



Newsletters

HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL

April
1978

833 Market Street San Francisco, California 94103

WINTER CLASSES

Classes in Progress and Poverty for the Winter term started the first week in February and ended the first and second week in April. There were six classes including one in the San Jose area. Fifty-four people began the classes and twenty have completed the course as graduates.

Congratulations to our new graduates and many thanks to the teachers who include Kayt Schaefer, Ward Lamon, Ray Bergman, Don Mywers and Ingo Blachoff.

There will be a graduation ceremony and social get together with showing of some films to be held later in April.

New basic and advanced classes will be held starting in May and they will be announced separately.

S. F. BOARD OF SUPERVISORS LTP HEARING

On Friday, March 3, 1978 a hearing was held before the State and National Affairs Committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on the subject of land value taxation. The hearing was organized by Jerry Newland, Director of Land Equality and Freedom and was attended by dozens of Henry George School and IRLAP members. The hearing featured several speakers: Floyd Morrow, of IRLAP; Robert McDermott; Jack Morrison, former San Francisco supervisor; Dr. Bill Plante, President of IRLAP and candidate for the State Assembly from Marin County; Dr. William Myerhart and Jerry Newland.

One of the committee members, Carol Ruth Silver, a newly elected supervisor, appeared to be quite favorable to the concept of land value taxation. Mr. Silver was heard to remark on a radio program the following Sunday that she "has just come across a new idea for taxation called land value taxation."

Another hearing before this committee, the State and National Affairs Committee, is scheduled for Friday, April 14 at 2:00 PM in the main legislative chamber at City Hall in San Francisco. More testimony on LTP will be given and the film "For the Land is Mine" will be shown.

Anyone interested in attending is invited.

1978 JOINT GEORGIST CONFERENCE

The 1978 Joint Georgist Conference will be held at Bryn Mawr University, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania (just west of Philadelphia), from Saturday, July 1 through Tuesday, July 4.

An exciting program is in the final planning stage by the Conference co-sponsors: the Henry George School of New York, the

Henry George Foundation, The Henry George Institute, the Robert Schalthornbach Foundation, and IRLAP. You will receive details on all aspects of the Conference as they become available.

Air-conditioned accommodations with three full meals daily may be reserved now at \$19.50 per person per day. All sports facilities of the campus and cultural attractions of nearby Philadelphia will be available to the conference. In addition, there are special trips being planned to the Henry George birthplace, to the Independence Day celebration and other exciting events. If you have any presentations you would like to make to the Conference please write to Philip Winkelstein, Director of the Henry George School of New York, 50 East 60th Street, New York, N.Y. 10021, or to Steven Cord at the Henry George Foundation, 404 Magee Building, 336 Fourth Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15222.

Please let us know that you plan to attend. The space has already been booked and a deposit given. Your checks should be made out to the 1978 Joint Georgist Conference and sent either to the Henry George School of New York or to the Henry George Foundation to insure your reservation. You will be hearing from us soon with brochures, program and further information about the Conference.

SAN FRANCISCO ANTI-SPECULATION MEASURE

An ordinance to discourage housing speculation in San Francisco, the scene of near unbelievable housing cost increases in recent years, has been urged upon the San Francisco Board of Supervisors by an organization calling itself the Housing Coalition Committee. The Housing Coalition Committee is made up of numerous affiliated organizations and individuals all of whom are concerned with increased rents and evictions which result from speculation in housing.

Their proposed measure would impose a tax on profits made from selling property. The tax would be levied on a sliding scale over a period of five years. The tax would be 80% of profits if the property were sold within the first year of purchase down to 15% if sold during the fourth year after purchase. The proceeds would be used to start an 11-member appeals board and to finance housing rehabilitation in San Francisco.

Without explaining the reasoning the Georgist analysts of this proposal is that it will have the opposite effect than intended in that it may raise housing costs rather than lower them. It does not contain any incentive to build new housing or renovate existing housing and it thereby fails to do

that which would bring the cost of housing down. In addition it will set up more bureaucracy and involve complicated regulations difficult to administer fairly.

The measure was considered by the Finance Committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors on March 20th and the matter was tabled pending further hearings.

Anyone interested in taking part in the deliberations of the Housing Coalition can contact them at 944 Market Street, San Francisco, California 94102, (415) 397-8589.

