

Henry George Foundation of America  
Center for the Study of Economics  
COMMON GROUND

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November 1987

My dear fellow Georgist,

A fireman on his first tour of duty panicked at the thought of rescuing a building full of sleeping people. "Wake them up," said the fire chief in this modern-day parable, "and they will save themselves."

Well, that's good advice for Georgists, too. But how do we wake them up? Fortunately, there is a way:

First, we get cities one-by-one, sometimes in bunches, to adopt a Two-Rate Property Tax, with a higher rate on land, lower on buildings. Then we show that this building-to-land tax switch produces new construction and re-employment. We're doing this already -

- Seven cities have already adopted the Two-Rate Approach, with surely more on the way (though let's not count pre-hatched chickens yet). During this past year, one of those cities (Scranton) moved again toward taxing buildings less, land more. Frankly, we are the only Georgist organization which brings its contributors Real-World Victories, so far.

Second, we must then bring these studies to the attention of the mainstream experts and organizations, hoping that they will take on the task of spreading the land value tax; we can't do it all ourselves, but we can get things started.

- We have published a new booklet, "The Evidence for Land Value Taxation," and we are currently bringing it to the attention of the experts and the organizations (if you want a copy, it is available for \$3 from HQ).

Third, once the grass-roots voters see the virtues of taxing land, not labor, once they see it working in practice, the Single Tax will come in with a rush.

- We're preparing for that day by developing membership-chapter techniques through our new organization, Common Ground. We see ourselves attaining victory through a step-by-step approach, but we should be working at all three levels simultaneously - provided, that is, that our contributors - you, for instance - let us do it.

If no money comes in, we can only wish. If little money comes in, then our efforts can only be feeble indeed. In the past, our contributors have always come through for us, and now

it is the time of the year when we ask our contributors to join with us to keep our Momentum building. Will you accept this invitation?

● We presume you give thousands of dollars to the I.R.S. for a tax you detest. Would you give at least one hundred dollars for a tax you know will bring a vast reduction, if not an end, to involuntary unemployment and poverty?

● See how committed are the terrorists and communists of the world. They devote their whole lives to an unholy cause. Dare we, who have chanced upon a Great Idea, do less, or much less?

● Because of our efforts, and we include you in if you have contributed in the past, literally millions of dollars, soon to verge on the billions, has been transferred from landowners to building owners. Our efforts may not yet have made headlines, but we, including you, have had a real impact. Stay on the team.

● If you think the private appropriation of the public land rent is a vast robbery amounting into the hundreds of billions annually (even if generally unnoticed), then contribute accordingly.

We want you to know we appreciate your past support. This is not a one-year crusade. We are willing to work for you, visiting cities, preparing advertising campaigns, organizing local membership chapters, writing articles, etc., if you provide the wherewithal. If you can't do all these things, we'll do it for you; you just do your part.

If you think our contributors this past year got their money's worth, then act accordingly. Use the enclosed remittance envelope. We're on the verge of great things - we're sure our next letter to you will bear that out. So use the envelope today.

Fraternally,



Steven Cord

P.S. All Contributors get a Special Membership Gift. Inner Circle Contributors (\$50 or more) get a Special New Gift; they also get a free subscription to Incentive Taxation. These membership gifts are designed to help you promote the Georgist Idea among your friends and acquaintances.

THIS IS WHAT YOUR 1986-87 CONTRIBUTION TO HGFA/CSE/CG  
WAS USED FOR

- Extracted another building-to-land tax shift from a (reluctant) City Council in Scranton, Pa. A Real-World Victory.
- Another year of Incentive Taxation; it is our Movement's only publication for reaching out to non-Georgist public officials and contains solid empirical research. This was also our 18th year for Equal Rights, our in-house publication of new ideas and controversy.
- Published a new 28-page booklet, The Evidence for Land Value Taxation - a compilation of studies showing that a building-to-land switch in the property tax promotes economic growth (\$3). This has been very useful when working with public officials and professional organizations (e.g., N.L.C.). This is a major new publication.
- Another major new publication - The Ethics of Land Reform - A Trialogue (\$3). George, Smith and Marx converse. Fills a need for literature on the important ethics issue.
- Advertising Campaign, so far mainly in the Washington Monthly, a current events magazine. WM loses mega-money a year while carrying our ads. We get our message out to the general public (how else can we do it as well?), and we have received a satisfactory number of replies so far.
- I.S.T.A. speech in Phoenix (10/87) on "Hole-y Phoenix - And What We Can Do About It." Also contacted local city officials.
- "Beyond Left or Right" - a speech (soon a book) given at Howard County MD Unitarian Society; some new members for our local CG chapter are likely to result from this.
- Professor Yoshisaburo Yamasaki of Japan has just published (in Japanese) a major new book entitled Land Policy & Practice. He based his conclusions largely on statistics extracted from Incentive Taxation.
- HGFA Director Joseph Casey has been hired for the busy months of November and December to do administrative and sales work. Joe is a bank examiner and long-time Georgist (and an ex-student of Harry Gunnison Brown).
- We have made (still making) numerous visits, also phone calls and letters, to city and state officials across Pa. and Md., even elsewhere. This is one of our chief time-consuming

activities and has resulted in several promising prospects.

