

"Progress and Poverty" Centennial Committee

Commemorating the 100th Anniversary of Henry George's Masterwork "Progress and Poverty"

1879 - 1979

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THE HENRY GEORGE MANIFESTO OF 1979

Agnes de Mille,
Honorary Chairman

"It would require less than the fingers of two hands to enumerate those who, from Plato down, rank with Henry George." - Dr. John Dewey, Professor of Philosophy, Columbia. Political Economy is only free trade, domestic and foreign, any interference tending to add extortion to the exchange. The French Physiocrats advocated laissez-faire, and a Single Tax of 30 % of the ground rent. William the Conqueror's England ethically supported itself from ground rent, despite complaints about the Domesday Book, listing landholdings, until the Magna Carta traded civil rights to the nobility, for the power to shift, gradually, 96 % of the cost of government to labor. (Richard Cobden) Henry George proposed, in addition to free trade, the full assessment of ground rent alone, created by nature, population and community development, without individual effort, thus returning, in public services, the value to which the community is entitled. This would force all land into its best use, to pay the assessment, or cause its release, for the use of others; ending the hoarding and speculative pricing which keeps millions unemployed, while providing enormous unearned income to land speculators, to beneficiaries of zoning changes, of subsidized "urban renewal" (robbing the displaced), of legally and illegally underassessed land, used and idle, and to all who hold land while population and development expand. Without full assessment, competition for an artificial scarcity of sites forces up land values until they absorb all increases in production and savings, leaving landholders, not producers, the ultimate beneficiaries of any gains. (Churchill) Speculative pricing adds to inflation. Many urban and rural areas of ancient China assessed ground rent exclusively, and many in Australia, New Zealand and western Canada either exclusively or at a higher rate than improvements. Denmark assesses ground rent for a portion of its federal revenue. Mencius, disciple of Confucius, (372 B. C.) urged rulers: If in the market place he levy a ground-rent on the shops but do not tax the goods...then all the merchants of the empire will wish to have their goods in his market place."

Sale price of land - capitalization of the unassessed portion of ground rent - would become nominal; while rent would be only its superiority over marginal land. This would equalize site values, tending to equalize production costs, and thus opportunities, as labor and labor products cost about the same to all. Ample selection from the ensuing surplus of jobs would enable everyone to exercise his faculties in safe, non-polluting work of his choice, at his skill level, at any age, for himself, for or in cooperation with others, and obtain the equivalent of his production - his economic wage - without violence or legislation. It would enable him to reject the unethical work of trapping animals, ruining the ecology, deteriorating or poisoning foods, in growth or processing (WHAT WE EAT TODAY - The Food Manipulators Vs. the People, CONSUMER BEWARE!), causing tremendous health and dental problems; making illegal arrests (kidnappings), beating suspects, peaceful dissidents and prisoners; fiendishly torturing laboratory animals by the millions, in exotic, frivolous, unnecessarily prolonged, endlessly duplicated experiments, when mechanical means are largely available for whatever is useful; and the torturing, denaturing and poisoning of "intensively" raised livestock, in rearing, slaughtering and processing. (ORDEAL OF THE ANIMALS, SAY NO!, ANIMAL LIBERATION).

Surplus jobs would solve or minimize other problems: slums, unemployment payments, theft, prostitution, rape, corrupt and inadequate relief, the need to forget, in drink and drugs; hunger, sickness, mental retardation, insanity, suicides, battered wives and children, broken homes (one-third of Chicago black families have no father at home; one-half of Mexican families), the ability of a wife to support herself, runaway children, violence, vandalism, arson; dishonest business practices; incompetent, brutal charity hospitals and asylums (I'M DONE CRYING); negligible support for clean energy, or known methods of saving more energy than any source can soon produce. (THE MENACE OF NUCLEAR ENERGY) Combinations

in restraint of trade (most), interchanges of stock, interlocking directors, countless unwarranted loopholes and other direct and indirect favoritism must end, to help end monopolies. Professions and trades must then be demonopolized. (SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL - more efficient) Natural monopolies - banking, insurance, utilities, railroads, city transport, airlines should be government operated, as in many other countries. Delivery of mail should be competitive. Royalties should make patents available.

Adam Smith: "Civil government, so far as it is instituted for the security of property, is in reality instituted for the defense of the rich against the poor." Senator R. F. Pettigrew, in IMPERIAL WASHINGTON: "The Constitution is...the greatest document ever designed by man for the safeguarding of the few in their work of exploiting and robbing the many..." Sir Thomas More, in UTOPIA: "when I weigh in my mind all these commonwealths which nowadays anywhere do flourish, so God help me, I can perceive nothing but a conspiracy of rich men procuring their commodities under the name and title of commonwealth." Herbert Spencer, in SOCIAL STATICS: "If one portion of the earth's surface may justly become the possession of an individual...eventually the whole of the earth's surface may be so held...(and) landless men might equitably be expelled from the earth altogether." The Trilateral Commission (Rockefeller) (U. S., western Europe and Japan) works for the reduction of competition among the industrial giants of the developed world, and the decadence and sadistic repression of the Third World, for the easy exploitation of both.

Grass roots ombudsmen should check government and major business, to prevent organized white collar crime, so vast as to make "organized crime" look like a "push cart" operation. (THE RICH AND THE SUPER-RICH), and institutions, to prevent abuse of inmates. We should cancel the national debt, except for paying small bondholders. A national debt is like "a check upon the First National Bank of the Moon." - Henry George. Infinite variables and prejudices make "positive law" an absurdity. We need representative mediation, at nominal or no expense, to obtain equal justice for rich and poor, of all races; an end to playing God with sumptuary laws; monetary restitution to replace penology, benefiting injured and guilty, with detention for the emotionally dangerous. (INJUSTICE FOR ALL) Polygraph or PSE tests must be accepted as evidence of innocence, or abuse, but not individual guilt. Accusations should also be subject to check. This would free the 5 % innocent in prison, end countless other miscarriages of justice, convert sentences to monetary payments, with restitution for the innocent, and victims of excessive sentencing or abuse; end the beating of 25 % of police pick-ups, out-of-this-world sentencing, hellhole caging, sadistic treatment and neglect. exploitation in work or dangerous drug testing, denial of usual sexual relations, infliction of interminable gang rape by the millions (TERROR IN THE PRISONS), many murders, long delays, the cost of lavishly supporting 350,000 lawyers, and the entire iniquitous miasma of sadistic repression. "the best use that could be made of our great law libraries...would be to send them to the paper mills." - Henry George. Mediation should give Reservation Indians, now threatened with extermination as a people, sovereignty over adequate lands to enable them to live a free and full life.

"Men had better be without education than be educated by their rulers; for their education is but the breaking in of the steer to the yoke;" - Thomas Hodgkins, 1823. "Bastiat saw in compulsory public-financed education the means by which the social architects could mold society to their will. ...'The solution to the social problem lies in liberty.'" - FREDERIC BASTIAT, A MAN ALONE. DESCHOOLING SOCIETY and RADICAL SCHOOL REFORM advocate voluntary resource centers. A 12-year-old can learn, in four months, the essentials of eight years in grammar school. Much of both youth and adult life is a squirrel cage of activity, for the profit and entertainment of POWER, INC. Henry George said that we could live well, and afford to travel, on a few hours of pleasant work a day. While working for basic reforms, we should immediately furnish adequate charity, and end brutality toward captive humans and laboratory animals, by executive order or otherwise, and assure ourselves of our humanity.