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PROFESSOR Roy Martin, who has served as Science and Technology Policy Advisor to UNESCO, has written to the publishers of Reader's Digest Universal Dictionary to challenge the definition given to "single tax".

The dictionary entry says that "single tax", originating in US economics, means "A system by which all revenue is derived from a tax on one object, especially on land". Prof. Martin recommends that this should be replaced with "An ad valorem tax of 100% on the economic rent (site value) of land".

In his letter to the publishers, Prof. Martin explained:

"The notion stems from the French Physiocrats (Quesnay, Turgot et al.) who recognised that the origin of the value they called the 'produit net', lay with the community and not the owner of the land. The English term is the 'economic rent' (Ricardo); but the French term is better because it avoids the confusion, common in English, between the origins of the rent of land and the rent of goods and services. To preserve the right of private ownership and use of land, they proposed that the produit net be taken in the form of a tax they called the 'impôt unique'. This has come across, poorly, into English as the 'single tax'; and it has often been claimed that it was precisely this name which helped kill the idea, politically. Unlike 'impôt unique', it does nothing to indicate its singularity by reference to the basis of other taxation.

"In fact, today's preference is for 'Land Value Taxation' or the more explicit 'Site Value Taxation'. However, that is another matter. It is what Dove and Spencer (both c.1850) recognised, Mill meant by the 'unearned increment of land values', Boden by 'the freeing of the land' and the Liberals (vide Churchill on the Land Question, 1909) by, but most unfortunately called, 'Land Reform'.

"The citing of the US as the origin of the term 'single tax' probably arises from the clarification and evangelising of the ideas of the Physiocrats by the renowned 19th century American political economist, George (c. 1898 *The Science of Political Economy*, see the acknowledgement by him, Bk II, Ch.4). In justice, therefore, the original reference should be to the French political economists. Further you will see that the tax is not a tax on land (certainly not just as an example of being directed at a single object only, as indicated in your definition) but a tax on the economic rent of land - quite a different matter. Further, its proponents do not insist that it is the only tax but that it must be the first source of taxation."

MOLDOVA: A NEW TAX ON LAND



NICOLAUS Tideman, a US Professor of Economics who regularly visits eastern Europe to explain the economics of Henry George to reformers, has received a letter from Mr. V.S. Kitsan, the First Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Finance of the republic of Moldova.

Prof. Tideman had sent Moldova a copy of his article, "Don't Repeat Our Mistakes" and his book, *Tribute, Duty, Tax*. Mr Kitsan wrote:

"The parliament of Moldova has adopted a law on land taxation. According to this law, all legal entities and persons must pay the land tax. The rate of the land tax [per hectare] depends on the rent of the land, which is determined by a land cadaster. There is also a profits tax. Large collective farms and state farms are released from the profits tax.

" The rate of the land tax [per hectare] will not depend on the results of the activities of land owners. It is levied as a fixed payment per unit of area of land of a specified quality. This estimation is made for three to five years. If someone uses land more effectively, the greatest part of the profit received will be at the disposal of that person or enterprise."