

Harry Golden, who is beginning a new and very successful phase of his life at 58, "was raised on Henry George and still finds him fascinating." He belonged to a club where he learned Henry George by heart. He can quote passages of *Progress and Poverty*, and confesses definitely to being "a Henry Georgist." In a recent interview he said, "there are a bunch of them around in the world, and I'm in communication with all of them."

We Need Henry George

If the City Council of Charlotte, North Carolina (or of your own city) decided to reduce the number of dogs in the community, it would be a fairly simple matter. Raise the price of dog tags to, say, \$150 each. It is true that most people would make the sacrifice rather than give up their pup, but the chances of any new pups coming into the community would be remote. If the \$150 license fee was maintained for ten years, Charlotte would eventually become puppyrein.

I do not suggest such a procedure. I mean only to make a point in discussing President Kennedy's public housing proposal. In fact my point about the dog-tags is not even original. I cannot put my finger on it but I believe that Henry George himself used it as an example.

I do not blame President Kennedy for a public housing proposal so inadequate as to be silly. But the President, having been both a Congressman and a Senator knows how difficult it is to break through Congress with some real legislation in housing.

The President's plan is to subsidize 100,000 units, although we need at the desperate least two million units and even that would be less than half the total requirements as of 1961.

The interesting thing about this whole matter of public housing is that the remedy is at hand which would by-pass any long drawn-out struggle with the housing lobbies and those every-man-for-himself boys.

Land is the answer. Idle land. That is where the money goes. Henry George called it "the unearned increment of land values." A fellow buys himself a big hunk of land at the outskirts of the city. It remains idle. He does not even bother to clear it. Pretty soon the city catches up to his land, making him rich although he did not contribute a thing to his wealth. Then he sells off half of his idle land and gets all his money back, and the other half is now free and clear. And now there are two owners keeping the land idle. Waiting. And they do not have long to wait.

The taxes on UNUSED land as compared with taxes on improvements, are insignificant even in these days of huge taxes. Sometimes the fellow bestirs himself and puts a parking lot on the idle land, but he never goes near it. The parking lot custodian takes in the fees and sends the land owner half. The taxes on UNUSED land are still small. Comes a day and a new fellow decides on building to make a contribution. All the time the land has been IDLE our society has smiled at the owner, but now when a new fellow starts to build they tax the living daylights out of him. The benefactor is taxed out of house and home and the guy who milked the land dry goes merrily on his way. Society rewards this man, smart enough to do nothing, and punishes the fellow dumb enough to do something.

We need Henry George today almost as badly as we need Benjamin Franklin.

Of course the taxing of IDLE land is not the whole story. We still have rather stupid laws covering costs of title search, and other vast expenses and the difficulty in getting mortgages; but the big problem is to get that fellow with his lots at the edge of town who takes all the cream off the top.

If we suddenly decided to fill our city with puppy dogs the Charlotte City Council could do this overnight — by imposing a tax of \$150 on anyone who does NOT own a dog.

I do not recommend that either, but I hope I have delivered myself of a fairly simple lesson on the Philosophy of Henry George!

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50 East 69th Street
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