

NEW NAMES

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For our belief: "Georgism" as an identification has two glaring weaknesses: (1) it lauds a man (deservedly) few people have ever heard of; and (2) it focuses on a personality rather than an idea. We look like a hero-worshipping cult of historico-economic trivia buffs. It does our cause no good to project such an image.

The main component of our particular worldview is Land, the forgotten factor. The other two factors in production have ideologies named after them. Capital has capitalism, Labor has the various forms of "laborism" - unionism, communism, etc., all of which refer to workers. But Land has no equivalent "ism." "Georgism" matches with "Marxism", "Keynesianism", etc. There is no label to go with the factor that underlies all else.

"Landism" doesn't sound right. "Earthism" (we mean Earth when we say Land) is a little better but not good enough. "Geoism" ("Geo" is Greek for Earth) makes the grade. Nearly everybody knows what the word means; it's a root in many words, and even an expensive popular magazine calls itself Geo. The word can wear any definition we give it with the word "Land" in it - for example, "share the Land." It has the first three letters of George's name. And it lets us count precursors of George (Lincoln, Moses, Paine, Physiocrats, etc.) in our ranks. The tag is vague; it says neither our end nor our means, but it ties us in with the environmental movement.

For our remedy: Our means, abolish taxes and collect ground rent, is also hard to name. "The Single Tax (Movement)" has two fatal flaws, too: (1) it overspecifies what we mean but says nothing about our end - justice, abolition of poverty, etc. - so our means appears as a panacea. Since how it works is not immediately obvious, we turn off many people who otherwise later might have looked deeper. And (2) it's a phrase, not a word, it's too long.

Just as there is "Reaganomics", etc., Geoism lets us name our program "Geonomics" - "planet management" - instead of the narrower "house management" (the original Greek meaning of "economics"). Unlike the phrase "Georgist economics", the word "Geonomics", being broader semantically, suggests a more holistic field of study, letting us logically include ethics.

For our group: Calling our ideology "Geoism" leads naturally into dubbing our proposed national umbrella educational group "GEO", which could stand for "Growth - Ethical and Organic" or some such thing. With GEO, our name and our aim, geoism can be nearly one and the same, simplifying the problem of identification.

All these spin-offs - geoism, geoist, GEO and geonomics - are novel and consciousness-raising in the way that "feminism" or "synergy" was.

For our return: The word "rent" is likewise inadequate, as are "ground rent", "economic rent" and the like. "Rent" to most people means payment for use of a building, not the site beneath it. Any preceding adjective, "ground" or "economic" or "resource" or "people's" does not clarify but adds to the confusion. To use words that are clear, familiar and positive, I suggest "site surplus."

For one of our campaigns: The phrases "Land Value Taxation" or "Site Value Taxation" defeat us before we've begun because they have the word "tax" in them. People hate taxes, yet we ask them to join us in raising one. Absurd! Tax Relief on Improvements (TRI) is better, but it still has that negative word and its acronym doesn't sound convincing but pleading. Instead, let's tell our anxiously awaiting public: "PRSE is good for the purse. Let's lower taxes on improvements and as a community collect Public Revenue from Sites Exclusively. To save taxpayers money (and local governments too) pursue PRSE!"