

International Conference 1993

Employment For All: Total Tax Reform By The Year 2000



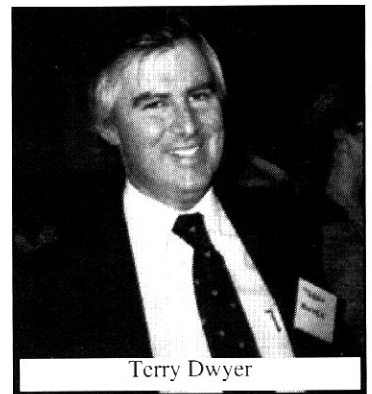
Professor Mason Gaffney

Professor Mason Gaffney, one of the keynote speakers at the conference, outlined clearly how by untaxing labour, we can have a "free lunch", offering the unemployed decent work opportunities at the same time. How putting the land to use – "lubricating the land market", as Mason put it, can increase the incentives to work, to save, and to invest. A proper reuniting of land and labour, the first two factors needed to produce wealth, could see an explosion in work opportunities.

As a current working example, another keynote speaker, Mrs Tatiyana Roskoshnaya reminded us that right now, 93 Russian cities are preparing to finance their activities from land value charges, in preference to taxing people and their activities. Tanya outlined the problems these cities face; not the least of which is defining land borders. A feature we in the West take for granted. The Russian military, it seems, are the only ones who have the detailed land maps. The maps remain a classified secret. So secret that one can only buy them in America. Nevertheless, for the first time in Russia since 1917, revenue is now being raised from the land.

Dr Terry Dwyer showed clearly the logic and justice behind the principle of site revenue. Since it is the landowner that ultimately benefits from the spending by governments on public amenities, why not charge them the cost of supplying them. In other words, the principle of beneficiary pays, not user pays. Says Dr Dwyer, "There are only three things you can tax, land labour or capital. Wouldn't you rather tax the one that can't run?"

The conference tackled several pressing issues facing the world today. Amongst them are environmental concerns. Karl Williams gave voice to a green policy that can actually promote effective environmental behaviour. This relates to protecting wilderness through site value assessments, adoption of "maximum sustainable yield" policies for rural problems and soil degradation, and how to combat urban sprawl by forcing idle land to be put to full use.



Terry Dwyer

Godfrey Dunkley, from South Africa, related to the conference how the indigenous were deprived of land both by the British and the Boers long before the advent of Apartheid. "The Georgist type approach could be instrumental," Godfrey said, "in solving the problem of land claims, whilst still ensuring total equity for all. We were reminded however, by Bob Keall from New Zealand, of the economic realities; of the collusion of those at the top, under the guise of "user-pays" charges. Bob spoke of the deviousness of self interested parties; their treachery. This is the economic reality.

The conference, I believe, marked a turning point for the Geonomic (Georgist) movement. The need for an exposition on implementing our approach was clearly signalled. So let's talk some more about turning points.

The indigenous of this nation have come to realise that although they have particularly hard won civil freedoms, it hasn't made them any better off. They are lacking economic freedom.

We were shown that there is enough value in the land to fund a new type of government, based on freedom and justice. This is the natural law. A growing awareness that land, by its very nature, is different; something that cannot be bought and sold like any other commodity. Precisely the sort of spiritual development that is starting to rise in increasing numbers. The conference picked up on this; a coming synthesis of geonomics and self development. It is the empowerment Geonomics gives to people that will carry us forward. Empowerment to indigenous peoples, to the women's movement, to low paid workers, to a society not plagued by crimes that are economic in origin.



Employment for all, total tax reform by the year 2000. And a hell of a lot of free lunches.

Report by Phil Anderson.