

Progress

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OUR PHILOSOPHY

We believe that the Earth is the birthright of ALL MANKIND.

We recognise that for many purposes it is essential for individuals to have exclusive possession and security of tenure of land AS GIVEN BY THE EXISTING FREEHOLD SYSTEM OF LAND TENURE.

We believe that those who have exclusive possession of land should COMPENSATE SOCIETY for being excluded therefrom.

We believe that such compensation paid annually would meet the costs of Government and permit Society to abolish all taxes on LABOUR and on goods produced by labour.

TAX REFORM URGENT

Extracts from an address at the Annual Meeting of Tax Reform Australia by the President, Mr. Morris Williams, Fellow of the Australian Society of Certified Practising Accountants.

No advanced country is more in need of tax reform than Australia: according to the World Bank we now have the least egalitarian tax system. At the turn of the century Australia was the envy of the world for the pursuit of social justice by Georgist founders of the Labor Party such as William Lane and the father of Liberalism, Alfred Deakin, an avowed disciple of Henry George. The tax policies of the major two parties have strayed far from their original beliefs and have produced grave injustice for all but the privileged few who monopolise land.

The top tenth of Australian income earners receive more tax concessions than their counterparts overseas in capital gains escape hatches, high levels of dividend imputation, negative gearing and dubious tax avoidance devices still not effectively outlawed.

Between 1984 and 1987 — the era of a Labor Government — the richest 200 Australians trebled their incomes from \$7 billion to \$25 billion. Most of this wealth came from monopoly ownership of land on which to run media, retailing, property development, brewing and immense cash flow empires able to exploit the tax system. Only 24 of Australia's richest 200 are true industrialists, the rest owe much of their fortunes to land.

The richest 1% of Australians now own three times the accumulated wealth of the poorest 50%.

In Britain 1% of wealth-holders own more than half the land (by value), in America 5% own 75%. The position in Australia is probably not much different.

WHO OWNS AUSTRALIA'S LAND?

Kidman Holdings with 120,000 square kilometres are the largest by area, but by value the Japanese multinational, EIE International owns nearly twice as much as the next biggest — Consolidated Press headed by Mr. Kerry Packer. Mr. Packer's estimated wealth exceeds \$2 billion and his after tax income could be \$200 million a year. Mr. Rupert Murdoch — estimated wealth nearly \$4 billion — owns over 200,000 hectares of rural land, plus immensely valuable urban sites all around Australia held by his company News Corporation.

Starting from small beginnings, Mr. Honori Takahishi, President of EIE International borrowed heavily from Japanese banks, particularly the Long Term Credit Bank, headed by his father's cousin and invested in prime real estate in Australia and other Pacific rim countries. EIE's ventures include hotels, tourism, golf courses, the Alice Springs-Darwin Railway and Bond University.

Land monopoly is the basic cause of social injustice and income inequality in Australia. Ground rent owners extract about a third of Australia's

national income from their monopolistic stranglehold on land, but contribute only one twentieth of all taxes by way of rates and taxes on land. Collection of the unearned increment from monopoly ownership and control of scarce resources such as land would preserve not harm the capitalist system and ensure a better distribution of wealth and income between individuals and between generations.

George's view of the world around us as a trust to be preserved rather than a conquest to be looted is in harmony with our growing awareness of the limits of nature. In this most profound sense — that we are all tenants on this earth, and owe rent for how we use and misuse it — Henry George speaks to the present and the future quite as eloquently as he did to the past.

David Hapgood, author.

INSIDE:

- Land Tenure in India
- Citizens Initiative Referendum
- Dates for your Diaries

(See Back Page)

LAND MONOPOLY KILLS THE RAIN FOREST IN LATIN AMERICA

The destruction of the rain forest is a classic land issue which demonstrates not only the rules of Ricardo's law of rent and wages, but also the cost to the world community of land monopoly. More and more groups are recognizing this fact.

A recent *Food First Alert*, published by the Institute for Food and Development Policy explains how the rain forest in Brazil is being destroyed as a result of the government's inability (or refusal) to discourage holding large tracts of underdeveloped land by a few wealthy families. The government encourages poor peasants to go to marginal lands in the rain forest instead.

World Watch, the Washington-based think tank, says regarding Brazil: The roots of Brazil's poverty and violence "lie in a pattern of land holding that excludes the majority of rural people from owning even a subsistence plot. In recent decades, land ownership has become even more concentrated and landlessness has grown correspondingly." According to World Watch, the government itself reported in 1985 that 2% of people hold 60% of the land, while 70% of rural households have little or none.

