

Equal Rights

To The Earth's Resources

Fall 1984

New Two-Rate City! Washington, Pa.

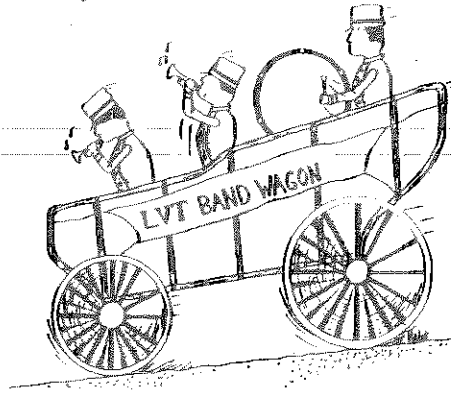
Washington, Pa. (pop. 19,000) becomes the state's sixth city to adopt a two-rate property tax. Effective January 1985, Washington's tax rate on land will be 6.056% (60.56 mills) while its tax rate on buildings will be 1.68% (16.8 mills).

The city is nestled in the rolling hills some 30 miles southwest of Pittsburgh. It is a county seat and relies heavily on smokestack industries - glass, steel, electronics, coal - and consequently is suffering from high unemployment.

City officials were faced with a serious problems in July. It had become increasingly evident that assessments in the city were becoming increasingly ununiform and consequently unfair. No one remembers when the last general re-assessment was made - probably 40-50 years ago.

Re-assessment posed a real problem to city officials, however. It would considerably increase the assessment and therefore the taxes of practically all homeowners since their property values had increased much faster over the years than commercial and industrial property values. A re-assessment would thus result in a significant transfer of taxes from commercial-industrial to residential taxpayers.

Your HGFA President brought to the attention of city officials that if the city were



to introduce a two-rate tax at the same time it introduced a re-assessment, then the property tax increase for homeowners would be moderated. If the shift were large enough, homeowners could even save tax money. A random survey of 119 homeowners showed that 81% of them would pay less with a two-rate tax than with a one-rate tax raising the same revenue for the city.

The City Council deliberated, and then acted. On July 21, the Council unanimously took these three actions:

(1) It switched assessments from city to county rolls (the latter at 25% of market value). The county roll was only a few years old.

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Remembering Henry George in Your Will

One of the easiest ways to continue your support of our vital programs is through a bequest. Over the years, bequests both large and small have been an important source of funds for the Foundation.

You may bequeath a specific piece of property (a stock, jewelry, a bond, or real estate, for example), an amount of money, or percentage of your estate.

A "residuary bequest" may simply state that the Henry George Foundation of America is to receive the remainder of your estate after all specific bequests have been made.

A "contingent bequest" may also be used to provide for distribution of property in the event one or more of your named beneficiaries does not survive you.

Suggested bequest wording:

"I give, devise, and bequeath to the Henry George Foundation of America, (580 N. Sixth Street, Indiana, PA 15701 in the sum of ---- dollars (or describe real property) to be used for its general purposes."

We hope this information will be of help to you.

Bill Newcomb



Bill Newcomb has gone - gone to that far distant place where no one is forced to share his wealth with others and access to location is open equally to all.

He died three days before the 198 Conference at Pawling began. He was 82 and his terminal illness was a traveling blood clot. We will miss him.

Born into a Baptist minister's family, Bill was introduced to Georgism by his uncle and he never strayed from the fold thereafter. He helped edit a Georgist mass-appeal magazine in the early 1940's, helped found the village he lived in (Melbourne, Florida) in 1947 - it was supposed to be a land trust community, but fell somewhat short of that mark - and after 1955 he achieved some financial success as a real estate broker.

But he will be best remembered as an ardent proponent of the media approach to spreading Georgism, especially by TV movie. At the Pawling Conference, there was a veritable explosion of audio-visual projects and when I spoke to Bill three days before his death, he was aware that he had helped spearhead that new emphasis.

I have known Bill for years as a fellow Foundation trustee, financial supporter and action-committed Georgist. Yes, we will miss him but we will try to carry on for him in ways that he would applaud.

