

The Georgist Journal



Number 92

Winter - Spring 2000

Our Movement is Not Motionless!

Are we doing yet another issue on our movement's lack of momentum? Are we still, seven issues after we asked "Whither the Georgist Movement?", trying to figure out how to get this thing moving? Such thoughts were going through my mind as I put together the cover illustration, which could be titled "A Demonstration of Incoherence". Yet if we look at the variety of themes dealt with in this issue, we see no lack of momentum! We see Georgists in every area of our movement analyzing, planning, executing strategies and taking advantage of opportunities for progress. If, as incoming Council of Georgist Organizations President Mark A. Sullivan suggests, Georgists have a self-esteem problem, it apparently is not keeping them from charging forward with their work! Seldom has an issue of the *Journal* had so much activity to report on such a variety of fronts.

Undeniably, there is frustration over the fact that so many talented, experienced Georgists are struggling to do their work without financial support, while large sums are spent on projects that seem dubious, or even downright hostile. That situation may change somewhat — perhaps the Georgist legal action against the Lincoln Foundation will prevail against the odds. Our work, however, is too important for us to wait around for that. We need to move forward, making the clearest, most sensible uses of the resources we've got. Even if there is gold at the end of the Lincoln rainbow, we shouldn't kid ourselves that things will all be easy after that! When the academic establishment and the conventional wisdom become receptive to the Georgist philosophy, then our work will be done! In the meantime, we are a voice crying in the wilderness — so we'd better

not waste our breath.

When it comes right down to it, though — this wilderness isn't as barren as we thought! There is progress in many directions, and dimensions. The multifaceted outreach to the Spanish-speaking world has exciting potential, both to expand our movement and to build on real possibilities for implementation at the national level. Both the International Georgist Union and the Council of Georgist Organizations are soberly evaluating their missions and taking steps toward greater effectiveness. Activists and coalition-builders are learning from both successes and failures. Researchers are taking on long-needed projects, important new books are being published, Internet presentations reach ever-further, and our ideas are being received with enthusiasm in developing nations around the world.

One strongly recurring theme in Georgist literature is the idea that "the time is now" — that there has never been a more opportune time to get our message across. We said it in the 30s and in the 60s, at the fall of the Berlin Wall and at the rise of globalization. One could become cynical about this. I don't think we should, though. We need to see that there's a sort of Zen Paradox at work here. Justice and prosperity, after all, are always needed — have never been needed more than they are now. In truth, while each time in history has been, and is, equally inhospitable to the (dreadfully inconvenient) imposition of fundamental social justice, the fact remains that now IS the time. We certainly shouldn't wait, at any rate, until someone out there decides to start paying us more money, or treating us with more respect!

Does our movement need to be unified? Perhaps — but I think it is far more important that it be edified. We have the paradigm, and we have some very capable propounders. It is terribly important, however, that we neither underestimate the challenges we face, nor allow the absurd difficulty of our task to make us desperate. Whether we like it or not, we're in for the long haul.

— Lindy Davies

INSTRUCTORS WANTED! As those who are involved in it already know, the Henry George Institute's volunteer faculty is the very backbone of its work. We need more to join! We cannot offer financial reward, but the payoff in personal satisfaction is great! You need not have any prior teaching experience, and you may work with as many students as you wish. If you have studied Georgist political economy — in English or in Spanish! — and want to take the next step, then don't hesitate to contact us! We will provide the necessary training and materials. An exciting adventure awaits. There is vital work that you can do, NOW, to further our movement! Write to the *Journal*, or send email to teacher@henrygeorge.org