Norman Myers, author of *The Primary Source, Rain Forests and Our Future* contends "in principle there is hardly a need to cut down a single tree in a virgin forest. They are being cut down in large part due to monopolistic land tenure patterns, particularly in Latin America."

According to the *US News and World Report*, (March 31, 1986), "Encroachment of the forest is simply a response to social pressure in parts of Latin America, where 93% of arable land is controlled by 7% of the population.

"In Central America some 35 million people are reckoned to have no land, or not enough to provide subsistence. So officials look at land currently covered by forests as the answer to overcrowding and poverty."

While we must look for short term solutions to the dilemma of saving the rain forests, in the long run the cause of saving the rain forest and social justice will be served by solving the land tenure problem in Latin America.

U.S. "The Mercury",
Winter 1991.

LAND TENURE IN INDIA

As to land tenure, what Australian farmer could remain solvent let alone care for his land, if he had to pay as rent half his crops – half his gross profit? He complains about 20% interest rates yet the Indian moneylender charges at least 100%. And as most Indian peasants are illiterate, the moneylender can cook the books to his heart's content. Born in debt, sold to pay his father's debts, the poor peasant has neither incentive nor ability to care for his land. However hard he works, he remains permanently in debt.

Yet, inland from Madras, in N Arcot district, a few miles from the nearest road, were a group of farmers whom I visited 40 years ago. They called themselves rajas, but they were just simple farmers. However, they, like their cattle and crops were healthy – pictures of health indeed, unlike their surrounding neighbours. The Rev. Josef John, who led me there, explained the miracle – for centuries they had *owned* their land! Traditional Indian agriculture works well, given a fair go.

W.A. "Quaker News",
Nov. 1990.

LIFE DOWN ON GLOBAL STREET

The world is finite. It is like a house full of people living in different rooms. The different rooms have slightly different standards of behaviour, but they all agree that the house belongs to the landlord.

Because this landlord gives nothing in return for his rent, and there is nowhere else to obtain the rent-money except within the house, those living there must devise ways of obtaining more than they need for themselves to be able to meet their rent. But in a finite world, filled to capacity, one man's surplus is another's shortfall.

In such a house, only two things can give, either your neighbour's share must be taken, or your furniture and fittings must be ripped up and sold to the highest bidder, regardless of your future need of them.

An atmosphere heavy with suspicion, mutual distrust and helpless self-interest must pervade this house! The occupants of each room view their neighbours with a jaundiced eye, knowing that to display weakness will invite attack and ruin – whilst within each room, the whole process is repeated in microcosm, as all vie for a

higher place on the dungheap.

When those at the top of the pile in each room are vilified by their compatriots, they turn and point to their neighbours across the landing, saying, "Look! It is their fault, if they bought more of our wonderfully cheap washing machines and stopped selling us their underpriced spin dryers you'd all be better off". Or else they cry "If you tightened your belts more we could make our spin dryers even cheaper than theirs!" "We must be competitive!" Identical cries can be heard in every room.

So the hard-pressed roommates mutter amongst themselves about the price of soap, and curse the dark-skinned families living in the basement, saying they don't need as much soap as us because they never use it anyway, and they steal our jobs by doing the washing-up for next to nothing. And so it goes –

Meanwhile each week the landlord, who lives in a penthouse suite in the attic, sends down his agents to collect the rent due. But the inhabitants are too busy struggling with their immediate problems to stop to wonder where all this rent goes, or why they should be paying it.

They have far more important matters to attend to. Preparing to defend their freedom by attacking those living in the laundry room, whose 'mad dictator' has just brutally annexed the broom cupboard, and threatened to raise the price of soap.

"Earthright" (Scotland),
Spring 1991.

THOUGHT-PROVOKING

The serfs of Europe were never freed – they commuted their bondage for rent. That rent has never ceased to be collected to the present day. 28% of annual U.K. national income is paid in land rent alone.

"Earthright" (Scotland),
Spring 1991.

LAND OWNERSHIP

In South Africa, the white minority own 86% of the land; in USA 3% own 95% of the land; in El Salvador 2% own 60%; in Britain as a whole, 2% own 74% of the land, whilst in Scotland, 350 individuals own 52% of the country.

"Earthright" (Scotland),
Spring 1991.

THE IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON WAGES OF A CHANGE FROM TAXATION TO LAND RENT FOR REVENUE

by Arthur Cannon

The Georgist method of collecting rent for public revenue in place of taxation would mean the elimination of the most powerful and ancient parasitic class – the land monopolists. If the full ground rent was used for revenue, land titles would have no selling value. We do not pay rent and by the same token buy the land title. Rent for revenue would mean the end of private rent monopoly and hence of land speculation.

