

COMMENTS ON THE PROPOSALS  
MADE BY GRAHAM HART FOR AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION  
OF THE HENRY GEORGE MOVEMENT

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THE GRAND PLAN CONCEPT

Graham Hart has called for what amounts to a political "action plan" on an international. Certainly, a grand plan does exist already in the form of George's social and political goals set forth in PROGRESS AND POVERTY. As he implies, the type of activity anticipated requires both concentrated effort and funding. Georgists are few and far between and, if the few individuals whom I personally know are a representative sample, extensive wealth and substantial leisure time are not characteristics of our lifestyles.

The western democracies already have the basic framework for equality within constitutional government. Henry George recognized this to be true and, therefore, voiced a desire for evolutionary rather than revolutionary change. A key ingredient to successful social evolution is participation in the process. Our "grand plan" should include strong support for individuals having Georgist philosophies to capture political office and, where possible, encourage qualified Georgists themselves to seek political office at all levels. This should be done in the realm of existing party structures and as independent lobbying efforts (as is being accomplished by the Incentive Tax League).

INTERNATIONAL IDENTIFICATION

One difficulty in Graham Hart's proposal for international exposure is, I feel, the barrier of language. Not only that, only 8% of the world's population now lives under a republican form of government. In many other nation's human rights and social reforms are goals of social dissidents rather than the governing bodies. While I do agree that no effort is too small where human rights and dignity are at stake, the potential for expansion of Georgist activities into the third world or the socialist bloc is, I suspect, dependent upon accomplishments within the nation's of the West, particularly the English-speaking nations.

THE "MANIFESTO"

I would prefer the term "platform" or something similar due to the association of communist doctrine to the word "manifesto". I would agree there is confusion as to whether land value taxation is a goal in itself or is one means to an end, the end being a universal humanitarian society.

Again, I believe the writings of Henry George represent a conclusive analysis of social progress and serve the movement well as a fundamental source of goals. I would like to see a book by someone like Mason Gaffney on the order of Wanniski's "The Way The World Works", which directly tackles in depth the social consequences of the world's various economic and political systems.

#### NAME OF THE NEW ORGANIZATION

Again, I have strong negative feelings about identifications which are remotely attached to the communist movement; I believe the word "International" used in this context has that connotation. I am also left with little enthusiasm for Bob Andelson's suggestion that "Neo-Georgism" is the answer, although I do agree with much he had to say in the recent LAND & LIBERTY article. However, calling oneself a "Georgist" does not necessary mean total agreement with everything Henry George ever uttered.

Should the desire to create an international umbrella organization gain strength, my recommendation would be a name which emphasizes the goals of social and economic equality and humanitarian reforms, something like: "INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR HUMANITARIAN SOCIETIES, a movement founded on the philosophy of Henry George". Obviously, there is substantial room for discussion on the matter.

#### INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

I agree with the need for reaching the masses by means of a professional periodical. In LAND & LIBERTY, I feel the core of such a vehicle exists. The key is to mold LAND & LIBERTY into a journal of much wider appeal and distribution, all of which requires funding and a market. One thing which could be done is to expand the scope of the material to include articles on specific areas as regular features: the environment, resource monopoly, scientific developments, economic theory in evolution (reviews of new books), etc. Less costly might be the undertaking of putting out a newspaper -- possibly subscribing to the UPI and API to pick up on pertinent writing being done by non-Georgist journalists.

#### SECRETARIAT FUNCTIONS

While the proposals put forth by Graham Hart are indeed noble, I have great difficulty in seeing any short run potential for such an undertaking. In effect, his outline presupposes not just an availability of unlimited funds but the existence of many more individuals able to dedicate 100% of their time to the movement than I currently believe there to be.

As an alternative, I suggest that where possible, national organizations should establish offices in their respective capital cities from which "lobbying" activity could ensure increased exposure. Operation of a large facility such as the New York and Philadelphia "Henry George Schools" would not be required. Rather, individuals specifically trained for such positions could be supported by a few full-time staff members, supported as much as possible by volunteer workers.

### DEMOCRATIC BASE/POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

Total agreement on this one; here in the United States, the platforms of both major parties are ostensibly to build a society based upon equality of opportunity governed by a republican form of government. Georgists must increase their involvement in local, state and national politics, forming a united front where feasible.

### SELECTIVE CONCENTRATION OF EFFORT

The one danger I fear in our movement is the evolution of elitism and an unwillingness to compromise. Should the Council of Georgist Organizations grow in terms of staff, funding and decision-making responsibility, I would hope its structure would prevent entrenched leadership.

My understanding of the work we are doing with the island of Santo Domingo (Dominican Republic) is what Graham Hart has in mind and should be intensified to the limit available funding permits.

### THE FUNCTIONS OF GOVERNMENT

I am not sure what he is saying here, other than we should support maximum operation of the free market and minimum government intervention. As a banking officer, I fully realize how government manipulation of the money and credit supply restricts economic activity. However, without legislation to implement basic Georgist reforms, the "free market" would not, in my opinion, operate to the advantage of the general masses.

Dodson

## ADDITIONAL AREAS FOR DISCUSSION

### CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT FOR THE HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL

The Georgist movement needs more exposure of Henry George's ideas in the nation's colleges and universities. One way to do so is to develop accredited graduate level courses at the school in New York which could be taken in connection with graduate programs at other educational institutions in the State of New York. An alternative to this idea would be to press a number of colleges and universities to offer programs based upon the concepts of "land economics" or George's philosophy.

### INVOLVEMENT IN HIGH SCHOOL AND UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE EDUCATION

Develop a list of qualified speakers who would be willing to lecture on Georgist economic and social reforms. Prepare a brochure which could be mailed to the political science, economics, social science and history departments of such educational institutions, advising them of speaker availability, etc.

### NEW ECONOMICS TEXT

My classes taken at the Henry George School in Philadelphia convince me that there is a strong need for an economic text for study guide which deals with current economic and social problems using language which is more easily digested than is that in "Progress and Poverty". I believe that a great deal is lost to many individuals coming to the school because they simply do not have the reading comprehension levels necessary to fully grasp George's works. Unfortunately, not enough people coming to the school are well-read or academically inclined. I believe that a text written on the level of high school seniors, with traditional study questions at the end of each chapter would increase the amount of understanding retained by those who attend the classes.

### FACILITY IN PHILADELPHIA

Last week Philadelphia was paid a visit by Mitch Chandless from Boston. I am sure you are aware that he desires to reopen a Henry George School branch in the Boston area. While I think this is an idea worth supporting, I would strongly suggest that if funds are at all available they be used for a new facility in Philadelphia at a location which will give the school greatly increase visibility. Philadelphia already has a strong core of activity, and a larger, more visible facility could only anchor greater efforts.