Steven Cord

Bequests Received

At least five HGFA/CSE members (and may be more) have written either the HGFA or the CSE into their wills. We trust that others will do so in order that our work may be continued into succeeding generations.

If you need information for including such provision in your will, you may wish to consult your own lawyer or one associated with HGFA or CSE.

Before we knew about the Georgist philosophy, we could not be held morally responsible for spreading the word, but now that we know about it, the situation is different. If we don't act to perpetuate the philosophy, who will?

"... our basic economic problem: too much emphasis on redistributing the economic pie, too little on making the pie in the first place . . ."

Equal Rights

A quarterly published by the
Center for the Study of Economics
Editors: Frank E. Nelson
Edward J. Dodson

Lobby Group Formed

An enigma that Georgists are forever discussing is the fact that they seem to have so little influence on the course of political affairs.

Another enigma is that they have seldom attempted to organize a mass-membership type of national pressure group, such as is done with so much success by environmentalists (Wilderness Society, Audubon Society, Sierra Club, etc.), pro- and anti-gun groups (Committee for Hand Gun Control, National Rifle Association), and many others (for example, Disabled American Veterans, National Organization of Women, Veterans of Foreign Wars, NAACP, American Civil Liberties Union), and so on, ad infinitum. There are hundreds of such national lobbying or pressure groups, many of them extremely effective. Their central theme is simply that if you want to get something done in the political arena, you get the attention of politicians and bureaucrats.

Of course nothing can be accomplished without public understanding of the Georgist idea, and the Henry George schools have performed an essential service in this respect; but without political action, the population could be 100 per cent Georgist and still get nowhere in terms of putting its aspirations into effect.

This lesson is well demonstrated in Pennsylvania, where diligent political drum-beating by the Henry George Foundation, the Incentive Tax League, and other organizations under leadership of Professor Steven Cord, has had concrete results in six cities of the state.

A person who understands this, and intends to turn things around on a national scale, is Morgan Harris, who is determined to establish a national Georgist political-pressure group. Harris proposes that all the important Henry George schools, foundations, local and state leagues and associations, be represented in a new, national lobbying group which he wants to call **The Henry George Association**, with the logo, **Action for Tax Relief**.

At the recent Annual Georgist Conference in Pawling, N.Y., there was a Founders' Caucus that voted to establish this national lobbying organization. All persons who wish to participate in supporting this significant new national pressure-group, are urged to contact Morgan Harris, 3959 Shedd Terrace, Culver City, CA 90230, (213) 838-0838.

James L. Busey,
Manitou Springs, Colorado

"Georgian Prosperism"

Isn't it the Truth? Actually, the newspaper headline read "Marxian Socialism ----". It was displayed in large type over a 6-column picture of an industrial scene, and occupied nearly a quarter of a page. All this splash was to embellish a "Letter to the Editor" which was replete with the standard Marxist illogy and obviously contradictory and mutually exclusive definitions.

If such garbage can attract this sort of free publicity, surely, the sound philosophy of Henry George with its happy prospect of freedom from government oppression, jobs, wealth and leisure for us all, is deserving of some, too! It is expected that the newly forming Georgist activist organization - A.F.T.R. - will see to that, with the co-operation of all Georgists.

What we need is an "ism" which clearly states a positive, cheerful and self-evident goal to which potential non-Georgist recruits and supporters can relate and quickly grasp, - an acceptable "label".

As "PROSPERITY" perfectly represents our goal, I suggest "PROSPERISM" to represent our ideology to the masses. We shall, probably, become known as "Prosperists", - a pleasing prospect, methinks. There is no reason to discard the use of our traditional "Georgist" or "Georgism" which could be used interchangeably with the new terms, especially internally amongst ourselves. "Georgian Prosperism" sounds a lot nicer than "Marxist Socialism", don't you think?

Let our slogan be: "Prosperity means Jobs, Wealth & Leisure for us all; Universal Prosperity means Peace on Earth & Goodwill among us all. It is the ONLY alternative." H.W. [Colin] Bonner

Georgist Land Speculators

The Endowment Funds of the Henry George Foundation and the Center for the Study of Economics has been built up in large part by donations from Georgists who have made profits in land speculation.