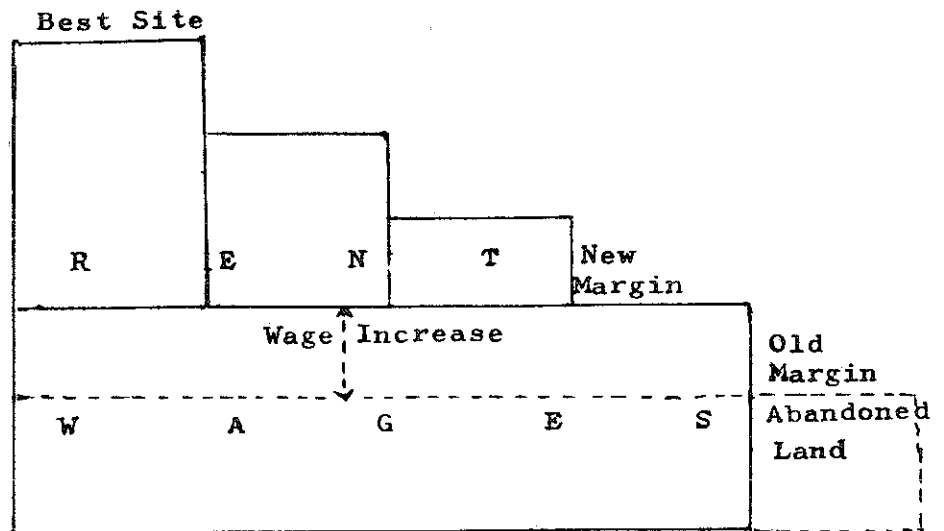
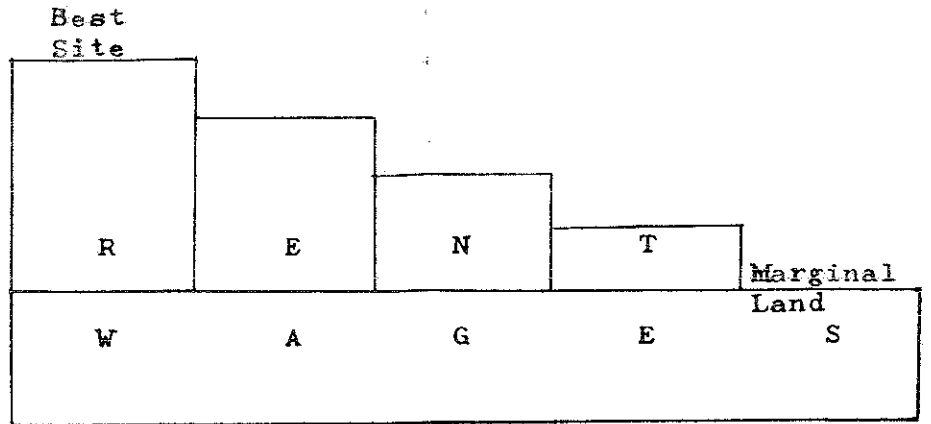
In contemporary western society, landholders, as such, occupy no useful purpose. Their affluence is at the expense of the workers, and their power of obstructing production inhibits industry.

Where private land monopoly exists, upon the inception of Georgism, except where land is required for public or for valuation purposes, there would be no need to interrupt anyone in his landholdings. As well as being an injustice, it would disturb the economy unnecessarily. Provided they paid their rent to the state, landholders would be entitled to remain.

There would no longer be any sense in holding land beyond that which was required for one's own use. Better to dispose of any surplus for what it would fetch – the market value of the improvements. To retain possession would be a dead loss, because the holder would have to pay a recurring rent to the state and also bear the cost of upkeep, or depreciation, of improvements.

With inception of this policy many land titles which had not been used to their best capacity, or held only for speculation, would be coming onto the market. Those who formerly were unable to obtain land, except at a premium to the holders, would now be able to acquire real estate titles at cost of improvements, and rent the land directly from the state. They would not pay an ingoing price for the land titles which, in our monopoly society, usually is well above the then intrinsic value of the land. In most cases, such purchases require a lifetime to redeem, as principal as well as interest payments have to be met.

As landholders disposed of surplus land titles, those who were occupying



the then marginal land would abandon it and move to more desirable sites. The margin would shrink to better lands, and, as true wages are determined at the margin, they would increase before the change.

