

A Declaration of Human Rights Based on Equal Freedom

Reaffirmed at Hanover, West Germany, July 1959.

The International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade declares that :

The economic, the political and, consequently, the intellectual and moral conditions of any people are ultimately determined by the system of land tenure under which they live;

Since everyone has an equal right to live it follows necessarily that every one has an equal right to the use of land by which alone life can be sustained;

The private appropriation of the rent or value of land constitutes a violation of those equal rights, and its consequences are that privilege exacts a monopoly price for access to land, the community is deprived of its natural revenue, taxation is heaped upon trade and industry, production is harassed and arrested, and industrial depressions inevitably occur;

The more completely the land is thus monopolised, the greater is the insecurity of employment and the nearer are wages driven down to mere subsistence level. This is true of all countries, no matter how they may differ in their forms of government, in the nature or development of their industries, in their tariff policies, monetary systems, internal or external public debts, or in any other way.

We therefore advocate:

That the equal right to land be secured by requiring of all landholders the payment of an annual tax on the value of the land held whether it is used or not and excluding the value of improvements thereon; and that such taxation, national and municipal, be based on a valuation showing the true value of the land, this valuation being made public and being kept up to date by periodic revision;

That imposts on earnings and consumption, taxes on improvements, customs tariffs, exchange controls and other burdens and barriers that restrict production and obstruct the free movement of men and goods be concurrently abolished;

And we maintain that:

The public collection of the annual value of land and abolition of taxes that are repressive of industry and commerce would enable the producer to enjoy the full fruits of his labour, make the withholding of land from use unprofitable, put an end to the monopoly of land, and by freeing the channels of trade, remove the main causes of international strife;

The illimitable field of enterprise offered to man being thus thrown open, involuntary poverty would be banished; "over-production" would be inconceivable until all human wants were satisfied; labour-saving inventions would be rendered a blessing to all; and there would be such production and distribution of wealth as would enable all to achieve comfort and leisure and to participate in the advantages of a progressing civilisation.

We condemn, as infringing personal liberties and menacing the general welfare, all plans that involve regimentation of the individual by the State; invoke the arbitrary powers of Government to control or prohibit import and export trade; profess the need for maintaining tariffs in one country because of their existence in others; imply the retention and mere management of monopolies instead of their abolition; use the proceeds of taxes and loans or the manipulation of money to put goods on the market at fictitious prices; or contemplate the unbalancing of budgets and the expansion of public debts on the pretext that spreading purchasing power by these methods will have beneficial social effects.

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR LAND VALUE TAXATION AND FREE TRADE

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