- Sponsored Walt Rybeck's trip to the IAAO Conference in New Orleans, 9/13-14/87 where he made a formal presentation and many useful contacts. Walt is the Vice-President of HGFA.

- Sponsored a Central MD Common Ground picnic of local supporters, the first of many to come.

- Peoria IL - helped HGFA activist John Kelly get a 100% tax abatement on improvements for 10 years in Peoria's 6 sq. mi. Enterprise Zone. We will be mounting a formal study of this soon.

- New Castle, Pa. - forestalled rescission with phone calls, letters, a study and visits.

- Speech at H.G.I. Dinner, 6/12/87 in N.Y.C. on "Political Problems & Prospects." HGFA/CSE/CG also gave the Annual Henry George Award to Wylie Young.

- Awarded the Annual Georgist Public Service Award to activist Appalachian editor Homer Marcum at the Annual Georgist Conference in San Diego in July.

- Editorial in City & State Magazine (10/87) - a new trade publication for local public officials; we'll follow up with visits to the editor.

- Provided data to Spencer MacCollum for his speech to the Libertarian Party (Cal., 10/87).

- Provided HGFA activist and author Seymour Rauch with data and literature for his testimony before a public organization in Buffalo.

- Boston 10/87 - prepared and presented a study to black activists in Roxbury/Mandela. Here is our chance for a Big Breakthrough.

- Attended the Senator Heinz Seminar (6/18/87) on the federal deficit - spoke to a number of senators, got some background feel for our forthcoming federal effort.

- Prepared a bill for federal LVT for Rep. Bill Coyne (D-Pa.), at his request. Will form the basis for a future issue of IT.

• Voorhees College, Ga. - we are helping member Harold Voorhees sponsor an HG Essay Contest and HG Book Collection.

• Exhibit Booths - one at the Pa. League of Cities Convention (Lancaster, Pa. - June); many good contacts were made. We also exhibited at two neighborhood fairs (lukewarm results).

• Lock Haven, Pa. - presentation at City Council's request (3/9/87). We have a strong supporter there.

• West Virginia - invited to testify before state senate. Prepared a report, with Walt & Art Rybeck.

• Sen. Sarbane's Executive Asst. (MD) - consulted with her and got some advice on how to proceed with Congress.

• U.N. Capital Development Fund - Karl Falk suggested I contact Hui Sun, Dep. Ex. Dir., and Sun referred me to a few good LDC contacts in the U.N. and World Bank.

• Howard County (MD) Council - testified (it seems scarier to do on home turf, for some reason!).

• Rep. Ben Cardin (MD) - consulted with him re Congress - he gave me some leads for our forthcoming Congressional push.

• BBC radio - on the spurt in new construction Pa.'s 7 cities. We arranged a tour for the visiting crew, spoke on show.

• Mike McManus column (nationally syndicated) on Pa. LVT. About a dozen inquiries eventually resulted.

• Sam Spatter - gave information to this Pgh. Post-Gazette columnist in defense of LVT (attacked by ex-county commissioner). Letter-to-editor published in the Pgh. Press.

• Article in the Pennsylvanian Magazine on LVT, co-authored by Gary Dodson. This magazine goes to 17,000 Pa. local officials

• Sylvia Porter's Personal Finance Magazine, 4/87 - gave facts for a brief favorable mention for article on the residential real estate market.

• A.I.E.R. Bulletin (1987) - endorses Incentive Taxation once again. This article resulted in about a dozen inquiries.

- Kansas City Star - telephone interview resulted in an article on Sen. Walter Mueller's bill.

- MD. Public Access Cable TV - showed "Issues & Answers" (we helped make it). Other Georgists could do likewise in their locality.

- Land & Liberty - about six articles submitted for publication.

- Article in I.U.P. Symposium (1/87) entitled "Equal Rights Demands Land Value Taxation."

- Pittsburgh Wage Tax Study - shows this tax hits average person harder than a land value tax which would raise the same revenue. Anti-wage sentiment grows in the city.

- Common Ground booklet published on "How to Establish Chapters" in localities throughout the world.

- Common Ground leaflet prepared for attracting new non-Georgist members.

- Catalyst! translated into Spanish by Argentinian Georgists - used in classes as textbook.

- Arden, Delaware Henry George Day - speech (Sept. 2).

- Technical Advice given to Georgist activists in MT, IL, PA, NY, Guatemala, New Zealand (helped Dr. Rolland O'Reagan with his new book), Japan, and many other places.

- Correspondence - literally dozens of letters a week to prospects and Georgists, etc. In terms of time spent, this is one of our chief activities.