For example, Walter H. Sheffield of Vista, California, bought a ten acre wood lot in 1942 about ten miles away in Maryland from famous U.S. Route 1. Later Interstate 95 was built nearby and Mr. Sheffield's wood lot assumed commercial value.

In 1974, he asked the Foundation to accept the wood lot as a gift so that he could gain a charitable tax deduction, and the Foundation could receive the wood lot without having to pay a capital gains tax. The Foundation is 501(c)4 registered with the IRS.

Mr. Sheffield was a Georgist of long-standing and a Foundation member for many year. He died about seven years ago. We take this opportunity to remember him and the example he set.

Everett Gross Elected



Everett Gross of Crete, Nebraska has been elected to fill one of the 21 slots on the Board of Trustees of the Henry George Foundation of America. Everett has been a long an faithful supporter of this Foundation. He is frequent attendee of the national conventions. His sons are reasonably active in the movement. He has taught economics and chemistry and writes a regular newspaper column on economics. He is a 100% Georgist! We are proud and honored to have him on the Board.

HGFA Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of the Henry George Foundation of America was held at the Holiday Hills Conference Center, Pawling, NY (the home of "Positive Thinking"), on July 29, 1984. Some 30 people were in attendance, including a majority of the Board of Trustees.

Re-elected for three-year trustee term were Steven Cord, Marian Hahn, Edward Dodson, Perry Prentice, Frank Nelson and Daniel Sullivan. Also elected for a three-year term was Everett Gross from Nebraska. The existing officers of the Foundation were re-elected to office, including Steven Cord, President; Agnes George De Mille, Honorary Vice President; Edward Schoyer, First Vice President; John Kelly, Second Vice President; Marian Hahn, Assistant Treasurer; John Weaver, Assistant Secretary; and Frank Nelson, Secretary.

Last year's minutes were adopted, and Steven Cord, who presided at the meeting, summarized the highlights as follows:

Proposal for a historical marker for the Henry George Birthplace. George Collins provided an update and reported that the birthplace has been recognized as both a National and State Historical Landmark, and that a suitable outdoor marker provided by the state should be in place in October, 1984.

Campaign in support of a U.S. Postage Stamp honoring Henry

[cont'd on page 6]

An "Old" Idea for Today

... a helpful property tax reform would follow the proposal outlined by the economist and social philosopher Henry George in his monumental work *Progress and Poverty* (first published in 1879). As contemporary followers of Georgist principles argue, under the provisions of current real estate tax regulations, maintenance and improvements to old structures and construction of new buildings is discouraged by high taxes on such activities. That is, in improving their structures or adding new structures, owners invite a higher assessment and tax on their property.

What can be done to reform this deleterious property tax structure? The editors of the neo-Georgist publication *Incentive Taxation* argue - in our opinion correctly - that state and local governments should legislate changes in order to tax land site values at higher rates than improvements. They say that land-value taxation would not only encourage development of unimproved land and better maintenance of existing improvements, but would also eliminate the special privilege associated with the ownership of land.

exerpted from: "Pro-Growth Property Taxes", 6/4/84, by the American Institute for Economic Research, Great Barrington, MA 01230.

Audio Cassette Available

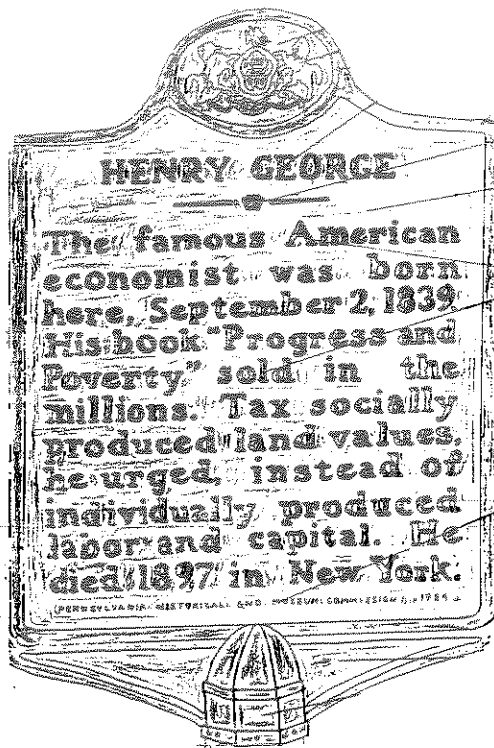
The Center for the Study of Economics has prepared an audio cassette for tape recorders on the subject of: "How Property Tax Reform Can Spur Economic Development in Your Town at No Additional Tax Cost"; on the other side: "How to Make the Property Tax More in Accord With Ability-to-Pay."

