

# The Henry George News

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## Hartzok Says Americans Barred from Land

Most Americans have as little access to land and resources as the poor of the Third World, Alanna Hartzok told the People's Assembly at the United Nations last month.

Speaking at the *Forum for Survival* meeting of the People's Assembly in the Dag Hammarskjold Library, Ms. Hartzok was part of a panel organized by Dr. Harry Lerner, Representative of the World Citizen's Assembly to the U.N., and Coordinator of the World Council for the People's Assembly. Mark Sullivan, Secretary of the Council of Georgist Organizations was also in attendance.

Ms. Hartzok told the group:

"I am sure that all of us here are in agreement that a more equitable distribution of wealth and basic resources is a key challenge at this time, and that the maldistribution of resources is a major source, if not the major source, of world conflict and unrest. The poorer citizens of the world are becoming increasingly vocal that they no longer want the kind of 'foreign aid'

that has been given to them by the richer nations. They instead want to be free from economic exploitation of their land, labor and resources. What can be the response to this plea of those of us with world concerns who live in the wealthy nations? Surely we will no longer want to lend support of any kind to the lifestyles or economic systems that harm and hamper the development efforts of our brothers and sisters in other parts of the earth.

"It appears that the creation of economic justice throughout the world can best begin right where we are. For those of us in the U.S., we need to understand

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## Georgists Respond to White House Plan

Robert Scrofani, Director of the HGS in San Francisco, with the assistance of Alanna Hartzok, has compiled a series of responses to the White House Global Task Force on Resources and Environment report entitled *Global 2000: Report to the President on Entering the Twenty-First Century, Volumes I, II and III*.

In 1977, President Carter directed the Council on Environmental Quality and the Department of State, working in cooperation with the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Science Foundation and others, to make a one-year study of the probable changes in the world's population, natural resources, and environment through the end of the century. After three years, three volumes have been produced, with Volume I as the summary, Volume II covering the technical aspects of the report and Volume III

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## Land Conference in the Dominican Republic

A conference on land value taxation will be held in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, January 8-10, 1981 sponsored by the Henry George School of Social Science and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy.

Arrangements for the conference were made during a visit by Philip Finkelstein, the school's director, to Santo Domingo, at the request of the Dominican Ministry of Agriculture. The Agriculture Secretary, R. Hipolito Mejia, indicated strong support in his department and other Dominican ministries for the

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# EDITORIAL

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## Beyond the Elections

The change voted in by Americans on Election Day may be greeted with anything from dismay to cheers to indifference. The conventional political spectrum is not broad enough for the range of political belief and allegiance among followers of Henry George. While some may be heartened by the winner's stand for lower taxes and shunning of big government, others might regret his proposed expansion of military expenditures or the proposed favored treatment for owners of land and natural resources. Some of our California readers will note the substantial benefits to him personally as a holder of valuable hunks of that state. Many will recall his own indifference to the cause of land and tax reform, an attitude in all fairness he shares with most mainstream politicians. It should be noted too that the minority candidates, from the well-financed and highly visible Libertarian campaign, to the bio-political Barry Commoner, scarcely made a dent either. Even John Anderson's effort was successful only in that he is able to pay his campaign debts. Those who have been urging Georgists to aim our efforts at any or all of the above might have second thoughts and third, and more.

In fact, national politics in the U.S. and elsewhere are only one arena and not necessarily the most significant one for modern application of the Henry George thesis. Collection of the economic rent for supporting public services at the local level is more appropriate, no matter what the politics of the city, town, village or community. Republicans, Democrats, Liberals, Conservatives, reformers and even radicals can agree that the best revenue base for their locality is the only one, that when taxed cannot escape their jurisdiction. Economic developers and environmental preservationists can equally favor rebuilding our cities and protecting the countryside; balancing our use of natural resources with the health, safety and welfare needs of the entire community.

In fact, the major focus of Henry George and his followers need be neither the nation state nor the local community but the entire planet. The whole question of who owns the earth and its resources and how they are to be distributed for the benefit of all mankind fundamentally attracts concerned people the world over. Many of these people can be won over to our cause. It will be up to us to direct our efforts towards this broader and more lasting approach.

# Effective Tax Rates Continue Decline

Effective property tax rates for 1979 continued to decline from their 1976 and 1977 highs for all classes of real property in the metropolitan area, according to the latest edition of *Effective Real Property Tax Rates*, published by the Center for Local Tax Research. The declines are attributed to higher property values not reflected in assessments.

Effective rates for every metropolitan county in New Jersey were lower for residential property, with only two counties, Essex and Warren, having higher rates for business property. In the metropolitan counties of New York, five had higher rates for all classes.

