

Financing Planet Management Part II

1 message

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Financing Planet Management Part II

Sovereignty, World Order and the Earth Rights Imperative

ALANNA HARTZOK
MAY 17

READ IN APP ↗

For Part One go to: alannahartzok.substack.com/p/financing-planet-management-part**Examples of Ground Rent Policy**

This taxation approach is not merely theoretical but is being implemented, at least in part, in a number of places. In the United States, enabling legislation in Pennsylvania gives cities the option of shifting their property taxes off of buildings (productive capital) and onto land values only (common heritage). The fifteen cities taxing land values at the higher rate have been experiencing statistically significant economic benefits.

Alaska retained its oil lands as public land, subject to fair leasehold arrangements for use plus a tax on each barrel pumped for market. Assets in the Alaska Permanent Fund are about \$13 billion. There are no state income or sales taxes, and every citizen of Alaska receives an annual dividend of about \$1000 each with an additional \$250 per month to every citizen 65 years or older.

Movements in this direction are underway through- out the world. In the spring of 1993, representatives of eighty Russian cities signed a resolution to reform their public revenue system in this manner.

On the global level, the Law of the Seas, the Moon Treaty, and the treaty now governing Antarctica are all based on the common heritage principle, a principle that now must be extended worldwide to include surface lands, as well as oil and mineral resources.

Hatching Many Birds out of One Egg

As the taxation of land values, essentially a "user fee" system, becomes an integral component of the agenda of planet management, several birds will begin to hatch out of one egg. Simultaneously,

- Land tenure will be based on fairness, not force, thus ameliorating territorial conflict, a root cause of war;
- Land resources can be equitably allocated;
- The economic playing field is leveled;
- A genuinely free market is encouraged;
- The gap between the rich and poor narrows; and
- The necessary collective activities of humanity are properly funded, which include peacekeeping and the restoration and protection of the environment.

Common Heritage Funding: Local to Global

It has been suggested that such a system of finance would be based on principles of subsidiarity in terms of implementation. Clearly delineated governing bodies can collect the ground rent of certain specific types of land resources from the local to the global level.

Thus, cities and counties would draw their funding from the ground rent of surface lands; regional authorities would collect the ground rent of oil and minerals, and global governing agencies would be funded by a percentage from these two levels as well as that of deep sea resources, the electromagnetic spectrum, satellite orbital zones, and other transnational resources.

Democratic rights to the planet can be vested in the people as a whole in a way that can be understood easily and administered practically. The advent of the information revolution combined with the personal computer enables such a system to be monitored by the masses. Who owns what, where, and how much ground rent they pay into the common fund could become the most enlightening computer game on earth.

A Warning and an Appeal

If we fail to tax land values for the common fund, the concentrated control of earth in the hands of the few will continue unmitigated, thus advancing the conditions of social turmoil which too often burst into flames of hatred, murder, and war.

Marx is in the morgue, and in the West there is a dawning realization that the huge bureaucracies of the welfare state, which confiscate the wages of the middle classes through the income tax in the attempt to provide a safety net (rather than a safe nest!) for the poor, are not only unwieldy but unworkable as well.

I am appealing to my brothers and sisters in the world order/planetary peace and justice movements to deeply consider the fundamental assumptions of the planet/people relationship as it concerns the entire question of land tenure. I trust that this consideration will discard both the power politics of dominium as well as the market construct of buying and selling our Mother Earth for private profit.

Currently, certain monetary and debt repayment policies and practices of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are strangling the

economies and harming the people of many developing nations. This reality relates to the theme of this exposition in a major way.

A significant proportion of the "profit" that has poured into the global banking system in the past several decades was not a product of honest labor, but was in fact a pool of funds generated from the ground rent of oil resources. These funds were loaned to numerous developing countries where they were frequently of benefit to the ruling elite rather than the people as a whole. However, the debt repayments have now fallen upon the middle class and poor citizens who neither voted for nor gained from the borrowed money.

Morally and ethically, a vast amount of the funds of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank represent a theft from the global commons. Under the common heritage principle, these funds would have been used to benefit the people of the world either by direct dividends or as interest free loans through a revolving loan fund type of system.

These "oil theft loans" made by the world financial institutions should therefore be declared illegal and invalid. In the future, any other money loaned to governments by global financial institutions should be repaid from the ground rent of the indebted nations. Such repayments would therefore fall primarily upon those who are unjustly reaping the benefits of valuable land holdings rather than further burdening the struggling wage earners, small business owners, and the oppressed poor.

Unless a reformed or empowered United Nations or other world government is built firmly upon the principle of equal rights for all to our planet, then both the government and the planet will be controlled by a handful of vested interests. It is up to the intellectual leadership of the world order movement to grapple with this issue NOW - to stop hedging and waiting for the messiah of world government to descend.

Before we purport to know the global governmental recipe for success, let us consider how to make one city succeed. What would it take for the wealth gap between rich and poor to begin to narrow each year instead of widening, for the murder rate to plummet rather than skyrocket, for the schools to become safer rather than scarier?

