

EQUAL RIGHTS

VOLUME 34, No. 3

SPRING 2005

" ALL PEOPLE HAVE EQUAL RIGHTS TO THE USE OF THE EARTH "

Our Origins and Goals

[This is a reprint of Steven Cord's Editorial from the inaugural issue of Equal Rights, Autumn 1969]

What Unites Us

In my discussions with Georgists, I am constantly surprised how our opinions on many issues differ. Some of us are liberals, others conservatives, some Republicans, others Democrats; some want the land-tax as the Single Tax now, others want to work towards it, others oppose it; some accept *Progress & Poverty's* economic analysis, others reject it; some of us stress the ethical approach, others not.

But there is one common bond that unites us all: we all want more taxation of land values. We may differ as to reasons and analysis, but when it comes to *action*, we all stand together.

Let us, then, discuss our differences, because that will clarify our own land-tax thinking and make us stronger land-tax advocates. Besides, the pursuit of truth is an end of life in itself. It is for this reason that *EQUAL RIGHTS* will spotlight controversial pro-and-con discussions of Georgist issues and will be tolerant of differing land-tax views. And we will welcome comments, both critical and laudatory, from our readers.

But let us not forget to conduct these discussions in the spirit of Georgist tolerance of the other man's point of

view. Dogmatism in manner is out. Let us remember that when it comes to *action*, we stand together.

Why The Henry George Foundation?

The Henry George Foundation of America was established as a permanent national institution in honor of the great philosopher, economist, and exponent of freedom and justice and for the purpose of popularizing his great idea which had come to be known as "The Single Tax." The Foundation was chartered by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and was formally launched at a memorial celebration at the birthplace of Henry George in Philadelphia on September 2, 1926.

(Continued on page 3)

OUR ORIGINS AND GOALS

(Continued from page 1)

It was designed to supply the need for a national organization of Georgists and as a successor to the National Single Tax League which had been disbanded during the First World War. A number of prominent Georgists throughout the country joined hands as incorporators and charter members. *Land and Freedom*, edited by Joseph Dana Miller, became the official organ of the Henry George Foundation and gave the movement strong support.

An annual Henry George Congress became a special feature and served to generate new life and vigor and to bring friends of the movement together regularly to exchange ideas and formulate plans to promote the common cause.

During the entire period from 1926 to 1941, an annual conference was held each year in some important American city. The Second World War interrupted these annual gatherings. The Great Depression also made it necessary to curtail some activities but contributed to a revival or expansion of Single Tax activity in the City of Pittsburgh where the Foundation had originated and had always maintained its national headquarters.

Now the Henry George Foundation has been revitalized and has adopted a policy of concentration on education for political action. Immediately following a national conference in Philadelphia in 1949 the Pennsylvania Campaign was launched and a significant victory

was won in 1951 when the Pennsylvania Legislature enacted an optional graded tax law permitting all cities of the third class to adopt a differential real estate tax. And in 1959 the Legislature extended and improved this act so that any of the 48 third class cities could completely transfer their municipal tax burden from improvements to land values whenever a city council might desire to do so.

The task which we have undertaken is not an easy one. But the time does appear to be ripe for a supreme effort. That is why we need the Henry George Foundation - which is free and able to promote practical application of Georgist principles. And that is why we earnestly invite the cooperation and support of every Georgist.