

Equal Rights

Winter

All Men and Women Have Equal Rights to the Use of the Earth

1980

H.G.F.A. 1979 Activities

Pittsburgh City Council voted to raise \$23 million in extra revenue for 1979 by a 48-mill land value tax increase rather than increasing the wage tax. Pittsburgh's tax rate on land is now nearly four times the tax rate on buildings, no longer the old 2:1 ratio! We are arranging for a study of the impact of this tax increase on the city's economic development. The study will be conducted by the center for Local Tax Research. Preliminary statistics look very encouraging. We may be on the verge of a real breakthrough!

Harrisburg and Allentown nearly extended or introduced the Incentive Tax. We lost 4-3 in both councils, but prospects look bright for next year.

Your president has addressed the following organizations: Pennsylvania Council on Urban Economic Development (CUED); Pa. Intergovernmental Council; Pa. Planning Association; Pa. Community Development Society (others also).

We have funded Nadine Stoner's expenses in Wisconsin, Wylie Young's in eastern Pa.

We have helped fund a new branch of the Incentive Tax League in the Delaware Valley. The guiding lights are Dick Biddle and Don Hurford.

We have given substantial support to Bill Newcomb's Media Foundation. He is a Floridian and vice president of HGFA.

We have made a grant of \$1,000 to Walt Rybeck's research study in Washington, D.C. It could prove conclusively that LVT spurs economic growth. (cont'd on Page Two)

Progress and Poverty Centennial

Conference and Banquet Philadelphia, Pa.

Georgists from New York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Hampshire, New Jersey and Maryland celebrated the centennial of **Progress and Poverty** with a working conference and an evening banquet on September 15th. The keynote speaker for the conference was Dr. Phillip Finkelstein whose address set the tone for the day—"Land Value Taxation-Possibilities for the Eighties." The workshops focused on political and educational action, highlights of the San Francisco conference and a panel discussion on the energy crisis with a Georgist perspective.

This was the second annual conference sponsored by the Henry George School and the Incentive Tax League, Delaware Valley Chapter which had been formed last year as the result of intense interest in political activity in the Philadelphia area. The day ended with a walking tour of historical sites in Philadelphia that had been prominent in the life of Henry George. Donald Hufford received recognition for the responsibility of the success of the conference.

The evening belonged to Henry George, via George Collins, banquet Chairman, who brought together for the celebration Agnes DeMille, William Coyne, the Pittsburgh City

Councilman responsible for the success in his city of increasing LVT; Thatcher Longstreth of Philadelphia, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and former candidate for Mayor; several other city officials and Congressman, Henry Reuss, Chairman of the House Banking Committee and a supporter of Land Value Taxation. Each guest added tributes to the importance of Henry George's message to our problems of today and added amusing anecdotes to keep the evening light and interesting. The banquet was held in the historical Second Bank of the United States providing a fitting setting for such an important event.

The day and evening were not only ones for celebration, but for renewed encouragement to continue the work of spreading the possibilities of what Land Value Taxation or the Single Tax (depending upon how radical you wish to be) to cities, politicians and others who are suffering from the effects of land speculation and its consequences. It is wonderful indeed to meet famous people, but to hear them share their support for what Georgists are doing and to hear from others about successes helps all involved in the movement enthusiastically meet another 100 years of **Progress and Poverty**!

Henry George Conference - August in New York

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Henry George Foundation
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Editor: — **PENNY COLGAN**

**HERE'S THE MOST LIKELY WAY
THE LAND VALUE TAX COULD
SPREAD ACROSS THE WORLD
WITHIN THE NEXT TEN YEARS**

If a government were to collect the full rental value of land from every landowner and then distribute it equally to all adult citizens, then all these things would be true:

- * Everyone's moral right of equal access to the resources of Nature would be honored,
- * Taxes on labor and capital would not be reduced, but at least some of those taxes would really be charges for government services rendered,
- * Over 90% of the voters would get more money back from the government as their equal share of the land rent fund than they would put in as rent for the land they own.

