

Henry George

NEWSLETTER

Volume 46, Number 9

October 1982

LAND TAXATION SEMINAR ANNOUNCED FOR PHILADELPHIA AREA

A one-day seminar on land taxation in Pennsylvania, "Municipal Revenue Roundtable," will be held on Saturday, November 13, at the Sheraton Hotel in Valley Forge, PA. The sponsors of the invitational program include George Collins of the Incentive Tax League of Eastern PA and Dan Sullivan in Western PA, Philip Finkelstein of the Center for Local Tax Research in New York City and Walter Rybeck of the Center for Public Dialogue in Washington, D.C.

The program will begin with remarks by Collins and a survey of the history of Pennsylvania's local tax options by Steven Cord. Representatives of Harrisburg, McKeesport, New Castle, Pittsburgh and Scranton will next discuss the use of differential property tax rates in their cities and the consequences for revenue, urban development, housing and infrastructure. Congressman William Coyne will address the topic, "There's Gold in Our Own Backyard" during the luncheon.

The afternoon's agenda includes a panel discussion on tax reform with A. L. Hydeman, former PA Secretary for Community Affairs, Allentown City Council President Ben Howells and Philadelphia Councilman James Tayoun, who sponsored a bill on the land tax in his city, and a session on Implementing Tax Reform with Finkelstein, Sullivan and Philadelphia Board of Revision of Taxes Member David Zwanetz. All participants will join in the summary session, "Where Do We Go From Here?" moderated by Rybeck.

The seminar was organized following requests for a follow-up to panels and discussions on this subject at the Georgist Conference in Pittsburgh and the Engineering Foundation Conference in Rindge, New Hampshire this summer.

AGNES DE MILLE SPEAKS AT FIFTIETH YEAR EVENT IN NEW YORK

Agnes de Mille, granddaughter of Henry George and a former Trustee, spoke of her fifty-year involvement with the Henry George School before an audience of over one hundred, including Trustees, faculty, current students and alumni, city officials and journalists, in New York on September 9.

Miss de Mille was featured in an article in the New York Times two days before the anniversary celebration in which she was quick to put in a word for taxes only on land and on natural resources, ". . . When you give them to individuals and corporations to sell back to us, you've given them the entire power. The earth belongs to the people who have to live on it."

Other speakers at the event included Henry George Institute Director Robert Clancy, Trustee Lancaster Greene and Professor William Vickrey of Columbia University. Director Philip Finkelstein noted the work of the current Trustees, and thanked them for their continuing support and interest in the school. A champagne and cheese reception followed the program.

Henry George Newsletter
published by
Henry George School
of Social Science

Lancaster M. Greene
Chairman
Publications Committee

Philip Finkelstein
Director

Louise R. Pulini
Assistant

Subscription \$5 yr
For change of address
5 E. 44th Street
New York, NY 10017

AFFILIATES

LONG ISLAND
63 Cedar Drive
Plainview, NY 11803

PHILADELPHIA
413 S. 10th St.
Phila., PA 19147

NEW ENGLAND
80 Boylston St. #1106
Boston, MA 02116

CALIFORNIA
Box 655
Tujunga, CA 91042

3410 19th St.
San Francisco, CA 94110

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
Isabel La Catolica #66
APO #758 S. Domingo

SCHOOL OF ECO. SCIENCE
(CANADA)

215 Lakeshore Blvd.
Toronto, Ontario M5A 3W9

3017 25 St SW
Calgary, Alberta T3E 1Y2

At the International Conference in Holland a spirited debate was engendered by the use, in one of the presentations, of the term "Third World." Considerable confusion seemed to accompany the term despite its common usage in the current global rhetoric. Is it strictly a political usage that signifies a nation outside the orbits of the East and West superpowers? Or is it economic, denoting a lower stage than the principal first two, a stage for which the euphemistic "developing nation" has replaced "underdeveloped" or "undeveloped" of the recent past? Or is the term social, frankly acknowledging a hierarchy of concern for different groups of people based on discriminatory bias of race, color, continent or simply polarized geography? The very notion of North-South dialogue seems to suggest the broadest bias of groupings with all the "haves" in the temperate and cooler zones and the "have-nots" linked in their torrid misery.

Foolish categorizations at best create the need for more of the same, with fourth, fifth and maybe tenth worlds to represent deeper degrees of despair. At worst the categories belie the enormous disparities within each of them, gaps as great or greater than those that divide rich and poor by region of the earth. The incidence of land tenure in the U.S. is no better than most of Latin America, commonly thought of as the "Third World." Conversely, the fabled riches of the powerful few in societies where poverty is the norm, match any display in the so-called Western World. Too often the attempt to focus on the world by numbers is to blind us to the fundamental inequities of access to natural resources wherever they persist and widen.

There may yet be room, however, for a genuine third position, not necessarily related to a region, society, an economy or even a particular politics. It is the position that recognizes the significance of freedom of access of all people to the gifts of nature and most especially the land.

"The present economic policy of the great powers is destroying riches without building anything in their place," the President of Brazil warned the United Nations recently. The press described the warning as coming from the "Third World," but Brazil, the biggest, richest and fastest-growing nation in its hemisphere, is too complex and dynamic for so convenient a category. As one of the world's biggest debtors, however, it is dependent on a healthy, global economy based, above all, on free trade. It is the monopoly access to resources, privileges aided and enforced by governments, that threatens the foundations of potentially prosperous countries like Brazil as well as the truly needy nations all over the earth. Until this fundamental truth is recognized, the whole world, first, second, third, and so on, will suffer the same fate.

