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Stop Tax-Penalizing Our Own Economy

Simple, Not Simplistic

Everett W. Gross considers why people would rather call a simple idea "simplistic" or "left wing" or "right wing" instead of calming down and actually thinking about it.

by Everett W. Gross

Those of us who have heard of [Henry George](#) and have been convinced, are often accused of offering only one solution to all problems, and are therefore being "simplistic." We are accused of being communistic when in fact we consider ourselves quite the opposite. The "conservatives" consider us too liberal and the "liberals" consider us too conservative. In fact, it is not possible to classify us on that scale. As to whether we are on the political "left" or "right," we only recall that those terms originally applied to the French Parliament, in which place the people who wanted change sat on the left side, and the people opposed to change sat on the right. We really do not know which side we should be sitting on, since all we want is to change those things which need to be changed in order not to destroy the good parts which need to be kept. For all I know, the French may have changed sides for each issue being discussed.

Now, are we "simplistic" and advocate only one solution for all problems? Actually, we mainly only want to remove the reason why your solution is not working.

I, for one, am aware of some problems which I do not address here since I have not studied them enough to offer a solution. But I do not know any which would be harder to solve in a decently functioning economy than in the troubled one which this country is trying to patch and juggle.

As for the many problems to which I am accused of applying only one simple remedy, I do not admit that they are many problems. I see them as several facets of only one problem, and not a very complex one at that. And my one remedy might not be simple even though the broad principle is -- and explaining and applying it might take a long time. But if we never start, how long will it take?

The general idea is that the only problem I have cared to bother about is just plain old poverty. It shows up in many ways which seem to defy solutions. It is a dismal list.

- Farmers are going broke.
- The schools at all levels are struggling and cutting programs.
- The State finances are sick.
- Too many families are not making ends meet.

- Even skilled people hunt in vain for jobs.
- The social security problem is not being solved.

The list goes on.

Some people (not I) find it handy to resist thinking about it by digging that excuse out of context from the Bible about having the poor always with us. Some feel safe in their total faith that alms or government subsidies will solve the problem if only we can get the other guy to shell out more. Alms and subsidies have not succeeded yet, so how long must we believe they ever will?

So my "simple" remedy is simply to stop the massive crippling of the total economy by our tax formulas which penalize useful functions and reward harmful ones. It can be done as gradually and piecemeal as anyone wishes. It can make concessions for hardship cases. It can open more investment opportunities than it closes. But it depends on large numbers of people learning the difference between a useful function and a harmful one.

I am sometimes told that I should take the idea to the legislature. Yes, but will any legislator beat the drum for an idea that doesn't yet have lots of voter support? That could get him kicked out of office.