

Henry George

NEWSLETTER

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THIRD ANNUAL EARTH DAY CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN NEW YORK

The third annual Earth Day conference, "World Trade and the Economics of War and Peace," will be held on Saturday, March 19, 1983, at the Henry George School in New York, from 9:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. Co-sponsors are the H.G.S. and the Council of Georgist Organizations, with Mark A. Sullivan, C.G.O. Secretary, serving as coordinator.

Sullivan notes that the reason for the theme is that "protectionism is again a big issue due to the international trade wars, and it will be interesting to try to find the connection between protectionism, monopoly and war."

The morning session will focus on the subtheme, "The Choice: Exchanging Bombs or Exchanging Goods," with a panel including George Collins, Don Hurford, Mark Brady and Bob Clancy addressing the issues of land monopoly and war in relation to protectionism.

After lunch, a panel led by Mitch Chanelis, including Ed Dodson and Scott Suma, will address issues relating to "The Politics of Development vs. the Economics of Peace."

The walk-in registration fee is \$2 and Sullivan can be contacted at the C.G.O. in New York at 212 697-9880 for further information.

MISSOURI LEGISLATURE CONSIDERS LAND TAX BILL

Stanley Fredericksen of the Public Revenue Education Council in St. Louis, MO reports that a land tax bill, H.J.R. #31, is currently under consideration by the MO Legislature. Hearings on the bill were held February 15 in Jefferson City, with State Rep. Walter Mueller, the author of the amendment, heading the coalition in favor of passage, which included Fredericksen, Thomas B. Curtis, a former Congressman, Mrs. Harry Gunnison Brown, and other committed Georgists.

The bill, if passed, will get enabling language into the Constitution (as Pennsylvania now has), so that the P.R.E.C. and other groups can seek to start cities, counties, etc., within the state toward the adoption of a land value tax on a local option basis. Progress of the bill will be closely monitored both in Missouri and in New York.

FOREIGN TRADE SEMINARS SCHEDULED FOR H.G.S.

A series of seminars on foreign trade are being planned at the school in New York. Representatives of Japan, Denmark, Nigeria, The Federal Republic of Germany and other countries will address the issues of foreign trade, regionally and from a global perspective. The seminars, tentatively scheduled to begin April 26, will be held on five or six consecutive Tuesdays, from 5:30 P.M. to 7:00 P.M., and are free and open to the public. For further information, contact the School in New York.

An Age Old Conflict

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Periodically, and especially in recessionary periods, nations begin to withdraw, conforming to political policies of yesteryear. Not since World War II has there been such a decline in world trade. Concommitantly, unemployment is at an all-time high for many of the western nations. Among the members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (O.E.C.D.), which includes the U.S., Japan and most of Western Europe, unemployment oscillates around the twelve percent range, and the prognosis for the immediate future is not encouraging.

Can nations successfully shut their doors to foreign trade in order to combat unemployment or will they merely exacerbate the situation? Unlike the economic picture before World War II, as the world has shrunk, so has our economic dependency. Although our need for foreign oil has decreased, about one-fourth is imported from foreign nations, which nevertheless represents a substantial amount. We are, however, totally dependent on foreign nations on our need of minerals such as cobalt and manganese to make steel, and are almost totally dependent for chromium, platinum and bauxite.

Restrictions on imports, such as steel and automobiles, usually triggers off trade reactions from exporting nations. American farmers often look to foreign markets to sell, as one-third of our crops are consumed overseas. One out of five factory workers in the U.S. produce for foreign markets. In these two major areas, and there are others, any curtailment in exporting these goods will lead to more unemployment. The conventional wisdom among trade experts is that more jobs are gained as a result of exports than are lost by imports.

Expansion, not retraction, of foreign trade is the answer. Decreasing wealth, as is the case with restrictions, can never help economies, whether it be ours or any other nation, which may be obvious, but apparently is not to special-interest groups. Almost one hundred years ago, Henry George, in Protection or Free Trade, spoke allegorically about the follies of nations:

"Near the window by which I write, a great bull is tethered by a ring in his nose. Grazing round and round, he has wound his rope about the stake until he now stands a close prisoner tantalized by rich grass he cannot reach, unable even to toss his head to rid him of the flies that cluster on his shoulders. Now and again he struggles vainly, and then after pitiful bellowings, relapses into silent misery."

