

if this be treason...

OLD professors don't fade away, not if they're Harry Gunnison Brown, formerly of the University of Missouri at Columbia and if 82 can be considered old in such a good and useful life.

Professor and Mrs. Brown were back home on the campus in June, and the editor of the Columbia Missourian did a nice thing—he published a cheery photo of the Prof and devoted a whole column to a recap of his familiar views about land value taxation.

Among other things, Dr. Brown evidently wanted to clear up why they spend so little time in Columbia. "I don't give talks on the land tax in Missouri because the State Constitution makes the system impossible," he said. "Instead I've gone to Pennsylvania where the state legislature has passed laws making this possible for third class cities."

Mason Gaffney, a professor at the same university, on reading the above, wrote a very gentlemanly letter to the editor congratulating him on the Brown interview but taking a slight exception. He corrected an implication that Dr. Brown's views were rare—instead he indicated in polite vein that quite a lot of people including himself favored "focusing local property taxes on site values alone."

Having said that, he took issue with his old friend, Professor Brown, and if this embarrassing charge should not be repeated outside Missouri we are sorry, but it's too adroit to ignore:

"I would disagree with Professor Brown that Columbians' hands are tied by the Missouri Constitution. We are good enough at passing the buck around here without such aid and comfort. Professor Brown is probably referring to a requirement that all property be taxed and assessed without discrimination among classes of property.

"However, that provision has obviously not prevented our assessors from discriminating against new buildings and in favor of vacant land, slum land, downtown commercial land and so on. We have a high measure of de facto local option, and it is just a question of which local groups are going to dominate the assessor.

"The Explainers of the status quo, of whom we have in Columbia a comfortable surplus, are skilled at rationalizing present inequities by citing state-imposed limitations on what we can spend to assess property. But if we so desired, that limitation could equally well be used to rationalize any system by pleading poverty in the assessor's office, why not elect the option of rationalizing a rational system.

MORE BASIC ECONOMICS

In addition to the extensions listed in the school booklet (available on request) there will again be a Fundamental Economics class in Monticello, New York under Sam Friedman's direction; and in Louisville, Kentucky with William Howard as instructor.

Tentatively, similar classes are being planned for Washington, D.C. by Lee Bottens; in Fort Worth by Joseph Craig; and in Miami and Miami Beach by Raymond Abrams. The new volunteer extension in Chicago, operating side by side with the Institute for Economic Inquiry, with George Menninger as secretary, has announced 9 classes to be held in Chicago and environs.