

THE GEORGIST JOURNAL

Number 67

Spring 1990

Comment

As can be seen in this issue, Georgists everywhere are aroused by events in Eastern Europe. We are sparked by the possibilities. Karl Marx's economics have evidently failed - and this seems an unparalleled opportunity to offer Henry George's alternative of bread and freedom instead of a system that took away freedom for the sake of bread and ended by reducing the supply of bread.

It is not clear that Eastern Europe is ready for full democracy and a true free market à la Fukuyama's "end of history." Inquiries have shown that people there still distrust "capitalism" and want a "social democracy" - which to them means reducing inequality, having more worker participation in enterprises and a high level of welfare measures.

Not much thought has been given to paying for all this. Here is one area where our ideas may be shown to be relevant.

Of course there is bound to be heavy competition. Perhaps Margaret Thatcher's boys are not ready to promote their Poll Tax in view of disturbances in Britain which rival the recent ones in Eastern Europe. But U.S. experts will sound the glories of the Income Tax; and Common Market geniuses will sing the praises of the Value Added Tax. Lots of other partisans will push their own utopias.

A bit of history worth putting forward is that the two Communist giants, Russia and China, once had a considerable Georgist influence. Before the Bolshevik Revolution, Henry George was the main rival of Karl Marx, with a large following, chief of whom was

THE GEORGIST JOURNAL (ISSN 0887-6290), 121 E. 30th St., New York, NY 10016, USA. Robert Clancy, Editor. Readers are invited to submit suitable items.

Leo Tolstoy. China's Sun Yat Sen declared his goal of implementing George in his country. Some Eastern European countries - notably Hungary, had an influential Georgist movement.

Let's not overlook the troubles of the "free world." With all their industrial éclat, Japan's land values have soared out of bounds and could be that giant's undoing. Korea, also growing industrially, is likewise experiencing exorbitant rises in land values. And so with other "advanced economies."

Closer to home, decaying cities, fiscal crises, recession, homelessness, drugs, crime, etc., render the saying "Physician, heal thyself" à propos.

The harvest is plenteous but the laborers are few. Let's get to it the best we can.

- R.C.
