

## USING COMMUNICATIONS MEDIA

By

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My participation in the Georgist Movement has been directed in only one avenue: to try and get the media to take notice of our alternative form of economics. My training in college was in journalism and marketing. I encountered a modicum of success in journalism and marketing in making my livelihood, but I must admit it has not been as far-reaching in selling Georgism as I would like.

Most Georgists accept the fact that there has been a conspiracy of silence against us. We six people in Melbourne, Florida, created Media Foundation For Land Economics to try and overcome that fact. Those of you who have never heard from or about us can get a pretty good picture from a profile written on our Foundation and on myself by a very perceptive reporter for the Melbourne Times, which you will find on the literature table.

We have been in contact with 1250 professional writers and with 22 quality magazines. We can only depend upon a small cadre of writers who have tried to sell their land economics articles to magazines. We almost had an article in the investigative magazine, MOTHER JONES, with 225,000 circulation, published in San Francisco, but negotiations broke down. *Alanus Hartzok may have been able to contact them.* Erwin Knoll, editor of THE PROGRESSIVE, a magazine with less than 50,000 circulation, but influential, has assigned an assistant to write an editorial on comparative forms of taxation, including land value taxation. We have been asked for a research grant by Peter Meyer for a chapter on land reform in a hard cover book.

Tristram Coffin, editor of THE WASHINGTON SPECTATOR, a highly prestigious newsletter based in Washington, D. C., has been planning to devote an entire issue of his newsletter, and sent Perry and me a draft of such a story, but Perry and I had to tell him his statistics were dated. Walter Rybeck has kept in close contact with him to pass on ideas, particularly from Congressman Reuss's office.

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Several socially responsible church magazines have asked us to have writers submit articles to them, and THE CHURCHMAN, published in St. Petersburg, Florida, and which published this beautiful article by Gaston Haxo several years ago: entitled "What Became Of Our Birthright" has specifically asked for articles in the Haxo vein; the ethics of vast church wealth being untaxed, and the justification of an American Arms Build-up to protect American overseas corporate real estate.

We have started a series of research grants to Hugh Nicolay, a man who has given his entire adult life to conservation: articles, slides and motion pictures, and holds office in all of the major conservation organizations in the United States.

Although we discontinued giving post-publication grants, Mr. G. M. Gitonga Aritho, of the Department of Land Development, University of Nairobi, attended the conference last year in San Francisco, and saw our literature there. He sent us a five-column article entitled "Land Ownership and Speculation in Kenya" which appeared in the DAILY NATION, published in Kenya, and asked for a post-publication grant. The article is marvelously researched. We sent him our minimum grant, and proposed that he write more articles with the emphasis on THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, THE SMITHONIAN, FOREIGN POLICY, and other magazines with an international flavor, as his outlets.

Another research grant was paid to Rev. Joseph Tisch for an article requested and now being written for the Theosophical Society in America.

Philip Osborne, Senior Editor of READER'S DIGEST, has told me that READER'S DIGEST is interested in reprinting another article on land speculation.

A woman in Greater New York, who has long run her own real estate office and construction business, written dozens of published articles and several books, is attending the Conference this weekend, and because of both her real estate background and her long publishing credits, I am hopeful will have many articles on property tax reform. She is Mrs. Dorothy Tymon.

~~favorite subject~~

David Hapgood, my long-time friend, who had a good article in the NEW REPUBLIC and in AMERICAN HERITAGE called "Henry George, Where Are You Now That We Need You" said to me when we first created our Foundation, "You can put a couple of years in this effort, and long after you have made the initial contacts with the authors and editors, the articles will begin to appear, but the Foundation won't get the credit. The important thing is: You have germinated the idea with the authors and magazines."

We have tried to get DONAHUE, whose syndicated program is on 216 stations, and probably seen by at least 12 million people each day, to have one of the prestigious people on this list appear on the DONAHUE program. Chicago Georgists tried to make a personal contact with the producers of DONAHUE, but could not get through the fortified entrance.

*Briefly*  
But let me cover four other avenues of media exposure that I believe Georgists should pursue outside of our Foundation:

(1) Last year in San Francisco, David Hapgood made a very worthy suggestion that I think should have been followed through: He proposed that pamphlets be written in cooperation with the leaders of the conservation movement, Common Cause, Nader's organizations, the League of Women Voters, and other groups so that the pamphlets carry the imprimature of the organizations cooperating. I wish that one of the big Georgist foundations had followed through on this proposal.