These tapes could be played before a live audience, or individual members might wish to listen to the tapes by themselves to get ideas for their own sales presentations.

Write to the Center at: 580 North Sixth Street, Indiana, Pa. 15701, to rent the tape. Cost: \$1

Also available: a 60-second radio editorial advertising our Idea. Cost for rental: \$1.

We like our latest free Memento for annual contributors. The slogan on it is a genuine conversation starter, and lots of non-members actually ask me if they can keep it! We're designing a new similar Memento for our next Annual Members letter.



This is a diagram of the historical marker which the Henry George Foundation has gotten the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to place in front of Henry George's Birthplace at 413 S. 10th Street, Philadelphia. We think it will be a good advertisement for our cause. It will be placed at the curbside.

Here's How to Help the Cause

CSE member Carl Shaw suggests that we publish a list of politicians to whom HGFA or CSE members could write letters urging them to either adopt a two-rate tax or spread their rates further. Here is such a list:

Mayor David Jannetta - City Hall, Altoona, PA 16601 (814-944-7131)

Councilmember Karen Ritter - City Hall, Allentown, PA 18101 (215-437-7540)

Mayor Leo Hegner (relative to Rep. Charles Eckert, ex-president of the Henry George Foundation) - City Hall, Beaver Falls, PA 15010 (412-847-2800)

Mayor Daniel Pastore - City Hall, Clairton, PA 15025 (412-233-4299)

Mayor Leo Zabelsky - City Hall, Duquesne, PA 15110 (412-466-4746)

Councilmember Mario Bagnoni - City Hall, Erie, PA 16501 (814-456-8561)

Georgist Wins Olympic Medal

Leonard (Harvey) Nitz won a bronze medal in the 4,000-meter bike race at the recent Los Angeles olympics. He is the son of Leonard Nitz of our Sacramento group. Our congratulations go out to both father and son.

Verlin Gordon

Belatedly, we regretfully report that Verlin Gordon, long-time Georgist and former director of the Ohio extension of the Henry George School, died Wednesday February 22, 1983. Verlin had been the Ohio director for the Henry George School and later years he ran an antique and fine art dealership. A number of active Georgists today, such as Walter Rybeck, were first introduced to the philosophy by Verlin. Verlin himself first became acquainted with Georgism in the early 1940's and in the 1950's he ran the noted "Ohio Conference" which were attended by Georgists from across the United States.

His articles and letters appeared in church magazines and newspapers frequently.

Georgism has lost a strong advocate and many Georgists have lost a true friend.

Mrs. Gordon, his wife, can be reached Box 201, St. John's, Ohio 45884.

Clairton Project

Dan Sullivan wishes to acknowledge thanks to those CSE members who sent contributions for his Clairton Project. He is intending to go door-to-door visiting the homeowners in the city of Clairton, Pa. who would pay less with a building-to-land property tax shift and enlist their support both political and financial (contributions) in the effort to legislate a building-to-land tax shift. If this works in Clairton, it could be a self-financing way to get city after city across the nation to move our way.

Think Globally ACT Locally?

Leo Manning runs a cookie store in Fremont, California and became upset about the plight of the unemployed in his town. He decided to give away thousands of sandwiches with coffee and milk. Leo feeds jobless auto and construction workers, mechanics, office clerks and single mothers. He also sends boxes of sandwiches to nearby state unemployment agency.

"He'd like to feed the whole world," says Barbara Levy, a state jobs counselor who distributes the food. "But he begins at home."

This should be the theme of our Georgist efforts. Better to convert one city to the two-rate property tax than to dream impossible dreams.

