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The new year and the new decade bring a strong ray of hope for the future of the Henry George concept. While the national and world pictures remain almost unrelievedly grim, something good must be said for what is happening at the local level.

Since its inception, the Pennsylvania graded tax has not sparked a major reform movement. While Pittsburgh and Scranton adopted the optional system, other cities stayed with their conventional revenue measures. But within the last year, new interest in the Georgist reform has erupted across the state.

Much of the credit must go to long-time Pennsylvania Georgists like Steve Cord, Jack Kelly, and John Weaver, who never gave up the good fight. Timely and pertinent research by Dan Sullivan, under the direction of our own Center for Local Tax Research, also helped convince the uninitiated.

Above all, we need to encourage the support of courageous councilmen, like Bill Coyne, of Pittsburgh, and Ben Howell, of Allentown. Perhaps someday, Pennsylvania mayors, who are still strangely more eager to tax the wages of their citizens than the land of their cities, will finally get the message.

What should be clear is that any advance in the application of our ideas is based on our ability to persuade others, rather than merely communicating among ourselves. Henry George himself was as much the political fighter and social reformer as he was the economic philosopher. We like to think he would approve of the growing, if still small, application of his remedy, and encourage more use of his ideas, even by those whose understanding of them is still incomplete.

Director Appears Before Senate Group

(The following is an excerpt from testimony given by Philip Finkelstein before the Real Property Taxation Committee, of the New York State Senate, on November 29, and 30, 1979, in New York City).

The real property tax in the state has been documented as the most burdensome, inequitable, inefficient, and economically unjust in the nation. Most of these ills have been traced to assessment practices that have been declared by our highest court to be illegal. An equitable, efficient, economically rational, and less onerous property tax burden—these are or should be the goals of legislation.

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