The abandoned lands, probably most fragile, could then be turned over to conservation projects.

TAXING THOUGHTS

A man stood in the bottle shop. To buy an \$18.50 carton of beer he needed to earn \$37.36 before personal tax. This meant that his company needed to make a profit of \$77.05 which required sales of \$1580. He had paid \$19.26 personal tax; \$39.29 company tax and had collected \$474 sales tax. (30% of his sales.) The government had received \$532.55 in taxes so that he could buy his carton of beer. There was also an excise tax of \$8 on the beer. He went home and had a glass of water.

We suffer from an unjust tax system. When people put property to good use

they are crippled by taxation and regulations. When they leave highly valuable land and property idle, or underuse it, they pay next to no revenue to the nation, yet the value of land is created by the presence and activities of the whole community.

Taxation should be abolished. Instead all marketable land, whether used or not, should pay rental revenue to the nation on the basis of yearly site value or potential for production. Those who put property to good use should pay no more revenue than those who leave land of similar value lying idle or use it inefficiently.

PRESS LETTERS

RUSSIANS' CHANCE

Isn't it remarkable that in 1990 the leaders of the USSR and Eastern Europe were again grappling with the question of land ownership?

In 1908 Leo Tolstoy urged Russia to adopt the principles of land value taxation and ownership of Henry George to solve some of its economic and social justice problems: "The government officials are not doing the only thing that would pacify the people at once. And the only thing that would pacify the people is the introduction of the system of Henry George."

Tolstoy saw the importance of land issue in the life of Russia. He knew that reconciliation with the peasants required a new concept.

Eighty years after his plea for a rational land policy based on the idea of Henry George, the Russians have another opportunity.

R. B. Excell,

The Henry George League,
(Tasmanian Division), Hobart.
"Oakleigh/Springvale Times" 13/3/91.

MAJOR PARTIES BENEFIT

A few reasons why electors should vote 'no' at the State Referendum.

Under a 'single member' electoral system, equal numbers of electors in every electorate does not guarantee a majority to the party with the majority of votes.

To anyone who has attended an enquiry into Electoral Boundary changes would know about the interminable arguments, and the submissions by politicians, trying to explain how, and why, and in which direction, boundaries should be moved.

It is obvious that there is continual movement in population, and people reaching voting age, and that if we are to have boundary changes for every election, some electors could be voting in a different electorate at each election.

It only takes a moment's thought to see the problems in polling booths; the distribution of How to Vote cards; the printing and reading of advice to electors on boundary changes etc.

Single member electorates favour the large parties, and politicians from both Labor and Liberal will do anything to

retain this iniquitous system; even to having a multi-million dollar referendum and a misleading television propaganda campaign.

The only way to cure this ridiculous situation which gives us political parties in power on a minority vote, is to change to a system of multi-member electorates, e.g. nine electorates (with equal numbers of voters) returning five members to each electorate.

Counting the votes on a quota preferential system would give representation equal to the number of votes received, i.e. South Australia today would have about 40% each of Labor and Liberal and 20% of small parties and independents.

This would give more flexibility and prevent the domination of the party in power to the exclusion of all others and the great advantage is we do not need a referendum to attain it.

Voters should vote no, and write across their voting slip 'multi-member electorates'. Remember too, voting is not compulsory. It is only attendance at the poll that is compulsory.

With a secret ballot voters are free to mark their ballot slip exactly how they wish.

Geo. E. Jukes,
President,

Electoral Reform Society of S.A.
"Lincoln Times", 7/2/91.

PROMOTING PROSPERITY

Sir, One simple example of how a peaceful tax revolution could begin is by replacement of all payroll taxes.

Based on extrapolation of rateable Australian land values in an appendix to the latest Commonwealth Grants Commission Report it appears that this could be accomplished with about one per cent LVT, cutting costs of Australian production by something like \$5 billion, increasing exports and/or import replacement and domestic sales to reduce poverty and promote general prosperity/justice.

Come on Mr. Prime Minister, what about it?

R. B. Excell, Secretary
The Henry George League,
West Hobart, Tas.
"Financial Review", 21/3/91.

CONTEMPT FROM THE TAX OFFICE

I pay provisional tax largely because I carefully saved a sum of money as a nest egg for my old age. However, having realised that, under the present system, spendthrifts are rewarded while the thrifty are penalised, early this financial year I spent half my savings.

Acting on the assumption I have not spent the money, and that regardless of the present economic climate the interest on my savings will rise, the tax office has sent me a bill for an increase of more than 10 per cent on my bill for last year.