"He who waits to do a great deal of good once will never do anything." - Samuel Johnson, English Writer (1709-1784)

Don't throw away your copy of *Equal Rights* after reading it - give it away to a friend or prospect!

Summer Issue Not Up to Par

You editors regularly do a fine job. But in the "Summer 1984" issue "Homer nodded!" - and with a vim. I have been working here for well over a year to try to bring LVT to Greenville and have some enthusiastic supporters. I fervently hope that none of these newcomers to the field (I date back to about 1920) ever see this summer issue. They would think we LVTers are crackpots or - worse - Commies. Because -

1. The Burger Court is sometimes as bad as the Warren Court, throwing the Constitution out the window and deciding that "The end justifies the means." Or, "Two wrongs make a right." And the Hawaii land-holding decision was one of those. Such a use of eminent domain smacks far more of the U.S.S.R. constitution than of the U.S. one.

You say, "At least now real reform may be possible." Is it not our LVT position that LVT is the real reform which involves no unconstitutional breaches of contracts, no ex post facto laws or actions, no unconstitutional abuse of the "welfare" clause.

2. "Getting from here to LVT" is more "end justifying the means": What do patent rights - the fruits of human effort and often years of labor and great investment for human effort - have in common with Land Values? This suggestion of posted land prices is based more on hot emotion, surely, than any rational thinking.

3. Steve Cord's "Assessment Tribune" idea seems to have some merit. But his commission payment smells just like the "Tax Farmer" so common in the ancient world.

Sterling L. Smith
1025 Edwards Road
Greenville, SC 29615

The Laws of Heaven

The Laws of Heaven, as Henry George was aware, prohibit the sale of land: The only excuse was abject poverty of the occupant. Even this was rectified by automatic reversion to the said occupant, or to his heirs, within 50 years or less.

If this were practiced, we would have **Heaven on Earth**. As long as your minister posts a copy of "Equal Rights" on the church bulletin board, it might be well to emphasize this point.

I plan on visiting Pittsburgh this summer, so I may have an opportunity to see the effects of their tax policy and, I hope, meet some of the people advocating this.

Douglas Boyd
Box 264.
Odessa, TX 79760

Readers' Forum



Mary Davis, prominent Georgist activist from Atlanta, speaking at the recent CSE/CGO Conference at Pawling, N.Y.

"TRI" Improvement

We received the following letter from long-time HGFA member Robert Sage of Arizona:

"Morgan Harris' suggestion of TRI Tax Reduction on Improvements in a good one. Let's change that for the better one: Tax Removal on Improvements.

"You built the house, you raised the corn, you caught the fish. All those are your wages. Why give any part of them to anyone?"

"Taxes on the value of the land are fair; because that value is produced by the conscious and unconscious cooperation of the people."

READERS — PLEASE WRITE!

We will try to print as many letters as possible within the limits of the space available. At the very least we will summarize all letters received, if addressed to —

The Editor, EQUAL RIGHTS, 580 North Sixth Street, Indiana, Pa. 15701

Free-Lance Artist Available

Vicki Scoumis has just graduated from Art School and is offering her services as a free-lance artist.

Ms. Scoumis wrote an article on Henry George that won her second prize in an essay contest in her high school. *Equal Rights* reprinted her essay some time ago. Her father Petro Scoumis recently helped in the efforts to get Washington, Penna. to adopt a two-rate property tax.

Any Georgist needing some free-lance art work should contact Ms. Scoumis at 301 McGregor Drive, Canonsburg, PA 15317.

A Budget to "Break the Bank"

"After me, the deluge," said Louis XIV famous "Sun King" of France and notorious spendthrift. In time the prediction came true. Shall we coin a similar slogan to describe the likely consequences of Ronald Reagan's economic policies? Some economists are predicting his deficit spending may lead to severe depression in 1985. Common sense tells us that the policies cannot long continue without disastrous consequences. Neve mind, the immediate priority is to soothe the populace and win reelection.

Most newspapers have carried accounts of the president's spending plans for 1985 and beyond. The *New York Times* has emphasized how the increase in interest payments on the federal debt since the president took office has exceeded all savings his administration has achieved in health, education, welfare, and social service programs.