The first two points are obvious but the third is something to conjure with. Just think: the average American owns about \$19,000 worth of land (for verification, see p. 59ff in "Catalyst!") For a family of four, that comes to \$76,000, but very few such families own that much land value! Not even 10%, more than likely.

Approximately one-third of the population owns no land at all. All those families owning less than the average would put into the land rent fund less, usually much less, than the equal share they would get back. The main point then is: wouldn't they favor such an income redistribution, and wouldn't the politicians urging it win immediate support?

Most landowners and certainly all tenants would not have to part with any money at all. Their rent debt for the land they own and their equal share of the Land Rent Fund could be calculated in advance and their debt would then be deducted from their equal share and each year they would get a rebate or if you wish, a National Dividend. Most people wouldn't have to pay in anything but would get a sizeable rebate instead. What self-respecting taxpayer-voter

Once You've Seen the Cat....

One cannot help noticing the Georgist view these days. While reading Howard Fast's *Freedom Road* I was happy to see that the importance of land ownership was so strongly stressed in this story of the reconstruction era of our history. The book is about much more, but tells a little-known story that all should know. As a teacher I recommend it to junior high and high school students.

I attempt in my teaching and in my daily contacts to point out "the Cat" whenever it surfaces to reinforce Georgist ideas but also to encourage those people to look for the Cat on their own!

Penny Colgan

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would fail to support such a scheme? Only those very few who would pay in more than they would take out and who could not see the moral imperative involved would oppose the idea.

The reason, of course, why most voters would benefit from this land value tax approach is that most land values are owned by corporations and a few wealthy individuals.

The revenue from the Land Rent Fund could surely be used to reduce taxes on labor and capital. That would satisfy the moral imperative but its political appeal would be decidedly less because tax savings have much less voter appeal than an outright government rebate to all voters.

The way to start this new approach is to let individual localities vote by popular referendum to introduce it. Adjoining areas could then vote to join the original localities until the whole country is won over. It could be done in the United States if individual state laws permitted it, but I could see how the idea might be first tried out in an underdeveloped country somewhere—if we could make the idea more widely known.

The Land Rent Refund would be easily large enough to put everyone above the poverty line. It might be so high as to encourage idleness on the part of some lazy recipients so it would probably be wise to devote at least some of the Land Rent Fund to lowering taxes. In addition, one could hope that with poverty abolished, taxes could be reduced for that reason alone.

Well, it's not the Single Tax but it is the government collection of the land rent. And its appeal is uncontestable—provided we make it known to one and all.

Steven Cord

H.G.F.A. 1979 Activities

(cont'd from Page One)

We have funded a booth at the Pa. League of Cities convention in May. Valuable contacts resulted.

We are arranging LVT studies in New Castle and Uniontown, preparatory to introducing LVT measures in those Pennsylvania cities.

We have responded to requests for LVT information from city and state officials in Portland, Maine, and Providence, R.I., also North Carolina and Indiana; elsewhere also.

We have supported such ventures as Tertius Chandler's newsletter, Tim Lefever's Act '79 Conference in Washington, D.C., and Dan Sullivan's Incentive Tax League (Pgh.)

Equal Rights, our quarterly, continues in its tenth year of publication. Four issues will be published by the end of this year under the editorship of Penny Colgan.

We were one of the prime sponsors of this year's Centennial Conference in San Francisco, and we are one of the underwriters of a TV film made at the Conference for showing on public television across the nation.

Upon the advice of new Trustee Dick Biddle, we have purchased one of the few extant copies of the Author's Edition of **Progress and Poverty**. If our political efforts are successful, then we will zoom the price of the book far beyond the \$400 we paid for it. So get out there and politic for the cause to protect our investment! Meanwhile we'll use it for display at conventions and for other publicity.

When we visit Harrisburg's mayor in October and also try to establish a HGFA group there, it will be your contributions funding travel expenses (and those of like trips elsewhere).

We are running a P&P course in Pittsburgh to replenish our ranks in that key city.