The normal machinery to correct this is for the payer to apply for a "variation of provisional tax". On receiving the bill I wrote to the tax office requesting the appropriate form. Two months later I had not received it, though I know they had received the request. I wrote again; still no answer. Finally, under much difficulty, I called in person to collect the form which I completed and posted the next day, registered (18/2).

I have still not received a shred of evidence that the tax office has even received it, let alone is dealing with it. It will soon be time for payment; overdue payment is penalised.

In my opinion the tax office seems to be withholding from me my right to a reassessment. One can pay, less any expected reduction, but I haven't a clue how to work it out. And I resent having to pay a tax consultant. I realise that eventually I shall be repaid, but in the interim I shall have been denied the use of my money for spending, and otherwise will have been robbed of the interest it could have been earning.

I am aggrieved at this contemptuous, bureaucratic attitude.

Are you out there, Mr. Hawke; Mr. Keating; voters?

Eric Farmer,
Black Rock.
"Age", 18/3/91.

RIDDLE

Q. What begins with S, has E in the middle, and ends with X?

A. SINGLETAX

URBAN SPRAWL IS COSTLY

Urban sprawl booms government costs. In substantiation, we offer this quotation from Professor Mason Gaffney (economics, Univ. Cal./Riverside):

"Consider water distribution. If demand doubles in a fixed area, all we need do is expand pipe diameters, not by double but by the square root of two, or about 40 per cent, since cross-sections increase with the square of the radius. But if demand doubles by doubling the service area, we must (a) double our pipe mileage; (b) increase the cross-section of our old system at its base in order to maintain pressure at the fringes; (c) upgrade pipe joints to hold the extra pressure, and (d) increase allowance for peaking."

"We do not even consider here the other costs of sprawl: over-extended roads (with associated air pollution and travel costs), police and fire protection, sewers, telephone and electrical wires, premature development of farms and rural areas, etc."

So – use land efficiently. Collect the annual rent of land in place of taxes on labour and capital.

U.S. "Incentive Taxation",
March 1991.

COMMENT

For Australian local government, this means site value rating.

CITIZENS' INITIATIVE REFERENDUM

As a proponent of the Swiss system of Citizens' Initiative and Referendum which has proved effective for over a century, I was concerned to read an article in the Saturday "Age" of March 24th which paints a disturbing picture of far right groups (including Citizens' Electoral Councils – campaigning around Australia for the introduction of C.I.R.) being taken over by an American extremist political group.

A tape of a meeting called to form a Citizens' Electoral Council was sent to me recently. From this it is apparent that the formation of these councils is the aim of such meetings, although time is devoted to stressing the advantages of the C.I.R. system has. The councils (in Australia) are loosely linked in a federation.

I have been unable to find any reference to Electoral Councils in the

Swiss system and am sure these are not necessary for its effective working.

Politicians are terrified of C.I.R. If adopted, it would break the power of pressure groups (imagine the ramifications) and political parties. The point of this letter is to urge readers to discount the bias of the Age article and give serious consideration to C.I.R. Progress, June 1989, ran a review of Geoffrey de Q. Walker's book explaining the system. The book has been available in public libraries and is well worth reading.

D. Davies,
Mornington, Vic.

DUTY FREE STATUS FOR TASMANIA

Now is the time in view of the present recession and world situation to make a concerted, positive approach to this unique opportunity to achieve economic prosperity for Tasmania.

As a matter of top economic priority for Tasmania, I am writing to enlist your support and that of your colleagues to finally getting this project past the talking stage.

It is very important to take note of the benefits to Australia as a whole. A duty free Tasmania would be an enormous asset to Australia by attracting more people to visit and spend money seeing attractions *around Australia* as well as Tasmania.

Tourism is Australia's best earner of foreign currency. Growth of the tourist industry results in far more jobs, both directly and indirectly than could be achieved by any other industry, so essential to Tasmania's future.

Comparison: Norfolk Island has duty free status, but not the infrastructure of airports capable of taking aircraft such as 747s and 767s, and Norfolk cannot attract cruise ships as there is no deep water harbour; large liners can only disembark passengers by tender when sea conditions permit. With present airline deregulation and duty free status, Tasmania would attract overseas airlines to include a stop en route in or out of Australia on some of their scheduled services; also charters, and Qantas would be able to resume services to Hobart.

Recently I attended overseas, one of the largest Travel Industry World Conferences (7000 delegates). At the Conference it was abundantly clear that shipping and airline companies needed

different destinations from the usual, in order to fill the superliners and new aircraft coming into service to obtain their share of the multi billion dollar world leisure holiday market.

