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Our cover picture was uniquely evocative of the *zeitgeist*, I thought, as we converged on the high-desert landscape of Albuquerque for the annual CGO conference. It's not hard to draw up a rather terrifying list of things being "bought now" in our society, to be "paid for later" by means that we haven't figured out — or have lacked the courage to consider.

The United States, for example, has gone ahead and borrowed an ungodly amount of money, to pay for huge tax cuts for high-income folks, and a very expensive war (last year's Federal budget-deficit projections



didn't even include \$87 billion of appropriations for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan). Consumers in the US, not to be outdone, continued to pile up unprecedented amounts of personal debt. Low interest rates helped to ease the pain of that, as millions of home-owners refinanced their mortgages to free up some cash.

These factors have, of course, contributed to the "housing bubble" that many people are talking about now — a phenomenon about which the Georgist literature is replete with sobering analyses.

We Earthlings are squandering our resources, living beyond our means, in many ways. The Sheraton hotel we stayed in, for example, is in a section of Albuquerque which is, for the most part, a wasteland of egregious sprawl. The stern, lovely Sandia Mountain looks on in reproach over a district that, like the desert itself, cannot be traversed on foot. (Certainly Albuquerque is no worse than many other cities in this regard, except that the obvious scarcity of precious water, the tremendous demands placed on the long, thin, fragile Rio Grande, cast the city's wastefulness in sharp relief.)

Other things we are “buying now” — for which “paying later”, however unsettling it may be to think about, cannot be avoided — are easy, breezy freeway travel in high-powered SUVs, food prices kept low by subsidies to energy-intensive monocultures grown on corporate farms, a “standard of living” that seems like Heaven to two-thirds of the world’s people and a sense of “national security” that depends on willful ignorance and demonization.

Georgists have a tendency to find solace in the faith that, although things out there might be awful bad, “we have the



solution to all that, if only people would hear it”. It is a comforting thought to carry with us as we strive to get people to hear it, and to make connections with other groups who seem capable of hearing it. Not very many people are hearing it, but that certainly can’t be *our* fault — after all, don’t we avail ourselves of every chance to “say a few words about the Single Tax”?

The fact is that proponents of the Single Tax — the Georgist Remedy — the Earth Rights Paradigm (call it what you will) must cope with a constant pressure so intense that it would utterly crush people who lack our deep reserves of stubbornness. Where the world sees, for the most part, an interesting notion, a nice hobby — we see *the key to the sustainable future of civilization on our planet*.

It’s a wonder we can even function at all.

And yet, function we do. Despite disheartening setbacks, insults and slights, bitter tactical and theoretical disagreements (but remember, stubbornness is a virtue!) and a vast, surging tsunami of public indifference, we manage to make progress, year in and year out, which is documented and celebrated in our conferences. In this issue we have two conference reports to share. If that whets your appetite, consider ordering a copy of the IU conference papers — or, stay tuned for more of Mason Gaffney’s paper on “The Unplumbed Revenue Potential of Land”, an expansion on his Albuquerque remarks, of which we here present the first of three installments.

In this issue we also report on new books being published, real political progress in Philadelphia and how you can bring your insights to bear in your local papers. If anyone is curious about “what’s happening in the Georgist movement these days”, this issue of the *Journal* would be a good thing to hand to them!

— Lindy Davies