We have published a 130-page book authored by SBC entitled *Catalyst*! It has ten chapters detailing the LVT story in modern terms. Among other features, it shows how a land value tax could raise revenue amounting to more than one-fifth of the national income. If you would like to buy a copy, enclose an additional \$5 with your annual contribution with a note that it is for *Catalyst*!

Steve Cord

Media Foundation Report

The Media Foundation has changed course. In June, 1978, we asked the major foundations to help meet our first year's funding needs of \$36,000. Through grants from three of them and generous contributions from Canadian and American individuals we raised \$7,440.

We made test runs on radio, the Black Press, the College Press and the "Shopper Press". Radio was most productive, and if our funds could have been immediately increased, we believe we might have developed a following among several hundred radio stations on a weekly basis.

Of the 21 men who signed the writer-questionnaire, we were able to depend upon Frank Nelson, Robert King and Wilbur Johnson. These three sent good stories on a regular basis.

Even cutting corners, each mailing cost over \$325. When our bank balance hovered around \$3,000 we changed courses. Two events caused this:

- (1) IRS determined that we could not collect fees if we were to receive our exemption.
- (2) Editorial and sales costs, massive printing/postage/ mailing costs (even with our volunteer staffers) would very quickly empty our bank account.

Here is where we changed course... Our Executive Board made the decision to offer post-publication grants and awards for scripts for TV documentaries and for articles published in nationally circulated magazines that related to land value taxation. David Hapgood had done it with articles in *AMERICAN HERITAGE* and *NEW REPUBLIC*.

We have been in contact with the real estate editors of 200 top-circulation newspapers; with 500 writers of the American Society of Journalists and Authors; also with the members of Investigative Reporters and Editors, Inc. — all professionals.

At the centennial in August, there will be many papers delivered on ways to make a breakthrough of the media blackout on land value taxation. We hope to be able to tell you that we have made that break-through.

Sixteen pieces—some of them 10 to 20 pages long—on land monopoly (we reprinted a Harper's article, with permission) and land value taxation goes to each writer on request. The enclosed (green) Prospectus is telling the professional writers what Media Foundation for Land Economics can do for them.

The grants-and-awards program does not

require the huge outlay that syndication did. Yes, we took a gamble in offering these grants and awards. But we felt that you Georgists believe today like you did in 1978, when we started our project, that Media Foundation for Land Economics had a special goal to fulfill — to bring land economics to the public through the media that you would again contribute generously like you did before.

Just the printing and mailing to get this new grants-and-awards program underway has reduced our bank balance to \$1,100. We urgently need the generous kinds of checks you sent before—\$25, \$50, \$100, \$200 and \$500.

William W. Newcomb, President

LETTERS

Dear Ms Colgan:

I am writing to you because I felt our Georgists friends might wish to know about a book that has just been republished. Yesterday I received a copy.

The book here referred to is my husband's *The Economics of Taxation*, first published in 1924 by Henry Holt and Company and reprinted in 1938 by Lucas Brothers

(Columbia) and now by The University of Chicago Press in the Midway Reprint edition.

The wide margins, good print and covers make this an attractive book and since it's paperback the price probably will be as moderate as it's possible these days. I've not yet learned of the price but should have that information soon.

On the back cover are two paragraphs: one a quotation from a review by Henry C. Simons, *Journal of Political Economy* soon after the book was first published. The other is by Professor Arnold C. Harberger, University of Chicago. These two quotes complement each other and would supply information for a brief notice, should you wish to have one. I don't know about whether or not permission would have to be obtained from the University of Chicago Press.

In case you wish to secure a copy of this book you can write to Mr. Clark Flint, Asst to the Paperback Editor, The University of Chicago Press, 5801 Ellis Avenue, Chicago, Ill, 60627.

From June 20th until early September my address will be R.D. #1, Box 288, Central Lake, Mich., 49622.

Elizabeth R. Brown
(Mrs. Harry Gunnison Brown)

Once You've Seen the Cat....