The Australian dollar makes prices for duty free items as well as food and hotels much more attractive than other countries.

The tourist industry worldwide is hungry for travel news and Tasmania applying for duty free status is front page material.

Sent to Tasmanian politicians
by John Cogan Travel, Hobart.

TASMANIAN STUDY ON HOTELS

This recent publication by the Municipal Reform Group demonstrates clearly the advantages of site value rating for hotels, motels, etc. It's comprehensive and thoroughly detailed.

The following extract gives the Summary and Findings and also the Recommendations:

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

1. That of 287 hotels, etc., surveyed, 258 would receive decreases. The greater majority (202) in the 51%+ category.
2. That in 20 separate municipal studies our theories have been proved correct.
3. That the hotel industry is being grossly penalised by the existing method of municipal rating.
4. That hotels endeavouring to improve facilities are not being encouraged to do so by municipalities refusing to change to land value rating.

RECOMMENDATIONS

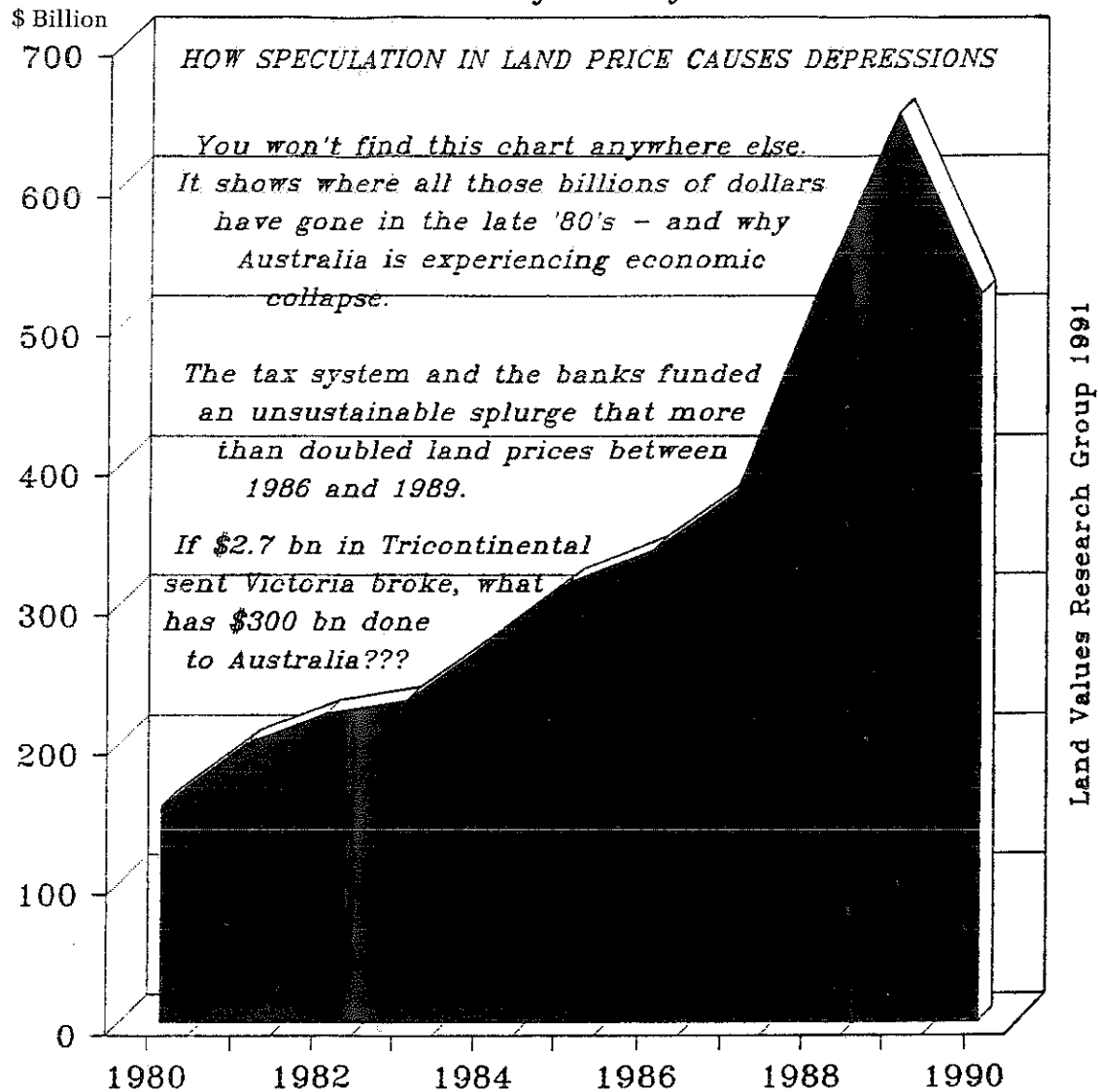
1. That the Australian Hotels' Association and its members demand that changes be made to the method of rating and that councils be forced by poll to change to land value rating.
2. That the Australian Hotels' Association seeks legal opinion on a state-wide challenge to the system.
3. That individual members lobby members of Parliament seeking a change in the basis of rating.