(2) A new phenomenon is occurring today in the reproduction of filmed subjects via videocassettes. The technology makes it possible to distribute the Schalkenbach film ONE WAY TO BETTER CITIES and the BEE film THIS LAND IS MINE to the 3,000 colleges and junior colleges and the 29,000 high schools and junior high schools at a print price of between \$20 and \$30, instead of the usual \$175 to \$200 cost of film prints for a half hour show. The unexposed tape for these videocassette showings can be bought for \$4.99 for 1200 feet covering 128 minutes. 1800 feet is \$5.59.

The public and private schools and colleges are well funded. Even back in the 30s and 40s when I was a producer-writer-editor for Eastman Teaching Films and Coronet Teaching Films, there was a great demand. I find that I get much more response from youth in high schools and colleges than I do from Lions, Rotarians, Kiwanians and Elks in showing the Schalkenbach and BEE films.

Most urban public schools have both film and video production and reproduction facilities. It is a part of the educational process. It is highly possible that Harry Pollard's Interstudent Program could be linked with motion picture and taped productions and reproductions and exhibition.

DISTRIBUTION IS THE KEY WORD IN ALL OF THIS. For any new films or tapes made by BEE, the Henry George Schools or the Schalkenbach Foundation there should be a bigger budget for distribution than for production. I'll venture the opinion that the textbook publishing industry spends more on its salesmen than it does producing the books.

Mark that point well.

You can bet that Bell Telephone, U. S. Chamber of Commerce, right wing and left wing organizations, and others are distributing their films and tapes to the schools in vast quantities, and often free.

I would also suggest that BEE, Schalkenbach and the Henry George School produce short 15 minute films and tapes illustrating, for instance, the Law of Rent.

Our entire movement is afflicted with a terrible shortage of young people -- those who are going to take our place in civic and political life. We simply must make inroads in the school system. We have got to get to the kids over and over again.

(3) In 1971, Chairman Dean Birch, appointed by Nixon to the Federal Communication Commission, and his fellow commissioners, concluded that not only should the free air waves be made available to the 2500 profit-making cable systems, but that access should be made more available to any group that could afford to set up the equipment, quote

"It must provide a public forum for the enrichment of the lives of people." End of quote.  
It has become known as public access.

The public access movement gained further impetus from the development of light inexpensive Japanese video equipment called port-a-pac. For a small investment, according to TV Guide magazine, any kid could become his own DeMille. The so-called video-freaks taped everything in sight. Where did they put their output? Where else, but on public access.

There are several public access channels in Manhattan. At Berks Cable in Reading, Pennsylvania, for example, Mr. Ordinary Citizen is invited to face down a local politician on a split screen. You can imagine how this makes for healthy confrontation.

Cape Cod Cablevision at Barnstable, Massachusetts, can provide an outlet for a Cape Cod Writer's Conference. According to TV Guide, some groups try to equal the NBC production, Saturday Night Live.

Viacom Cablevision is in San Rafael, California. Patty Trosclair, former Community Director of Programming, gave anyone the right of access so long as they did their own production. Peter Rafalow replaced Ms. Trosclair. In 1980, Viacom received four national cable television ACE awards for locally originated community programs.

In Santa Barbara, California, Ira Oppen, of Cable 2, put a couple of comics on the air who did an irreverent take-off on the sacrosanct Fiesta Day Parade. Of course, the city fathers were not amused.

This step-child of cable television in the Santa Monica outlet has had on its programs, Sophie Loren, Henry Fonda, John Ritter, Lee Strassberg, Michael Cain, Peter Usinov, Jack Lemmon, and other film luminaries.

The FCC has now given to mankind public access. An engineer, a producer, a man or woman to use the port-a-pac, and an innovative person to put it all together should give us land value taxers a means to get our message across. The show can be initially produced and shown wherever there is a Public Access station, and tapes for that show can be supplied

to all of the other Public Access stations around the country. For that matter, who says the tapes can't be used on pay cable TV?

BUT --- and this is a big BUT -- The innovator or producer put in charge of this project must be able to create productions that will keep the TV viewer interested. In my proposal Number 2, made five minutes ago, in connection with using videocassettes in the schools, the audience is captive. Here, we must compete in the marketplace.

It is time the Georgist Movement used these new techniques.

The fourth and last avenue of media exposure I can put in a couple of sentences.

(4) The Georgist Movement needs a central Press Release Department. After 101 years, we are now old enough, and doing enough, to have stories released on WHAT IS HAPPENING ABOUT US AROUND THE NATION. Perhaps, if the Council of Georgist Organizations comes to life at this Conference, such a centralized Press Release Department can be established.

Perhaps some day, when Media Foundation For Land Economics is sufficiently funded and a younger person takes my place as the Foundation's administrator, the Foundation can take on some of the proposals I have made in this paper.