

WHAT IS A GEORGIST? by Philip Finkelstein

In August, 1981, William C. Lucey of Fairhope, Alabama asked a group of people in the movement to answer the question, "What Is A Georgist?" Philip Finkelstein's response appears below in its entirety.

"What is a Georgist? One who follows the teachings of Henry George which are basically: 1) All humans should be free to pursue their own needs and enjoy the full products of their labors and 2) everyone must have equal access to the natural resources of the earth."

"It is this balanced commitment to both liberty and justice that distinguished Henry George from the unbridled monopolist of private enterprise and the socialist monopoly of government. A Georgist believes that the economic rent of natural resources, including the value of land, be collected and used for social benefit and not private gain. This would provide the revenue needed for public improvements. By freeing productive labor and capital from taxation and breaking the monopoly of natural resources, more people would produce more and distribute more wealth more equitably throughout society. Some Georgists are adherents of the single tax, believing that only the tax on land should be levied and no others at any level of government. Others support varying degrees of taxation of land values, particularly at the local level, to provide community services. Still others oppose all forms of taxation and would refer only to rent of land, or ground rent, as a legitimate payment for the use of a specific location. Some Georgists are most concerned about the monopoly role of governments which exercise authority over much of the resources of the earth. Others are most concerned with the exclusive access enjoyed by wealthy corporations and individuals which then can dictate the other factors of production. But all Georgists basically believe we should own everything that is ours, that is made by man, and that we must share all of our natural heritage."