VOLUNTEERS WANTED

Help is needed for addressing envelopes etc. for sending out the Georgist message. Contact the Hardware Street office if you can help. Please indicate the time or times when you would be available.

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COMMON WEALTH AND COMMON GOOD – REACTIONS

The following is a comment on the first report emanating from the Inquiry into Wealth conducted by the Australian Catholic Bishops. Several Georgist submissions were originally made.

POINT 1: The common wealth of all Australians (or of any other nationality) is their natural resources. As compared with buildings or other property, these can never be privately appropriated in natural law, because such a man-made law was the start of the process of dispossession inflicted upon our own aborigines and the poor throughout the world.

Man is the only one of God's creatures denied free access to land by legislation. As this "deviates from the right reason, it is an unjust law. In such case it is not a law at all, but rather a species of violence." (St. Thomas Aquinas)

Under natural law in civilised society, a person or corporation granted exclusive possession of land (which in economics includes sea and air) automatically becomes the "owe-er" to the public purse of the economic rent for that land (hence, the word "owner"). Even our modern freehold title – the fee simple in possession – entitles the Crown to levy the annual rent of the land, or to "resume" the land for the betterment of the community.

Sufficiency of/enormity of economic rent: A recent study by a team of British scholars showed the economic rent of Britain's natural resources to be almost

30% of her national income in 1990! Australia's economic rent, too, is at least 25% of national income. Currently, this is being permitted to flow into a relatively few private pockets – thereby creating the need to levy penalty taxes upon those who work.

POINT 2: The private wealth of Australians (or of any other nationality) is the value of what individuals produce or offer by means of their talents. It does not include land – as stated in page 13 of the draft report.

By exacting various forms of taxation, instead of taking the community-

created economic rent, and, the State interferes with a basic right of people to retain the fruits of their own labour – committing, yet again, “a species of violence”.

ANALYSIS:

Despite its good intentions, by failing to spell out the two most fundamental of human rights abovementioned, the Bishop's Draft Statement has really only proposed that we put our fingers into the holes of the terminally damaged dyke that is our economy.

“Re-introduction of death duties or some other form of wealth tax” (discussion point 14 of the draft document) casually dismisses the moral fundamentality of the case for tapping economic rent – the Creator's natural fund, a fund which comes into creation by the mere existence of a community!

Death duties do take some economic rent in “one off” situations at a time when families are still grieving, and are therefore callously intrusive. On the other hand, wealth taxes are too cumbersome, too bureaucratic and require too many valuers to be effectively implemented.

As we said in our original submission, the remedy to a multiplicity of society's deepening problems is *not* a search for a series of palliatives, but *to found a just economic model – based in natural law*. There is no need to look any further, or to agonise over the sheer number of obvious ills in society; they all stem from the one source – the misappropriation of God's natural resources. The remedy, as always, remains a simple adjustment to our revenue system.

Amongst the many positive results which flow from abolishing taxes which penalise investment, employment and wealth-creation – and taking instead the economic rent of our natural resources, are:

1. A bridging of the vast gap in wealth between a privileged elite and all

other people. Less poverty means less crime, and less occasion for war.

2. No proclivity to speculation or monopoly in land – caused by a tax system which virtually leaves these activities free.
3. Access to land for those who really need it. Because a “tax” upon the economic rent of land, unlike all other taxes, cannot be passed on (and economists accept this fact), monopolists and speculators will be encouraged to divest themselves of their “surplus” resources.
4. A breaking-down of business monopolies, and greater opportunity for self-employment.
5. Conservation of our sacred resources by means of a *sustained* levy upon their use. (cf. death duties)
6. A tendency towards decentralisation and community which such an incentive “tax” engenders.