The projected 1985 budget is \$976 billion with a \$180 billion deficit and record military expenses. This budget would raise the national debt to \$1.8 trillion at the end of next year. On this, the government - i.e., we, the taxpayers - will pay interest of \$165 billion in 1985. By 1986, if the Reagan administration continues in office, the national debt is expected to reach \$2 trillion, with commensurate increase in interest.

Do these data mean anything to rank and file Americans? What difference does it make if the national debt doubles in the years 1981 to 1986?

In plain language the answer is: The national debt - as well as the interest on it - affects all of us. The mounting deficit drives up interest rates and slows production lowering our standard of living as it raises the cost of food, clothing, shelter and other necessities. American economic recovery hinges in part on significant reduction of this debt.

To understand the negative effect of the trillion dollar debt (a moderate debt can sometimes act as an economic stimulant; we are talking here about a debt that goes far beyond moderate), we have only to recall that the greater the federal government's need for money, the greater the competition

[cont'd on page 5]

Georgist Sees Income Tax Marxist

Here is part of a letter by Woodrow Williams to his representative in Congress (also reprinted as a letter in the *Putnam County Sentinel*, Ohio): "I am opposed to the whole idea of an income tax of any kind, since I consider it quite Marxist in aspect."

Budget

[cont'd from pg. 4]

with business and industry for available capital, i.e., savings, and -- since the government is a safe, preferred risk customer -- the less the capital available for the private sector. In short, deficit spending with heavy borrowing by the government forces up interest rates, slows economic growth and threatens our limited, fragile recovery.

At this point we might pause to ask why has the administration, in spite of announced intentions, been unable to hold down expenditures? Penetrating the smokescreen of misleading verbiage, we find that in spite of complaints from the president and his staff about the high cost of health, education and human services, the main cause of the mounting budget stems not from the human services sector, but from the military.

The government has acknowledge that of every dollar spent 29 cents goes for the military. In fact, this figure is deceptive; it does not include the cost of NASA, the Veterans Administration, and the Department of Energy -- one-third of whose budget goes for nuclear arms production. In addition, two-thirds of the interest payment on the national debt -- \$88 billion -- is war-related. If we include these amounts, then military expenses can be shown to total not 29% of the federal budget, but 61%. Clearly, if the government does not do us in with a nuclear war it will do the job economically.

The justification for the enormous military budget is, of course, the argument that the U.S. is weak and needs to bolster its defenses vis-a-vis the Russians. But as *Newsweek* observed in a lengthy article advocating cutbacks in military spending, "Spending more money on defense does not necessarily guarantee greater national security." Indeed, there is ample evidence to argue that our arms build-up may be counterproductive. Feeling more threatened, the Russians may respond by further increasing and deploying their military forces -- as they are doing now since deployment of our Cruise and Pershing II's in Europe. Meanwhile, it is important to recognize that in economic terms the production of military-related materials is a complete waste of natural resources, manpower and capital; we can hardly clothe family members in khaki; we cannot ride to work in an army tank.

Let us face the facts and acknowledge that massive spending on the military is the principal factor threatening our economy. We do not need and cannot afford the proposed 13% boost in the 1985 military budget; our economy cannot handle a trillion-dollar budget stretching over the next five years. The undertaking is foolhardy. We urgently need a new set of priorities and policies.

Don Hurford
122 Green Hill Rd.
West Chester, PA 19380



"The Curse of Partisan Politics"

Long before political parties became prominent in the United States, the potential dangers of partisan politics were foreseen. In his farewell address as departing first President, George Washington warned against the evils of factionalism, evils that have become characteristic of partisan politics. Nearly a hundred years ago an observer of the American political scene wrote:*

"Now this transformation of popular government into despotism of the vilest and most degrading kind is not a thing of the far future. It has already begun in the United States, and is rapidly going on under our eyes. That our legislative bodies are steadily deteriorating in standard; that men of the highest ability and character are compelled to eschew politics, and the arts of the jobber count for more than the reputation of the statesman; that voting is done more recklessly and the power of money is increasing; that it is harder to arouse the people to the necessity of reforms and more difficult to carry them out; that political differences are ceasing to be differences of

[cont'd on page 6]

Two-Rate

[cont'd from pg. 1]

(2) It adopted a two-rate property tax of 6.056% (60.56 mills) on land coupled with 1.68% (16.8 mills) on buildings, instead of raising the same revenue by taxing both land and buildings at 2.58% (25.8 mills).

