



Newsletter

HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL

July
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833 Market Street San Francisco, California 94103

BOARD ELECTIONS

Elections for new Central Board members and officers of the Henry George School of Northern California were held way back in May. The new members are elected for four year terms and officers for one year starting July 1, 1978. The new members elected to the Board are Lauri Bischoff, Muriel Mackeprang and Ingo Bischoff and Bob O'Donnell. In addition to being elected to the Board Bob O'Donnell and Ingo Bischoff were elected President and Vice President respectively. Don Pirenes was elected Treasurer and Joe Casey was elected Secretary.

Our heartfelt thanks for their devotion to the School and a job well done are due to outgoing officers. They are Charles Turner who was President; Ed Wachsman, Vice President; Don Pirenes Smith, Treasurer; and Joe Russer, Secretary. Finishing their four year terms are Bob Tideman, Ed Wachsman and Ann Reeves.

PROPOSITION 13

On June 6, 1978 the voters of California voted 2 to 1 for Proposition 13. Only time and the history books will tell what Proposition 13 really means. Whether it is a victory or a defeat, a cause for rejoicing or despair, a step forward in realization of human potential or a step back. It is amazing to see every sort of emotion, reaction, opinion and prediction being expressed on the subject. The whole experience is reminiscent of the story of the Tower of Babel where all at once everyone was incapable of speaking to, understanding or sympathizing with anyone else.

Those familiar with the economics of taxation and land have an insight into the possible results of Proposition 13 which is different if not more profound than the prevailing public understanding of such matters. Armed with this knowledge it is easy to be pessimistic about the long range consequences of Prop. 13. Nor are any of the proposals so far advanced to remedy the shortcomings of Prop. 13 likely to win any awards for just or sane economics from our point of view. There is no denying the fact that

the principle of the common ownership of the earth has received a setback at the hands of an unknowing electorate. This is a tragedy for which we will all pay, rich and poor alike.

But this does not mean that humanity has once again lost the battle and promise of civilization nor does it mean that we can afford to walk around predicting doom and destruction. As Henry George and Adam Smith (Theory of Moral Sentiments) said the greatest and strongest motivation of human action is to receive the approbation of one's fellow men. The public will not sit still for condemnation or criticism from Georgists but there is much that is positive and praiseworthy in that which led up to Prop. 13. There is much that we as Georgists can agree with.

For example we can agree with, support and praise the following principles:

1. The desirability of lower taxes
2. The desirability of less government
3. The desirability of more efficient government
4. The desirability of greater citizen control over government and politicians

These are the principles that won overwhelming approval. In our comments on Proposition 13 we can give credit for recognition of these principles and then any other remarks can be directed toward analyzing whether or not the details of the new law will accomplish these goals efficiently.

As a local San Francisco columnist has said in a year or two it may be very difficult to find anyone who will admit they voted for Prop. 13. If this happens we may see a reaction which will destroy support for the general principles mentioned above. That would be worse than Prop. 13 in the long run.

NATIONAL GEORGIST CONFERENCE

Georgists from all over the United States and Canada gathered together at Bryn Mawr (Brown Hill), Pa. along Philadelphia's "Mainline" for their annual conference over the fourth of July weekend.

Space does not permit a detailed report of the conference. Suffice it to say that a gathering of Georgists such as this never fails to charge one's

batteries or to provide some good thinking on a wide range of subjects. One of the highlights was a renewed spirit of cooperation and mutual concern which was manifested between the various organizations sponsoring the conference. In particular the Henry George School of New York under the leadership of executive director Phil Finkelstein expressed the desire to see education in the principles of Henry George revitalized and strengthened throughout the country. It was suggested that the New York School would be open to entertaining the suggestion of reviving Georgist educational programs in cities which had previously received support from New York. Whatever happens from now on in this regard will take place in a new atmosphere of cooperation.

Many fine presentations were made at the conference copies of which are available from the Northern California School at the prices indicated. To order just drop us a note indicating title and author along with a check. Prices reflect our cost of reproduction and mailing.

1. Henry George and the Henry George School by Paul Nix, President of the Henry George School of New York. 2 pages. 25¢

2. A Georgist's View of Inflation by Gerry Shaw, School of Economic Science, Calgary, Alberta, Canada. 3 pages. 30¢

3. Proposition 13: Implications and Alternatives by Philip Finkelstein, Executive Director, Henry George School of New York. 5 pages. 45¢

4. Proposition 13: Implications and Alternatives by William Filante, President of L.E.A.F. and Candidate for California State Assembly (Marin County) 6 pages. 50¢

5. Land Speculation, Production Inflation and the Keynesian Wage Model by Glenn Weeks, graduate of the Henry George School of Northern California and former President of the Henry George School of New York. 24 pages. \$1.75

6. Inflation--Instant Intercept by Benjamin F. Smith of Ada, Michigan. 23 pages. \$1.75

7. A New Foundation and a Magazine - A Newspaper Syndicate by William W. Newcomb. 8 pages. 65¢

THOUGHTS ON A VISIT TO GETTYSBURG

While at the National Georgist Conference reported above your editor took the opportunity to visit the site of the Battle of Gettysburg just outside the small town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. This battle took place July 1-3, 1863 and marked the turning point and high water mark in the fortunes of the Confederacy. The battle raged for three days and cost 50,000 dead on both sides. The final day saw Pickett's charge a direct frontal assault of the Union lines by 15,000 confederate soldiers across a mile of open field. Of the 15,000 confederates who started out only 7,000 lived to return to their own lines after braving artillery coming and going and desperate hand to hand fighting.

The visitor to this battlefield can almost relive these three terrifying days and begin to appreciate the emotion and sacrifice involved. What must amaze the visitor is that men could voluntarily subject themselves to the kind of thing which happened here. What is even more amazing is that this battle and the entire war itself is still being fought in many people's minds, that sides are still picked, and that sympathy and resentment wells up today, albeit romanticized and moderated, just as it must have then.

Most visitors to Gettysburg must think that war is inevitable. Some may even think that this particular battle was glorious. Other visitors may detest war and wish that there could be peace. Could it be that only the Georgist knows for a certainty that wars are not inevitable and that peace is easily attainable?

At the site of this and all other battlefields we can only pray that the God of all will consent to the lifting of the shroud of ignorance from the mind and senses of Man so that he may see how brotherhood may be achieved.

Editor: Wendell Fitzgerald