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EDITORIAL

Beyond the Elections

The change voted in by Americans on Election Day may be greeted with anything from dismay to cheers to indifference. The conventional political spectrum is not broad enough for the range of political belief and allegiance among followers of Henry George. While some may be heartened by the winner's stand for lower taxes and shunning of big government, others might regret his proposed expansion of military expenditures or the proposed favored treatment for owners of land and natural resources. Some of our California readers will note the substantial benefits to him personally as a holder of valuable hunks of that state. Many will recall his own indifference to the cause of land and tax reform, an attitude in all fairness he shares with most mainstream politicians. It should be noted too that the minority candidates, from the well-financed and highly visible Libertarian campaign, to the bio-political Barry Commoner, scarcely made a dent either. Even John Anderson's effort was successful only in that he is able to pay his campaign debts. Those who have been urging Georgists to aim our efforts at any or all of the above might have second thoughts and third, and more.

In fact, national politics in the U.S. and elsewhere are only one arena and not necessarily the most significant one for modern application of the Henry George thesis. Collection of the economic rent for supporting public services at the **local** level is more appropriate, no matter what the politics of the city, town, village or community. Republicans, Democrats, Liberals, Conservatives, reformers and even radicals can agree that the best revenue base for their locality is the only one, that when taxed cannot escape their jurisdiction. Economic developers and environmental preservationists can equally favor rebuilding our cities and protecting the countryside; balancing our use of natural resources with the health, safety and welfare needs of the entire community.

In fact, the major focus of Henry George and his followers need be neither the nation state nor the local community but the entire planet. The whole question of who owns the earth and its resources and how they are to be distributed for the benefit of all mankind fundamentally attracts concerned people the world over. Many of these people can be won over to our cause. It will be up to us to direct our efforts towards this broader and more lasting approach.