(3) It increased total property tax revenue by 5%, 1985 over 1984, in order to account for increased inflation-caused costs.

Moving to 6.056%/1.68% was too mild a change to counter completely the up-tax on homeowners occasioned by the much-needed re-assessment and slight tax increase, but it did moderate it. And the City Council has only to lower the building tax rate and raise the land tax rate even further in ensuing years in order to provide even more property tax relief for homeowners.

The Real Benefits

Of course, the best reason to move tax off buildings and onto land is to encourage new construction and re-employment.

The tax on buildings is a significant obstacle to urban renewal by private enterprise. For example, a 2% tax rate on the current market value of a building equivalent to a 20% tax rate on its capital value (assuming a 10% interest rate). 20%! If anyone proposed a 20% excise tax on new construction, they would be hooted down by any city council, yet many of those same councils blindly levy a 2% property tax rate which has exactly the same effect.

The Politics of It

The Washington council members were first hesitant to adopt 6.056%/1.68%; they feared that the general public, not knowing anything about the two-rate approach, might oppose it. They feared that at least a segment of the public, especially those paying more, might oppose it vigorously. But in fact, the public reaction was near-zero. Unfortunately, at this state of affairs the public isn't interested in tax rates, only in the ultimate property tax bill. The reaction to the re-assessment was minimal also; most homeowners realized that they had been getting free ride all these years.

Conclusion

It is possible to take a despairing view of the whole land tax situation. So much effort was put into this 6.056%/1.68% shift that only \$40,111 was transferred off the building owners and only \$40,000 was transferred onto landowners. And Washington is only one city among thousands. At this rate it will take centuries before an appreciable portion of the land rent is taken by government taxation with a similar tax portion removed from labor and capital.

And yet, despair is not in order. If only a little new construction and re-employment in Washington attributable to the mild new two-rate tax occurs, then the improvement in human welfare will have justified the effort expended. If only a few Washingtonians find new jobs, the council members can find satisfaction in that. And if in ensuing years they reduce the building tax rate still further and raise the land tax rate still more, the even more good could be expected. And if the news of these economic benefits gets out to the urban tax experts across the land and they begin pushing the reform, a Bandwagon will start moving, faster and faster. Public opinion will then get ignited. All this seems so far away at this point, so chimerical, yet reforms don't come slowly. They build up and then suddenly explode across the national consciousness. We can expect this to happen with land value taxation, and in the movement, little Washington, Pa. can play an important part.

It is better to light a single candle than to curse the darkness. The longest journey begins with but a single step. Steven Cor

Partisan

[cont'd from pg. 5]

principle, and abstract ideas are losing their power; that parties are passing into the control of what in general government would be oligarchies and dictatorships; are all evidences of political decline.

"There is no mistaking it -- the very foundations of society are being sapped before our eyes, while we ask, how is it possible that such a civilization as this, with its railroads, and daily newspapers, and electric telegraphs, should ever be destroyed?"

"The most ominous political sign in the United States today is the growth of a sentiment which either doubts the existence of an honest man in public office or looks on him as a fool for not seizing his opportunities. That is to say, the people themselves are becoming corrupted."

"Where that course leads is clear to whoever will think. As corruption becomes chronic; as public spirit is lost; as traditions of honor, virtue, and patriotism are weakened; as law is brought into contempt and reforms become hopeless; then in the festering mass will be generated volcanic forces, which shatter and rend when seeming accident gives them vent."

"Whence shall come the new barbarians? Go through the squalid quarters of great cities, and you may see, even now, their gathering hordes!"

And in the century since these statements were written their validity has become more evident with each passing decade. The struggle between political parties has become primarily a battle between the "ins" and the "outs" for the power and privileges as well as the "loot" available to those in high office.

