____ places for me from ____ to ____ (incl. room & meals)
(day and hour)

Enclosed is \$____ Conference Fee at \$15 per person (will pay balance at
Conference at pro rata charge).

Please reserve ____ places for me on Sunday bus tour. (Pay at conference)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Send form and make checks payable to Council of Georgist Organizations
5 East 44th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017.

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

All members of Georgist organizations, friends and readers of the Henry George Newsletter are invited to attend. Pittsburgh and Pennsylvania are of special interest because of recent advances in land value taxation. An interesting and relevant program has been prepared at an attractive location, in a pleasant environment. If you receive an extra copy of this invitation, please pass it along to a friend.

Reasonable rates have been arranged: a package price is offered, with a reduction for payment in advance. Package includes \$15 conference fee, room for three nights (Friday to Sunday), and all meals from Friday dinner to Monday lunch. Rooms are \$15 per night per person, whether in single, double or triple room. The full conference fee is \$110 if paid at the conference and \$100 if paid in advance. Fill out the form below if you are attending the full conference, or the form on the other side if you are attending only part of the conference. Please mail the reservation by July 2.

Travel directions to get to Chatham College are printed on page 6. Registration and dormitories will be at Woodland Hall, and most meetings are at Cooldige Lecture Hall. The meals are served at Mellon Center, and the schedule is:

Breakfast 7:30 AM
Lunch 12:30 PM
Dinner 5:30 PM (Sunday Banquet is at 6:30 PM)

A cash bar will be available at the College, Friday to Sunday, open from 9:30 PM. There will be a guided bus tour of Pittsburgh on Sunday afternoon. The Conference package does not include charge for this, but please reserve if interested, to guarantee you a place on the bus; payment will be made at the Conference.

Details about the rest of the program are on the reverse side. In addition to the printed program, conferees may organize ad hoc meetings and programs; e.g., extra sessions of the workshops. This printed program is subject to modification.

For further information, write to the Council of Georgist Organizations at 5 East 44th Street, New York, N.Y., 10017, or phone 212 697-9880.

RESERVATION FOR FULL ATTENDANCE (see over to reserve for partial Conference)
Please reserve ____ places for me at the conference, July 16-19.
Enclosed is \$ ____ full payment at \$100 per person (Save \$10 per person)
OR \$ ____ Conference Fee at \$15 per person (will pay balance of \$95
per person at Conference).
Please reserve ____ places for me on Sunday bus tour. (Pay at conference)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

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SCHOOL NOTES

NEW YORK

Over forty students, including fifteen who took Spanish-language courses with Manuel Felix, attended a graduation ceremony for the Winter and Spring Semesters in New York. Director Philip Finkelstein handed out the certificates and H.G.S. Trustee Fryda L. Ossias congratulated the graduates.

Finkelstein was recently interviewed and will be part of a half-hour TV documentary, "Bullish on Long Island," which will be aired Wednesday, June 30, at 8:30 p.m. on WNEW-TV, Channel 5, in New York.

LONG ISLAND

Over twenty groups have expressed interest in using the services of the newly formed Speaker's Bureau, according to Director Stan Rubenstein.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Twenty-six students recently graduated from courses in Fundamental Economics in San Francisco, Berkeley and Marin County. At the Sacramento branch, six students completed the basic course.

LOS ANGELES

Director Harry Pollard reports seven students graduated from courses this semester, bringing the total to fifty-two for the year. New graduates are invited to join the Alumni Group International program, to continue their association with the school.

SEYMOUR RAUCH MAKES CASE FOR LAND VALUE TAXATION IN BUFFALO

The following are excerpts from an article, "Why Downtown Withered," by Seymour Rauch, director of the Niagara Frontier Extension of the Henry George School, which appears in the "On the Record" Section of the Buffalo, N.Y. Courier-Express, on Monday, May 10, 1982. Permission to excerpt the article, c1982, is given by the publisher.

"Urban tax policy in Buffalo and other cities works backwards. Real estate taxes place a higher burden on buildings than on land value. By undertaxing land values, land speculators and holders of underdeveloped properties are encouraged to neglect their parcels until they find a builder willing to pay an exorbitant price."

"As a result, land prices, over the long range have risen faster than any other housing cost. Even interest has risen less if one discounts the effect on interest of spiraling land prices. Nowadays, land costs are twenty percent of housing costs compared to the former range of ten to fifteen percent."

"Suppose the burden of real estate taxes were inverted. Suppose taxes on land values were tripled and building taxes reduced correspondingly so there was no loss in city revenue. What is likely to happen? Land speculators, exploiters of rundown commercial property and slum landlords would have to build or get off the lot. It would be costly to sit and wait until desperate needs for good sites were met by private overpayment or through subsidy by government. The ostensible land shortage would vanish."

"Good land available at sensible prices would combine with reduced taxes on buildings to provide enormous incentives to developers. Possibilities for profit would rise. Annual carrying charges would fall sharply. A good return on investment could be made at lower rentals than before, encouraging office tenants to move back to downtown areas. Along with a new building boom would come rehabilitation of buildings worth saving, including historical landmarks. With more disposable income downtown, retail selling, theatre, restaurants and cultural activities would boom."

"All the benefits of the subsidy would accrue to the downtown situation, without cost to virtually all the taxpayers. No commuter taxes, no federal revenue sharing, no city taxes would be needed. Buffalo could become a self-supporting city and a living proof that the urban life can be the best life."

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS TO CHATHAM COLLEGE, SITE OF 1982 CONFERENCE

Chatham College is next door to the Oakland, Shadyside and Squirrel Hill business areas of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It is thirty minutes by bus or twenty minutes by taxi from the Golden Triangle and approximately forty-five minutes from the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport. (An hour should be allowed if visitors plan to use limousine service from the airport.) Pittsburgh International Airport is served by seven major airlines, with more than 300 daily flights from most cities in the U.S. Two airlines, U.S. Air (212 736-3200) and People Express (212 772-0344) have convenient, inexpensive and short flights from the New York City area. Greyhound and Trailways Bus lines also travel frequently to downtown Pittsburgh, and schedules can be obtained by calling Port Authority Bus Terminal (212 564-8484).

Drivers coming from the East and West should exit the PA Turnpike at Pittsburgh Interchange #6 and follow Interstate 376 (Penn-Lincoln Parkway). Continue west on the Parkway through the Squirrel Hill Tunnel and exit immediately after the tunnel at Squirrel Hill Exit #8. Follow exit ramp to first left (Forward Avenue), turn left onto Forward Avenue and drive to the first traffic light. Then bear left onto Murray Avenue and proceed through the Squirrel Hill business district until Murray Avenue dead-ends at Wilkins Avenue. Turn right onto Wilkins Avenue, then turn left after a half block onto Woodland Road. The entrance is identified by two red brick pillars. Chatham is located on Woodland Road. It is twelve miles from Exit 6 of the Turnpike to the campus.

When coming from the West, North or South, on I-70 or I-79, proceed on I-79 to Penn-Lincoln Parkway East to downtown Pittsburgh. Then follow Interstate 376 to the Squirrel Hill Tunnel exit and follow directions in the preceding paragraph.

Henry George School of Social Science
5 East 44 Street
New York, NY 10017

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