If the present political structure of democracy were sufficient for the task, then Washington, D.C. would be the New Jerusalem, Philadelphia would truly be a city of brotherly love, and every slice of the Big Apple would taste sweet.

To have peace on earth, we must work to create the conditions for peace in our own towns and cities. If we would revitalize our urban habitats by improving schools and libraries, creating livelihoods and affordable housing, and maintaining safe and beautiful parks and playgrounds, then we must urge our city council members to collect the ground rent of land to finance public services and greatly reduce or eliminate most other forms of taxation.

If the politics of the planet are to be based on fairness rather than on force, then equal rights to earth must become the guiding principle, the sovereign, supreme rule.

The fundamental human right that now needs to be affirmed is this:

The Earth is the Birthright of All People

About the author: Alanna Hartzok co-chaired the Alternative Economic Commission at Conference on Global Governance sponsored by the

Association of World Citizens and the Campaign for A More Democratic United Nations (CAMDUN).

Comments on *Financing Planet Management* included in the printed pamphlet:

World citizens must be concerned with the growing gap between rich and poor in the world and within democracies. Conventional economics has failed miserably. Alanna Hartzok's application of the common heritage principle to land and 'land value taxation' offers a refreshing new approach. - **Ross Smyth, President, World Government Organization Coalition**

Alanna Hartzok has recognized that the earth is the birthright of all peoples and that prevailing notions of state sovereignty must yield to the new thinking that the only real sovereigns are the people. If we are all to live together in peace and dignity, it must become a reality that the land, the sea, and the air we breathe are a common heritage to serve the basic rights of human kind. - **Dr. Benjamin B. Ferencz, Prosecutor, Nuremberg War Crimes Trial, Adjunct Professor of International Law, Pace University**

Alanna Hartzok has given us a fascinating account of the economic necessity of building democracy in human terms from the ground upwards. World governmentalsists should start their re-think from here. - **Dr. Jeffrey J. Segal, Co-Founder, Campaign for a More Democratic United Nations**

I enjoyed reading *Financing Planet Management* and found it to be a valuable contribution to the quest for world government on a democratic basis. We do need to have a politics based on fairness and with the earth as our birthright. - **Leland P. Stewart, Founder, Unity-In-Diversity Council**

I'm very much in favor of the ideas proposed in your paper. I agree very much with you that world federalists and world governmentalsists need to think through the fundamentals of economic justice. - **Jack Yost, United Nations NGO Representative, World Federalist Movement**

Your paper is a cogent and convincing reply to the appeal for an economic engine to propel the 'democratic world order', 'global peace and justice', and 'environmentally sustainable development' movements. It is an evocative introduction to a crucial worldwide discussion by citizens locally and opinion-makers internationally and confirms your qualifications to serve as a coordinator for the Campaign for a More Democratic United Nations (CAMDUN). - **Dr. Harry H. Lerner, Co-Founder, CAMDUN, President, Communications Coordination Committee of the United Nations**

One thing that has troubled me about the world government concept is the fact that our continuing failure to be able to use power wisely at any local level, with which I am familiar, casts doubt on the possibility that we homosapiens would be able to do any better at the highest level. Your essay correctly isolates land title as the modern day weapon-- the one which has so recently replaced the Auchenian 'almond-shaped hand axes' Louis S. B. Leakey found at Olduvai, and the even earlier thigh bones which seem to have bashed in so many skulls. Your essay is calculated to focus the attention of the world peace movement at a critical place. -

Representative Richard Noyes, New Hampshire State House of Representatives

Many organizations that advocate peace, human rights, or alleviation of poverty suggest temporary charitable measures or a future ideal solution to world problems, at once inadequate on one hand and frustrating on the other. Alanna Hartzok in *Financing Planet Management* makes a vital connection for creating world peace. In this concise but insightful narrative, the author has us realize the importance of providing a sound base from which democracy, justice, and equitable opportunity can proceed. - **Hal Sager, Media Producer, Trustee, Common Ground-USA**

We are fond of citing history yet refuse to act in accordance with the lessons that are apparent. Past civilizations have collapsed and perished by their own making and by stubborn adherence to their profit and power paradigms. The unchecked depletion and destruction of natural resources and eco-systems, is an old story repeating again and again. In every case where there was the holding of land by the few out of the hands of most, the result was the horror of war or economic collapse. The nation-state country clubs have not been able to rise from the muck of myopic views and economic illusions. Hartzok drops the veils through which we see economics and courageously calls for a gentle revolution in our relationship to the planet-one that is not only necessary, but also vital to our very survival. - **Mary Rose Kaczorowski, Action Coalition for Global Change, Ten Mile River Association**

Hartzok has a firm, intuitive grasp of basic economic and political principles. - **Dr. Mason Gaffney, Professor of Economics, University of California, Riverside**

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