

Dear Robert,

Thanks for your short note of 31 May. Yes, Australian Capital Territory is ACT.

I certainly agree with Mary Hutchinson (GJ No 67) that euphemising we are "against all taxation" but in favour of "collecting the rent" is first confusing if not downright baffling, second very frightening (land nationalisation?) third, if we have somehow retained our hearer's attention long enough, a reason to consider we are practicing deceptive sales talk.

The same applies only to a lesser degree, in my view, to "collecting site rent/revenue".

The question must then arise: "Why do we do it so much in Australia, if not in other countries to any extent that I have discerned?"

I believe we are pretty thoroughly intimidated by Establishment aggression and censorship here and that we must all consciously endeavour to speak out and speak plainly, without euphemising in deference to such pressures. This works better, too.

I confess to occasional guilt myself, by talking of "taxing unearned monopoly wealth instead of production/producers and consumption/consumers" when particularly desperate to get a letter published in The Canberra Times. I think sixteen was my longest such "drought", broken by a gentle reminder as a PS to no. 17! That was before I woke up to euphemising! Now I average one in five or six whilst their promulgated weekly statistics show about one in two. Occasionally I even make it with LVT.

I will never use terminology such as "rent" or "interest" other than in their current conventional meanings in ordinary society.

No doubt you are also bugged there with the old "furphy" (forgive me if I am not practicing what I preach) that LVT is passed on like any other tax. Why then protest it more than the others? In Australia the Establishment are pushing hard for a "broadly based consumption tax" like New Zealand's disastrous General Services Tax. If LVT is such a tax, as they claim, then it is clearly the most broadly based of all. Why don't they advocate unavoidable LVT for their purpose? Perhaps other countries' Georgists can adapt this to their circumstances, too, to take the offensive?

Another interesting point I like to make is that 19th century reformers put LVT at the top of the 1847 Communist Manifesto but were effectively diverted to socialism by Establishments which repealed/contained LVT but could live with socialism as long as those just above the poverty line paid the taxes for those falling below it, thereby avoiding revolution. Socialism has now provoked revolution in Eastern Europe but not yet in the partial Western versions which still stagger along.

Use as much or as little of this and recent writings enclosed herewith, Robert, as you wish.

Very best wishes to all US Georgists. Sincerely,

*Bill Mason*

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