Moreover, the whole performance of the politicians ranging from the primaries with the hectic "huckstering" for votes through the major party conventions, which has become "dances of idiots," to the final election campaigns has been financed in large part by vested interests hoping to retain or obtain special privileges at the hands of politicians only too eager to receive financial assistance on the road to power. As a grand circus performance, the show may have merits and please many observers but as ways of seriously choosing the best qualified to guide the Nation's destiny, the whole performance has become an obscene farce insulting to the intelligence and integrity of most citizens. There must be a better way, and it must be found if the Nation is to survive.

*Henry George, **Progress and Poverty**

Excerpted from 3/20/72 bulletin by
Behavioral Research Council
Great Barrington, Massachusetts 01230

HGFA Mtg.

[cont'd from pg. 2]

George. Cord urged the membership to again write to the selection committee with a simple plea (they already know about George) addressed to: Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza, Washington, D.C., 20260.

HGFA/CSA President Cord reported that he is compiling a history of the HGFA, and in addition, an Honor Roll booklet highlighting the Foundation's founders, "prime movers," and principal supporters. Cord is also doing a paper on total land rent in the US, which will be summarized in **Incentive Taxation**.

Cord reported on three 1984 victories (Harrisburg, New Castle and Washington) and one defeat (McKeesport) in the continuing battle for greater reliance upon land taxes in Pennsylvania cities. Harrisburg raised their land/bldg. tax rate to approx. 3/1. New Castle moved to a higher tax rate on land, based upon recommendations by Cord. Washington, PA shifted their rates from 25 mills on both land and bldgs. to 60.5 on land and 16 on bldgs. Cord mentioned that Washington's assessments are about forty years out of date. McKeesport, which has been plagued by various problems, including bad water and idle steel mills, raised their tax rate on buildings.

Cord hopes that in the future, mailing of property tax bills might include a slip explaining the advantages of LVT to taxpayers.

Cord stated that **Incentive Taxation** had been responsible for the initial "softening-up" process that has led to most of the victories achieved in PA cities. He also reported that HGFA continues to answer hundreds of individual letters of inquiry annually.

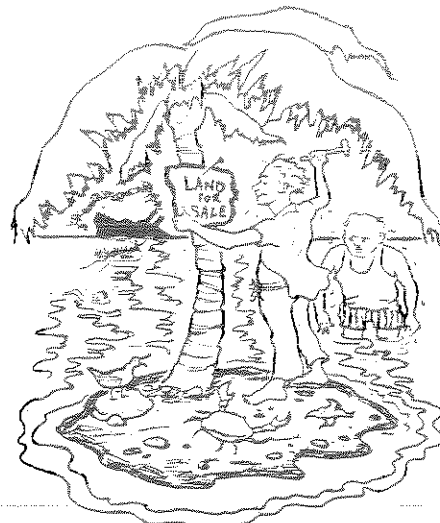
President Cord presented a printed financial statement, showing a combined HGFA/CSE operating budget of approximately \$32,000. The Foundation has some 220 contributors, only 13% of whom live in PA, contributing 5% of total income.

Equal Rights

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Address Correction Requested



Funds have been received from the Schalkenbach Foundation, which will be used in a new ad campaign in a national magazine such as the **Washington Monthly** (having a large activists membership).

HGFA will implement the Bill Filant Resolution regarding the recent Hawaii landowner Supreme Court decision adopted by the Council of Georgist Organizations.

Frank Nelson suggested that members name HGFA as a "contingent" beneficiary of their life insurance policies. Ed Dodson suggested that members look into the use of "reverse annuities" on their real estate to help provide funds for HGFA and CSE.

Daniel Sullivan reported on the upcoming Clairton campaign. HGFA will provide \$500 of seed money, along with a \$500 grant (provided that matching funds are solicited). Sullivan said that this campaign will involve door-to-door solicitation for homeowner civil and financial support.

Ed Dodson called attention to the recent special edition of **Equal Rights** that was devoted to Human Rights, and invited feedback from readers.

Cord paid tribute to the memory of long-time HGFA officer and activist, E. Newcomb of Florida, who passed away earlier in the week.

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