

✓ Yet the report shows that property taxes and revenues are especially low where land ownership is highly concentrated among few firms. The political power of companies such as Philip Morris, Alcoa, Weyerhaeuser and John Hancock aids in the retention of low tax rates. For example, Philip Morris owns most of Cabarrus County; Alcoa most of Rowan County, and eight owners control Hyde County.

The study effectively links the concentration of land ownership to inequality, mismanagement of the land, and lack of job opportunities.

✓ An earlier report by the Clergy and Laity Concerned (CALC) used Robeson County, North Carolina as its focus. Rev. Mac Legerton, CALC staff persons says, "The same pattern of hunger, poverty, and oppression that are so often highlighted for us in the Third World are also here in our own rural counties."

"Sadly it is usually easier to arouse compassion, anger and response to situations of hunger, poverty and oppression in other countries. We need a wholesome, prophetic view that sees hunger, poverty and oppression wherever they are, as sins against God and need to work for justice and peace without regard to geographic boundaries and ideological differences."

The new studies here led to growing citizen awareness and participation. For the first time, "Who Owns the Land" is making a difference to the people of Appalachia and North Carolina. It is now up to them to find the policies and politicians that will make the changes that will lead to justice and equality.

A CASE STUDY: ROBESON COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA, USA

RACIAL DIVERSITY: 40,000 White; 25,000 Black; 35,000 Native American.

HUNGER/POVERTY: 4th largest agricultural county in N.C., but highest level of malnutrition in the state. One of five receive food stamps. Per capita income less than \$5000. One third live in poverty.

EXPORTED WEALTH: labor, including crops, live-stock, timber, manufactured goods exported.

HOW PAY, NO SAY: Highest rate of under-employment in North Carolina -- i.e. the highest percentage of people who are working full time but are below poverty labor. Average industrial wage \$3.40 an hour. Absentee corporations. Little labor power; no alternative occupations; no union contracts.

"WHO OWNS NORTH CAROLINA": Latest Appalachia Study Proves Again
Land Means Power

by E. Robert Scrofani

A timely report, "Who Owns North Carolina", by the Institute for Southern Studies makes the links between land ownership and economic inequality evident once again.

The North Carolina Study is the largest single land ownership investigation in the nation. It follows the ground breaking patterns of the Appalachian Alliance's "Who Owns Appalachia" study. The Appalachia study covered 6 states and 81 counties.

Both studies prove, as the classic 1930 Goldschmidt ~~aborted~~ federal study in California farm communities that concentrated land holdings and a low tax on land leads to deficient public education, health care facilities, poor roads and failing sewage systems. A perfect example is the Kentucky community where the children attend school in a trailer but proudly hang the sign, "One Billion Dollars of Coal Mined Here."

According to the Institute's report on North Carolina, land provides the basics for much of the economy of the state. Nearly one third of the state's 33 million acres is farm land. Tobacco and textiles are both key products of the state. Despite its rich natural resources, North Carolina raises and spends little revenue. In 1983 it was 43rd in per capita taxes and 47th in direct general expenditures.

Since the cuts in federal expenditures, public services depend more than ever on the ability of states and localities to raise needed revenues. And this means, the property tax.

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