

---

# Smith and Hartzok participate in Green Millennium Conference

by Jeffery Smith, Portland, OR

At the Green Millennium conference, hosted by the Green Ecological Party of Mexico in Oaxaca, Mexico, a week before Mexico's most recent major earthquake, elected Green officials from around the world expressed an interest in trying geonomics. These officials who were willing to shift their jurisdiction's taxes from earnings to Earth's worth conveyed their willing to Alanna Hartzok and Jeff Smith. Both geists presented to the plenary panels and were able to attend the conference by generous assistance from the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation. At the gathering, both Hartzok and Smith were invited to moderate panels. Hartzok was informed of her invitation but unfortunately Smith never received his; his telepathic powers were a bit fogged that particular morning after a long, hard night of proselytizing the natives.

The event was attended by hundreds, mostly Mexicans and other Latin Americans, yet representatives came also from Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia. The conference was covered extensively by the local press. Both Smith and Hartzok had lengthy and friendly conversations with a local reporter who called "geonomics the most important presentation" he had heard. The reporter is writing an article on geonomics and the conference (available upon request, but in Spanish). The national press gives thorough coverage to the Mexican Green Party, now the fourth largest party in Mexico with a role in the opposition coalition, and with dozens of members elected to offices all over the country from city councils to the federal congress.

Besides commitments to collaborate in the near future, the conference also produced a document to be forwarded to the entire Green movement worldwide. The Oaxaca Declaration calls upon our species to, among other demands, provide universal access to land, both resources and sites, both rural and urban. This wording, which will be read by millions all around the world, was the result of proselytizing by Hartzok and Smith.

Besides planning future advances, a recent one was unearthed. In Sweden, apartment buildings are no longer taxed, only the land beneath them, thanks to the efforts of the Swedish Green Party. This shift was the first step that the Greens could win toward their goal — stated in their platform — of shifting all property taxes off buildings onto land.

This policy dates back to the first European Green Economic conference, hosted by the Swedish Greens, to which Smith, the only American presenter, presented geonomics, an appearance made possible in part by a grant from the Henry George School. Whether there is any causal connection between Smith's 1990 talk and present policy is undetermined. Given the rapid turnover in activist politics,

the 1990 leaders have moved on, replaced by a younger generation unaware of the policy's origin.

In 1991, Smith attended the founding conference of the Mexican Green Party. The 1999 Oaxaca gathering showed little if any impact from Smith's previous appearance. One possible connection is the recent tax shift in Mexicali where Greens have been active. As a resident of nearby San Diego, Smith frequently pestered his Mexicali Green neighbors to try geonomics, successful business people who may have been on the mayor's review committee that implemented the local tax change.

Being able to cite the real world example of Mexicali made the proposals of Hartzok and Smith to Oaxaca Greens much more impactful. Mexicali proves that a local Mexican jurisdiction can legally and politically shift their property tax, should they desire to. It is also possible for a Mexican port to lower or abolish tariffs, as did La Paz, Baja California in the early '90s. The experiment worked so well it was shut down. La Paz, ruled by PAN, an upstart, competitor party, drew away trade from ports ruled by the incumbent party, PRI. Now that Mexico is a bit more democratic, the chance of a new geonomic demonstration — unhindered by the capitol — is a bit more likely.

Besides the Mexicali break-thru, another new development in Mexico became apparent during an outing to a petrified waterfall, when the group passed through flat valley floors, undoubtedly kept vacant by land monopoly. Closer to the source of the hardened water near a mountain top, poor and simple villages perched on the mountain side on hillocks as narrow as a dinosaur's spine, with steep winding stairways traversing the hamlet, stretching hundreds of feet vertically, houses precariously awaiting the next hard rain (which came a week after our visit, with devastating results). Yet now, crowning the roofs of more than a handful of huts were satellite dishes, with big screen TVs inside the homes! To afford the best the West has to offer, Oaxacan males work a season or two in the U.S. fields, then return home with their trophies.

One thing that had not changed for millennia was the pyramids at Monte Alban, the ancient religious city built on a mountain top overlooking the modern city of Oaxaca. The abandoned city had practiced free trade, the countryside had enjoyed communal landholding. Among the venerable stones, the Greens closed their conference, calling upon the strength of Mother Earth so that we moderns can go forth and harmonize people with planet.

Following the conference, Smith will write all the contacts he made, sending requested copies of his talk in Spanish (French to Africans). He will also ask for official invitations on government stationery to arrange the collaboration leading to implementation of a geonomic tax shift.

*continued on page 14*

## ***Smith and Hartzok participate in Green Millennium Conference***

*continued from page 4*

Smith is also willing to translate any letter Schalkenbach Foundation may wish to send to his contacts and/or to the complete roster of attendees (available upon request).

Thanks to connections made in Oaxaca, geoists can look forward to collaborating on real world implementation in Mexico, possible in other countries, too, to a widening of the existing shift in Europe, and to an even more integral presence in the 2000 Green conferences in Brazil and Australia.