Philip Finkelstein

SCHOOL NOTES

NEW YORK

The Fall Semester in New York features a Fundamental Economics course in Spanish taught by Manny Felix, who has recently been named as Ambassador for Economic Development at the Dominican Mission to the United Nations. Felix, who is a native Dominican and has worked with Lucy de Silfa in Santo Domingo, has taught the basic and advanced courses at the school on 44th Street and at an uptown community center.

LONG ISLAND

L.I. School Director Stan Rubenstein and members of the Incentive Tax League of Long Island have prepared a position paper on the property tax in New York State which is being sent to Nassau and Suffolk County legislators. The paper refers to the Legislature's override of Governor Carey's veto of Senate Bill-7000A, paving the way for a new law that legalizes the old, existing assessment methods and ". . .burdens New Yorkers with the same inequities that have grown with the years." The argument for land taxation is presented, along with statistical findings on how a land tax would affect property taxes for single family dwellings, retail establishments, factories and industries and vacant land in Nassau County. Copies of the paper are available by contacting Rubenstein on Long Island.

ARDEN, DELAWARE

Mike Curtis, who teaches Henry George to inmates at Smyrna, DE Correctional Center, presented a one-day "teach-in" of Fundamental Economics to a group of Georgist educators at his home in Arden, DE on Saturday, September 18. Curtis demonstrated his ideas and methodology for a condensation of the basic course, which he ran through in six hours, to George Collins, Mark Sullivan, Dan Sullivan, Tony Meis, Mitchell Chanelis and several teachers-in-training. A follow-up to this program may be presented at the school in New York sometime this fall.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Alanna Hartzok, Education Director of the S.F. school, has sent a multi-media kit of materials, including books, pamphlets, films and filmstrips, on Henry George and the land question, to Rob Hershman, a producer at "CBS News/CBS Reports," who requested the information as background for a possible program or news feature on the issues of land use, monopoly and control. Hartzok maintains in her correspondence to Hershman:

"It is to be expected that along with the increasing awareness of land monopoly in America comes a resurgent recognition of the value of Henry George's work and his proposal for land reform through tax reform."

In Sacramento, a Fundamental Economics course began September 28 at the El Camino High School in the city. Congressman William Filante spoke on "New Federalism and the Post Proposition 13 Politics" at the home of Gloria and Wayne Luney in August.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Three sections of the basic course are being offered in the Los Angeles area, at the Crescenta Valley Library in Montrose, the Sunland Recreation Center in Sunland, and the Casa Verdugo Library in Glendale.

The Alumni Group's First Friday sessions recommence, after a summer hiatus, on Friday October 1, at Pike's Verdugo Oaks restaurant in Glendale. Ken Greg, President of the Rampart Institute and Editor of the Rampart Individualist will speak on "A Perspective on Georgism."

The following article, "Game's Up For Monopoly Control," by Chuck Fager, appeared in the 9/28/82 issue of the Phila. Inquirer, and is excerpted with permission, © 1982.

"A court decision ruling that Parker Brothers could no longer have exclusive rights to the game Monopoly has led to the unraveling of a forty-seven year coverup over the true origin of the game. Monopoly, Parker Brothers has maintained, was the "brainchild" of Charles Darrow, who thought it up in his Philadelphia kitchen during the Great Depression and made millions from it. 'The reference to Darrow as the inventor or creator of the game is clearly erroneous,' is how the court decision put it. Darrow did not invent Monopoly, he took it and told Parker Brothers he was its originator."

"Monopoly was first called The Landlord's Game and its inventor, a Maryland woman named Lizzie Magie, was granted a patent in 1904, thirty years before Darrow supposedly thought it up. Magie was a believer in the anticapitalist economics of Henry George, who taught that speculation in land values was at the root of modern society's social and financial problems. Her game aimed at exposing these evils."

"Lizzie Magie made some copies of her game and dozens of people, mostly Quakers, played and enjoyed modified versions in the following years including Ruth Hoskins, an Atlantic City teacher, who played with friends who eventually taught the game to Darrow."

"Darrow sold the game to Parker Brothers as his own invention, and the company paid Lizzie Magie, by now Mrs. Phillips, \$500 for the rights to her Landlord's Game. The cover-up was so successful that only one article on Mrs. Phillips and her game was printed in forty years, appearing in the Washington Star in July, 1936, stating that Mrs. Phillips was still a follower of Henry George and did not regret making the fortune from the game that Parker Brothers and Darrow were reaping. Except for this short article, the official version of the history of the game has gone unquestioned by dozens of other reporters and writers who have published articles and comments on the game."

No one person invented Monopoly. Lizzie Magie Phillips started it but the game evolved from the playing and tinkering of hundreds of people over three decades. Maybe that is how the game came to evoke so well the commercial spirit of the culture. It is not only in the public domain, it may even be said to embody the domain."

Henry George School of Social Science
5 East 44 Street
New York, NY 10017

Address correction requested

Non-Profit Org. U.S. Postage PAID New York, N.Y. Permit No 7759