GEORGIIST CANDIDATE

As was reported in the last Newsletter Clay Berling, a long time member of the School and present member of the Board of Directors, was running for City Council of Albany, California (East Bay). Clay lost in the February 7 election but that was a recall election only and now he is running again for a full four year term. The voting will take place on April 11. We will report the outcome in the next Newsletter.

Clay informs us that the main issue in the election is something we Georgiists understand very well but which is confusing to the general public. It involves the drift toward increased development and pro-party speculation in Albany and whether the City Council should permit upzoning so that developers can develop and speculators can reap their profits.

The reason for the development crunch in Albany is linked, according to Clay, to the whole problem of proper land use in the San Francisco East Bay and particularly in the large city of Oakland where people are being forced out because of high land and housing prices. The pressure for alternative locations is felt by all communities including Albany.

Clay tries to explain the overall economic picture to voters but he finds that he has to respond to narrower points of view since most people are not in a position to appreciate or care about the overall causes of their problems.

Clay's experience is undoubtedly typical of most Georgiist candidates for political office and after the election we hope to hear more about his experiences and insights.

Good Luck Clay.

FRANCES MOORE LAPPE AND MASON MEDAL AWARD

On Monday, April 10, a small group met at a luncheon presentation of the J. Rupert Nason Medal Award to Frances Moore Lappe, author of Food First: Beyond the Myth of Scarcity. Mrs. Lappe is currently working on the paperback edition of Food First so the meeting was kept small and informal in deference to her busy schedule. We congratulate her for her work in identifying the underlying causes of hunger and starvation in the world and are now assured that she is at least aware of the remedy to the problem proposed by Henry George almost 100 years ago.

JARVIS-GANN AMENDMENT

It appears that most Californians are awaiting the June 6 election either with fear and trembling or with happy and sanguine expectation. On that date the Jarvis-Gann Amendment (Proposition 13 on the ballot), perhaps the greatest challenge to the status quo in taxation and government to come out of the initiative process in California, will be voted on.

The Jarvis-Gann Amendment proposes to cut state property taxes from 1/2 to 2/3 for a revenue loss of \$7 to \$8 billion to local government. Further provisions of Jarvis-Gann will limit property taxes 1% of full market value, limit assessment increases to 2% per year and make it difficult for local and state governments to raise new taxes to make up for the revenue loss.

The most recent issue of the Henry George School's "Analyst" presents a critique of Jarvis-Gann so there is no need to repeat the argument here. Extra copies of the "Analyst" article on Jarvis-Gann are available for those who want to pass them on to friends.

In addition to the Jarvis-Gann Initiative voters will have the opportunity to approve an alternative tax relief measure proposed by the State legislature but the mechanics of how to vote for this measure are somewhat complicated.

The legislature has passed what is known as the Behr bill which will cut property taxes for homeowners (but not businesses) by 30%, the difference to be made up to local government out of a \$5 billion surplus fund presently residing in State coffers because the State for several years has taken in more taxes than it needed, mostly from producers and consumers.

The Behr bill cannot go into effect, however, unless Proposition 8 on the June 6 ballot is passed by the voters.

Proposition 8 is a proposed Constitutional amendment which will allow business property to be taxed differently from residential property. If Proposition 8 does not pass the Behr bill will not become law. Even if it did pass the passage of Jarvis-Gann (Proposition 13) by any margin, will take precedence, Jarvis-Gann does not have to get more votes than Proposition 8 in order to take precedence.

It is all a bit complicated but not really. If you want Jarvis-Gann vote for it. If you want the Behr bill vote for Proposition 8 and against Proposition 13. If you want neither vote against both Propositions 8 and 13.

Since what Georgiists would want is not on the ballot Georgiists will have to vote their conscience on these issues. No matter what happens the result should be very interesting. Only time will tell whether the chaos of these developments will lead to greater attention given to Georgiist ideas.

AMERICAN HERITAGE ARTICLE ON HENRY GEORGE

The April 1978 issue of American Heritage magazine contains an article by David Margood, author of The Screwing of the Average Man, entitled "Where is Henry George Now That We Need Him?" The article also includes a 2-page spread of photos of Henry George.

Editor: Wendell Fitzgerald