

HENRY GEORGE NEWS

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ROOTS

by Stan Rubenstein

In our centennial celebration year of Progress and Poverty, it's time to reflect — to take note of our successes and failures. The marked interest throughout the country in balanced budgets and property tax reform, especially since Proposition 13, may be attributed to many factors, one being the lack of current sound economic principles. Another could well be the tireless efforts of indefatigable Georgists, for who can say we have not had influence?

Involvement with contemporary issues and problems has brought Georgist philosophy into the real world. And the results are encouraging. For, travelling the routes of politics has enabled the merits of land value taxation to gain a wider audience. Our contributions to various journals about Georgist principles have begun to edge our ideas closer to the mainstream of public opinion. We no longer encounter resistance. Rather do we find friendly acceptance of our ideas; This is all to the good, but there is a less encouraging side of the shield.

The avant garde of the Georgist movement can trace their roots to our magnum opus and to its study in

formal classes. Sadly, however, throughout the country fewer classes and fewer graduates are being developed. Unless this condition is reversed, we may be past the point of no growth. We may be losing more men and women through attrition than we are gaining through our courses. At this moment in history, when hope and vigor ought to permeate our souls, when the portents indicate to those with the slightest vision that now is the time to reach for the stars, we seem dispirited, hopeless and apathetic. Yet, this need not be the case.

Take heart from our experience of the last two years on Long Island. In each of these years, three to four hundred students have enrolled in four contiguous towns, so that large follow-up classes and an alumni association, led by students, could be developed. Extra large first night attendances were derived by tying in the courses with the crying need for property tax reduction and reform. From these beginnings, we made the transition to the heart of the Georgist philosophy.

Successful classes have led to a renewed faith in teaching, leaving class discussion leaders with that warm glow we experienced during our

"If I go this night over the civilized world, I would find men who would gladly clasp hands with me . . . if it has been given to me to help forward a great movement — it is through no merit of mine ; it is not from my energy ; it is not from my learning ; it is not from my ability ; — it is from the simple fact that, seeing a great truth, I swore to follow it."

CENTENNIAL '79!

The Centennial Committee, under the direction of Chairman **Terry Newland**, is laboring well in San Francisco.

The international festival in honor of the 100th year since publication of **Progress and Poverty**, will be headquartered at the Jack Tar Hotel from August 20th to 26th. The program shows an impressive group of top-grade thinkers and speakers. A preliminary listing appears inside the **NEWS**.

Plan **now** to join hundreds of fellow-Georgists from around the world who will rendezvous in San Francisco this August.

introduction to this challenging philosophy. How gratifying, once again, to open for students that door to a promising world of the future.

Let us not forget, however, that the decades of yesteryear are gone — those days when reception of our ideas was much kinder. Social, political and cultural forces have made our task more difficult. Past successes may be today's failures. Classes must conform to our changing audience. Ideas, no matter how valid, cannot be shared with a group that is unable to understand them. (cont'd — Page 4)

Dear Harry

Oscar B. Johannsen wrote recently: "I read with pleasure and delight your excellent article, Henry George, Prophet of the Good Society. I agree with you that we should stress that we favor no taxes . . . I've been looking for a catchy title, instead of 'Single Taxers' or 'Land Value Taxers'"

Oscar Johannsen is right. If we call ourselves "Land Value Taxers" people will get just one point — we are "taxers". They will believe we want to impose on them some kind of tax — and they will be against us.

If we say we are "Single Taxers", we will get a similar response. People will be turned off, thinking we want to impose a tax on them.

But there's a catchy title, made to order for us. If we call ourselves "Un-Taxers", the immediate reaction of nearly everybody will be, "Right On! We're for you!"

If they ask, "How far would you go in un-taxing us?" there are two answers. Everyone who understands economics could agree, "We would un-tax all the products of human labor; all buildings and improvements; all earned incomes."

Some would go further: "We would un-tax everything; eliminate all taxes."

This would probably bring the question, "How would you finance government?"

A LETTER

The answer is precisely stated in the words Earl Hanson used in the resolution for the Utah Republican Convention. "Economic rent is the rightful source of public revenue.

In **Equal Rights**, James L. Busey wrote "Proposition 13 indicates the people want to reduce taxes, not increase them. They are not interested in some new or apparently added tax, such as 'land-value tax'."

"They want to reduce or eliminate a tax or taxes . . . the abolition of some tax such as that on improvements, would have tremendous appeal at the present time."

"Never mind about 'where the money is going to come from?' Did California voters fuss about that?"

But some will ask that question, and insist on an answer. Fortunately, we have a perfect answer: The money will come from charging people for the things they use — the land, radio and TV channels, ports, harbors, rivers, forests, minerals and all natural resources.

People will have more questions for us, but if they look on us as "the Un-Taxers" they will not be asking questions the way they do now of "land value taxers" — as though they are challenging an enemy.

MORGAN HARRIS is a multiple professor of economics, writing, and advertising. Here's a letter.

If we are "the Un-Taxers" who are working to reduce and eliminate their tax burdens, they will look on us as their friends. They will want to know more — not to refute us, but to understand what we are saying and to help us achieve our goal.

Is it not common sense to enlist their support — by calling ourselves "the Un-Taxers"?

Sincerely,
Morgan Harris

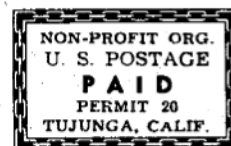
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Our message is not for this generation alone but for all generations so we need feel no trepidation about the teaching of Georgist philosophy. But changes are in order. We need a re-structuring of the basic course; more palatable reading material geared to the reading habits of our students; and more successful advertising to meet the changing tastes and attitudes of our communities.

We have never known a more propitious time, or a greater need, for what we have to give, the teaching of the principles set forth in **Progress and Poverty**. Paraphrasing Arnold Toynbee, the noted historian, every organization is judged by its ability to respond to its challenges. As the various celebrations of our centennial fade into history, may we take pride in having met successfully this most formidable of challenges.

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HENRY GEORGE NEWS
Box 655 Tujunga CA 91042



GEORGE COLLINS
HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL
413 S. 10TH ST.
PHILADELPHIA PA 19147