

To the Editor:

Reagan's devotion to less government is the first hope to obtain more freedom that we have experienced in many years. Stemming from our belief that man belongs to himself and to God is our conclusion that taxes on production (the extension of the man who produces it) is stealing. Arthur Laffer says he teaches all his college classes the four canons of taxation as stated by Henry George in Progress and Poverty. Milton Friedman sees a tax on land as "the least bad tax of all." I have believed in Reagan's principle since May, 1979, when I heard him and talked with him. Give him time.

Lancaster M. Greene

REAGANOMICS REVISITED

Our esteemed Lancaster Greene gently chides us for our distrust of Reaganomics and maintains his faith in professions of a free market by the current administration. Dr. Greene, recently awarded his honorary doctorate in Commercial Science, goes on to quote Laffer and Friedman as supportive of the idea of Henry George. Alas, there is little evidence in Washington that politicians who like to quote free-market economists are at all likely to embrace the concept of sharing in the natural resources of the community, the nation or the world. The evidence is really in what they do, not in what they say.

There is nothing in Georgist theory or writing that makes spending for military purposes superior to spending for the social improvement of the community. Indeed, to the extent that military expenditures are made for products and services whose use is destructive, rather than productive, one might well argue that the military budget is economically irrational if politically necessary.

There is, on the other hand, a substantial concern on the part of Henry George and all other social reformers of his and our time for the betterment of the health and welfare of the community, including such expenditures for the physical infrastructure that would enhance the quality of life and in turn the values that would increase the economic rent to be collected. The reduction of the federal income tax is of course welcome but the increases in the payroll tax, now more onerous to both employers and employees, demonstrates the indifference of the administration to labor, not just in unions but all working men and women.

The latest wrinkle in the budget, suggesting that states and localities may tax and spend what the national government abandons, is perhaps the most revealing of true policy intent. Shifting social programs or trading health for welfare or giving states excise revenue options can hardly be called a movement toward freedom and justice. All we can do is hope that the American people will understand that our commitment to these ideals can transcend any political term.