

The American Dream

Alfred F. Andersen has developed his own ideas on land rights in his book Liberating the Early American Dream (Tom Paine Institute, 1985). By the "early American dream," Andersen refers to the period of colonization (17th-18th centuries) when people came to this country for a better life, and a great sense of freedom prevailed. He believes the dream was betrayed with the framing of the U.S. Constitution in 1787 which created a structure in the interests of powerful ruling classes.

In seeking to correct the situation, Mr. Andersen engages in "groping for economic handles" as a starting point. Though he differs from Georgists in calling land "a form of Capital Goods," he concurs in affirming land as the most basic starting point and in affirming that it properly belongs to all; also that persons are entitled to the fruits of their labor.

He also concurs in wanting the rent of land to be fairly shared by all. However, he seems to misconstrue the Georgist position as wanting land to be "owned" by government, which then rents it out. But the taxation of land values urged by George leaves current institutions, including land titles, as they are, and anticipates beneficial changes as taxes get shifted to land until it becomes a single tax.

Mr. Andersen pursues a different course - a "fair share" plan which he wants for all the world's people. He invokes a "trusteeship" of the land to collect and disburse shares to all people. From there he proceeds to work out a comprehensive system of governance wherein many conditions and requirements are elaborated and which looks forward to a world order. Georgists tend rather to work within present structures as much as possible.

Liberating the Early American Dream is available for \$12 from the Mackay Society, Box 131, Ansonia Station, New York, NY 10023.