For the first time in five years, New York City's Finance Department has refused to make its data available to the Center for the report. Until such time as New York City publicly discloses the real data on its tax base and a coherent policy in assessing it, the assumption must be made that its real property tax is levied more inequitably and more irrationally than the rest of the region.

The 1980 20-page supplement and the 1979 five-year summary are available for \$3.50 by writing or phoning the Center for Local Tax Research in New York City.

*The following article appeared in the New York Times, November 10, 1980, and is being reprinted with the permission of the paper, ©1980.*

## City Won't Let Analysts See Real Estate Sales Data

By PETER KIHSS

New York City, facing numerous challenges that its real estate tax assessments are far below market values and discriminate among classes of property, has refused to make official real estate sales data available to analysts for the first time in five years of studies.

The refusal follows reports by the Center for Local Tax Research of so-called "effective tax rates." In these, the center has calculated, for example, that in 1978, the city taxed residential property at \$2.15 per \$100 of averaged sales values.

State law, as interpreted by the Court

of Appeals in 1975 requires that real estate be assessed at full value. Since 1977, the city's official tax rate has been \$8.75 per \$100 of assessed valuation, and is due to rise to \$8.95 on Jan. 1, 1981.

Philip Finkelstein, director of the center and a former deputy city administrator, disclosed yesterday that the center's request for the city's aggregated 1979 data on sales had been turned down because the data was "confidential."

Harry S. Tishelman, who just resigned as City Finance Commissioner to become district director in the Small Business Administration, explained the refusal by saying that sales records had been put on

computer tapes that included tax returns filed when an owner sold property, and that this information must be kept secret.

Mr. Tishelman said that the data were also sought by persons suing for tax refunds from the city based on claims of inequality in assessing classes of property, as well as individual property.

The center's new study of 1979 data calculated that residential properties in nine nearby New York State counties were taxed at \$3.42 per \$100 of full value, as against \$2.36 in 14 New Jersey counties and \$1.30 in Connecticut's Stamford and Greenwich districts.

## School Notes: Long Island

High schools in five school districts in Long Island have been chosen to offer classes in Fundamental Economics as part of the Adult Education program for this semester, according to Stan Rubenstein, Director of the Long Island Extension of the HGS.

The newly revised course, which is designed by Mr. Rubenstein and Fryda L. Ossias, is being used by the five teachers in the towns of Levittown, Bellmore-Merrick, Oceanside, Rockville Centre and Lynbrook. The current version incorporates more contemporary information by applying Georgist materials to the changing world while maintaining the spirit and dynamics of the old approach.

An advanced course, entitled *The Critics of Henry George* is being offered to students, who have had other advanced classes in Contemporary Issues, Science of Political Economy and Democracy vs. Socialism.

Albert Fink spoke to the Alumni Association at the Plainview Public Library on the essence of the Pittsburgh Graded Tax, beginning the semester's schedule of special programs for current students and alumni. Mr. Fink stressed that the success that Georgists have had in implementing land tax reform in Pittsburgh has come as the result of sound reform, teamwork, and dedication over a number of years.

## Toronto Affiliate Delineates Values

The school of Economic Science has published two more reports in its continuing series of objective property tax studies.

*Farm Values and Taxation in Rural Communities: Aldborough Township: S.W. Ontario* by John Fischer and Tim Fielding is a study of property sales and their market value variations, the potential causes of those variations, the characteristics of assessment and property tax variations in relation to land and property characteristics and market values from 1978-1980.

The second report, *Changing Property Values and Taxation Levels in Developing Urban Areas: Yonge Street, North York, Toronto, 1910-1979*, by Tim Fielding and Laire Teich, attempts to trace and explain wherever possible the interaction of changing land use, property values and property tax rates for properties located along the rapidly changing and developing suburban strip of Yonge Street. It monitors the wide variations in effective tax rates and property values during stages of development and change, and indicates areas of difficulty for proposed tax reforms.

Copies of these reports may be obtained by writing to the School of Economic Science, 344 Willard Street, Toronto, Ontario, M6S 3R2 Canada.

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## Georgists Respond to White House Plan

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presenting the Government's global models. All three volumes are available from the U.S. Government Printing Office in Washington D.C.

The major findings of the report point to a more crowded, more polluted, less ecologically stable and more vulnerable to disruption world in the year 2000 than the one in 1980. Population growth figure indicate that the number of people on the earth will surpass 6.35 billion, a growth of 50% from the 4 billion figure in 1975. Agriculturally cultivated land will increase only by 4% in twenty years, so that most of the increased output of food will have to come from higher yields.