CATALYST — New Georgist Book Reviewed

Steven Cord, prolific editor of *Incentive Taxation*, President of our organization and professor of History at Indiana University, Indiana, Pa., has done again what Georgists constantly promise — written a book! The book, a collection of some of Cord's most useful articles from "Incentive Taxation" joined with a majority of new ones is correctly named — **CATALYST**! A catalyst it is! Organized into chapters beginning with the "Proposal" and going through each segment of society which would be affected by it and ending with "Successful Where Tried." These easily readable and concise articles give the reader all the practical information, coupled with concrete examples and clear explanations of what is being proposed to meet a friend for conversation over coffee, see a politician about changing his/her position on taxation, address a civic group which is concerned about the disappearing wilderness or urban blight or just to enlighten oneself about

our current economic problems and what Georgists propose to do about them.

The book ends with a chapter, "History and Prospectives," which traces the history of land tenure, describes the fore-runners of Henry George, gives an excellent sketch of Henry George and his life and then discusses what has happened in the world and, specifically, in the US since Henry George's death both politically and economically.

Anyone who has consistently read Cord's *Incentive Taxation* is familiar with his enjoyable style and strong research. *Catalyst* combines these two and more—it gives you within one softback cover all the information you will need to begin or carry on your campaign. With the holidays approaching, it makes an excellent gift to people you wish to convince to the Georgist perspective. Copies can be ordered from HGFA Headquarters, 580 N. Sixth St., Indiana, Pa. 15701, for five dollars a copy.

Interview with Joshua Nkomo

Time Magazine had this interview with Joshua Nkomo who is in London for the peace conference planning the future of Zimbabwe. A previous issue of ER carried another quote from him that sounded Georgist. He has the "press" of Being a Marxist, but this statement sounds more Georgist to me.

**TIME — Oct. 29, 1979 with
Joshua Nkomo in London**

Q. The most crucial issue between you and the British became that of land nationalization and compensation. What will be the effect of your land policy?

A. If the U.S. had not stepped in, it would have been very difficult to move on this question. The war is about land, and the British were protecting the settler element's right to keep land to themselves. But this does not mean we want to rob the white settlers of their land. The whites are an essential part of the country and therefore they must have some land as citizens. Only that land that is not fully utilized will be made available to other people. This arrangement would affect perhaps half of the white-controlled land. Private ownership is a foreign ideology. Our system is that the land is yours for as long as you work it, and the fruits of your labor belong to you. But you don't own it. It's the people's property.

President's Corner

Elsewhere in this issue there appears a list of some of the 1979 activities of your Foundation. I would call it a lengthy one that we can be very proud of.

I would especially call your attention to these two activities:

THE GREAT PITTSBURGH VICTORY.
This could be a breakthrough for us because the land value tax increase was large enough to produce measurable benefits, which we are just now studying. And more such victories seem to be in the offering.

THE PUBLICATION OF CATALYST! I refer to this event with some reluctance as I am the modest author of the book. But sales are going well so far, and I myself have been able to use it with some effectiveness among politicians (you could, too!) and pretty soon the Foundation will have recovered its money.

Among the many topics treated in the book is the total annual revenue which a

100% land value tax could produce. I arrived at a conservative estimate of \$440 billion, based on the best statistics available (U.S. Conference Board study) and updated to 1980. That amounts to 60% of all U.S. taxes to be levied in that year! And it is a truly conservative figure.

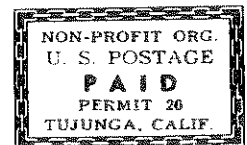
Readers may order a copy of this book at five dollars from the Foundation headquarters (580 N. Sixth St., Indiana, Pa. 15701).

Back to the Foundation's list of activities: you may have seen it before. It accompanied the Foundation's annual contribution letter recently sent out to HGFA members. If you think your past contributions have been well spent, then you'll want to give again this year. If you have not already responded, please know that we intend to send out no reminder letters — you can let this message be your reminder.

Keep in touch — we hope to report some new victories soon.

Steven Cord

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Address Correction Requested