FINALLY:

A century ago this May, Pope Leo XIII tried to justify private property in land in paragraph five of *Rerum Novarum* in these words: “*That which is bought with rightful property is rightful property.*”

Clearly, honest money paid either for land or a slave can only transfer a form of proprietorship. Under natural law, it is obviously impossible to confer moral sanction to such transactions. By remaining silent on this gross error, the Church remains an active agent in obfuscating the primary cause of the maldistribution of wealth.

There is something synchronously unholy about the Bishops' Committee's failure to accept that this planet of God's can be privately owned, abused, and sold at a profit, precisely 100 years after *Rerum Novarum*.

Sure, we should retain our freehold titles, but we all have the annual duty to “Pay the Rent”, as our

indigenous people say (and as Peter Garrett sings).

Strange, that unsophisticated people such as our aborigines can see the critical implications for economic justice of private “ownership” of mother earth, but our religious organisations cannot. We can only guess at the reasons.

By not getting to the root cause of poverty, the Committee appears to have consecrated the atextual interpretation: “The poor you have always with you”. It has done so in a draft report released again at the onset of another economic depression – a depression which we forecast to EPAC in a report dated 1 May 1984! (Compare this with the final sentence on page 8 of the statement.)

As our last plea towards the Committee's final report, we ask that it view the enclosed video *The Third Way*. If viewed in a reflective manner, we feel confident that it will be seen as the only Christian response to the widening gulf between the rich and the poor – both in Australia and elsewhere.

Bryan Kavanagh, AAIV,
Immediate Past President,
Tax Reform, Australia.

NEW LEAFLET

Tax Reform Australia has compiled a four-page leaflet, consisting of extracts from the U.K. “Land and Liberty”, relating to the impact of Georgist ideas upon present-day Russia – in particular, a letter to Gorbachev from 20 American economists including three Nobel prize-winners, advocating what is essentially a Georgist proposal.

Copies are available at 31 Hardware Street, Melbourne. For postal requests, send three 43 cent stamps for five or six copies.

GOOD GOVERNMENT

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WORLD HUNGER

At the world food conference of 1974, the then Secretary of State of the United States, Dr. Henry Kissinger, said:

"The profound comment of our era is that for the first time we have the capacity to free mankind from the scourge of hunger. Therefore today we must, proclaim a bold objective: that within a decade no child will go to bed hungry, that no family will fear for its next day's bread and that no human being's future and capacity will be stunted by malnutrition."

In fact the number of hungry people has roughly doubled during the decade that Dr. Kissinger referred to, and which has now passed. Over 500 million people – an eighth of humanity – suffer today from chronic malnutrition and

the number of hungry people – men, women and children – is increasing year by year. Over 15 million children a year die in infancy from hunger and related causes. This silent holocaust is equivalent to death by starvation of the entire population of London every six months. It is equivalent to the death toll of a Hiroshima explosion every three days. In any circumstances this fact would be an unspeakable tragedy; what transforms it into a moral horror is that – as Dr. Kissinger implied – it need not happen; it could be stopped.

Source: "Cultivating Hunger" by Nigel Twose.

An Oxfam report publ. 1984.

COMMENT

Hunger cannot be eliminated until land monopoly is abolished.

PRIME SITE

The property at 343 Little Collins Street, Melbourne, was sold late in 1990 for \$29 million – \$2.5 million above an independent valuation in 1990.

A substantial part of this valuation is site value. The extra \$2.5 million would be almost entirely site value.

DRASTIC

According to the World Bank, 3% of the world's population owns or controls 80% of all arable land, forcing landless people into already overcrowded "mega-cities" in the hope of finding food.

Well, with land monopoly so widespread and not strenuously opposed, what else could be expected?

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

- Lunch-hour videos, Series, 12.30 p.m. 1st Monday of month.
- Executive Meeting: 7.30 p.m., Thursday, June 13th.
- Discussion night "Developments in Eastern Europe" 7.30 p.m. Wednesday, June 5.
- Launch of "Elementary Economics" written by George Charles – Tuesday, July 9, 5.00 p.m.- 6.30 p.m. Dallas Brooks Hall.

DEADLINE FOR PROGRESS:

Noon on 12th of previous month.

The views expressed in articles are those of the writers and not necessarily of Tax Reform Australia Inc.

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31 Hardware Street, Melbourne 3000

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143 Lawson Street, Redfern 2016

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Henry George League, 20 Connaught Terrace, Brooklyn, Wellington, N.Z.

The Crown Leasehold Association,

P.O. Box 6038, Auckland, N.Z.

The New Zealand Land Value Rating Association,

P.O. Box 6038, Auckland, N.Z.

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