In its conclusion the report states that "the United States must improve its ability to identify emerging

problems and assess alternative responses." It was also stated that formulation of prompt and vigorous changes in public policy around the world are needed to avoid or minimize problems before they become unmanageable.

In his response to the questions posed by the report, Scrofani felt that the most critical problem emerging from the report "is our failure to be just and worthy stewards of the land." A comprehensive list of actions the President's Task Force could take is outlined in this compilation, along with quotes from Henry George, Robert S. McNamara, President of the World Bank, Philip Finkelstein, Director of the HGS in New York, and Ms. Hartzok. Copies of this report are available by writing to HGS in San Francisco.

# Hartzok Says Americans Barred from Land

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the reason for the growing distance between the rich and the poor right here. According to statistics from the World Economic and Social Indicators, the income distribution, percentage-wise, in the United States today is about the same as that of India—the poorest 20% has 4% of the wealth while the richest 20% has 46%. In terms of real economic power, meaning ownership and control of land and resources, probably more than 80% of the U.S. population should identify with the Third World poor.

“We have heard over and over again, that land reform and banking reform are essential ingredients for economic equity and power for the people of the Third World. Yet it is a little known fact that in the U.S. 3% of the population owns 95% of the privately held land. Because so many have had homesites, the land has appeared to be better distributed. But the land under homesites is just a small percentage—about 2%—of the total land mass. In California just one company, Southern Pacific, owns more land than the land under all the homes in the state. The possibility of home ownership in an increasingly remote one even for middle class people. To afford a modest two-bedroom home in San Francisco now means that a family has to be making about \$4000 a month!

## Land Conference in the Dominican Republic

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implementation of land value taxation both for economic development and as a stable source for revenue.

Lucy de Silfa, director of the Henry George School in the Dominican Republic said that leading figures in the government and other major economic institutions would participate in the conference, to be held at the Sheraton Hotel, in Santo Domingo.

During his visit, Mr. Finkelstein also addressed a graduation ceremony of the Henry George School at the National Library, and met a new group of students organized by Ms. de Silfa in Bani, a city east of the capitol.

“As Theodore Roszak says in his fine book, *Person/Planet*, ‘Land reform is the undiscovered revolution in American politics.’ The access to the land and resources of this country by increasing numbers of its citizenry can help to create an economic system that provides an alternative to unemployment, underemployment, wage-slavery, and work in the weapons-producing industries. It is getting clearer that the creation of real economic justice in the U.S. is one of the best things we can do to promote the same throughout the rest of the world.”

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## HGS to Be Opened in Johannesburg

Plans are underway to set up a school devoted to the teachings and philosophy of Henry George in Johannesburg, South Africa, reports Lancaster Greene, who recently returned from a trip to Australia, Africa and the Far East.

Mr. Greene met with Godfrey Dunkley who attended the Centennial Conference last year in San Francisco and together they discussed efforts to bring the Georgist message to the people of South Africa. Judge Frank Lucas, the overseer of the administration of Location Value Tax, which places no tax on buildings, also sat in on the meetings.

In Sydney, Australia, Mr. Greene spoke at the Henry George Anniversary Event, sponsored by the Association for Good Government and the Australian School of Social Science. He pointed out the success of Georgist principles in Australia and hoped that there will be continued interest through the schools now operating in Sydney and Melbourne.

In Melbourne, Alan Hutchinson, the publisher of the Georgist newspaper *Progress* and a prominent Georgist, William Pitt, were on hand to present Mr. Greene to Georgists active in the Henry George League there.

Mr. and Mrs. Greene also traveled to Singapore, and Kuala Lumpur before returning home.

# Ninth Annual Urban Workshop Announced

Students from over 100 high schools in the metropolitan area have been invited to attend the Ninth Annual Urban Workshop, co-sponsored by the Henry George School and the New York City Council on Economic Education. The program is scheduled for Thursday, December 4th, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, with a lunch break between the morning and afternoon sessions.

Dr. Albert Alexander, director of the Council will lead off the first session with a talk on *Major Urban Problems*. Philip Finkelstein, director of the HGS in New York will speak on the topic *The City as an Economic Unit*. To round out the morning's

activities, Mr. Samuel Ehrenhalt, Regional Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor Statistics will evaluate the performance of the city's economy.

After lunch, Mr. Joseph Weintraub, Principal of Newtown High School will address the issue of dealing with youth unemployment. A panel of high school chairmen from the social studies departments of their respective high schools will discuss the new course of study, *Urban Affairs*.

It is hoped that this program will generate interest among the students and motivate them to attend classes at the Henry George School on their own in the future.

*Greetings of the Season  
and Best Wishes for the New Year*

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