This time, however, it may not be silent!

SCHOOL NOTES

LONG ISLAND

After developing a position paper on the property tax, one detailing many of the facts and figures per the study made in Nassau County, members of the Long Island school assembled a mailing list which included twenty-two assemblymen and eleven state senators in both Nassau and Suffolk Counties. They were each sent a copy along with a personal letter. Several months later, to follow-up, some brochures were mailed, which espouse the virtues of land value taxation, also with a personal letter. To date, five state senators have replied along with five assemblymen. Although most of the replies were in the realm of political courtesy, two, interestingly enough, expressed an interest and have requested appointments with the Long Island School Director for more information.

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Education Director Alanna Hartzok is developing a basic course in Progress and Poverty in Spanish, and posters advertsing the course in Spanish are being distributed throughout the city. Hartzok also recently began the first of a weekly series on "Economics for Peace," on KFOX Radio, which is heard throughout the Pacific Northwest.

A FITTING MEMORIAL TO PHILIP FINKELSTEIN by Fryda L. Ossias

At the close of the January, 1983 meeting of the Board of Trustees, the members present voted unanimously to install in the Henry George School Library at 5 E. 44th Street, a Philip Finkelstein Collection.

The inauguration, of the collection will be this Spring. In the next issue of the Henry George Newsletter, an announcement will be made of the date, time and a detailed program for the day.

In order to maintain a collection worthy of Phil, a permanent fund has been established with contributions received from members of the Board. For further development and enrichment of the collection, we will seek advice from experts as to ways of making use of the collection. We will publicize its existence in Universities and other institutions seeking information on full value assessment of land, public policy and land value taxation.

In order to achieve this very ambitious project, additional contributions will be needed. We will welcome any sum from students, associates and friends of Phil.

We were all very happy to see Phil develop such interest in the work of the School and to become the dedicated Georgist that he was at the time of his death.

Hopefully all Georgists will want to participate in this venture. This will help others find inspiration in Phil's ideas to continue with projects that his untimely death interrupted.

If you are able to make a generous contribution, please do so; but any amount, modest or generous, will be appreciated.

To: The Philip Finkelstein Collection
c/o Henry George School, 5 E. 44th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017

Name: _____
Address: _____
Amount: _____

Please make checks or money orders payable to the Henry George School

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

(The following Letter to the Editor was written by Stan Rubenstein in response to a column by Richard Strout, on the value added tax, which appeared in the Wednesday, February 23, 1983 issue of the Christian Science Monitor. It is reprinted here in its entirety, and appears with permission of the paper, c 1983.)

"V.A.T.--the value added tax--like Phoenix, rises once again from its own ashes, with promises of unlimited revenues for a thirsty government. Richard Strout, in his column of January 28, tactily endorses this black hole of fiscal policy, a tax adopted by many European nations."

"What better method of raising revenue, and plenty, with a minimum of squawking, then taxing each step in the productive process, claims Mr. Strout. More than two centuries after Adam Smith enunciated his classic criteria for a good tax, we are still debating the merits of a tax that bears heavily on production. V.A.T., as most other taxes, runs counter to the concept that it should bear as lightly as possible on production."

"In lieu of V.A.T., which reduces purchasing power by increasing prices, there is one tax that could increase production, create more competition and thus, lower prices. Taxing land values heavily and concomitantly, decreasing the already existing taxes on production--including labor and capital--would accomplish the task, with greater economic efficiency."

"Emphasizing land values as a source of revenue would increase greater utilization of land, since underusing it would be economically unsound. Millions upon millions of acres in this nation are owned and controlled by major corporations, many of whom pay little for its usage."

"Only society creates land values, so why not return its value, in revenue, to the logical recipient--the government."

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