



Henry George's Other Idea:

"Free Trade and the Construction of a Georgist Politics".....

by Dr. Ronald Yanosky

(Editor's note; The following is an edited version of a lengthier speech by Dr. Yanosky August 8, 1997 at the Council of Georgist Organizations conference in South Plainfield, N.J.)

One hundred years ago this fall George accepted to run for mayor for Greater New York despite warning of doctors that campaign would cost him his life. Eleven years earlier George accepted another nomination for the same office under circumstances less physically threatening but nevertheless loaded with physical risk and exposure to every kind of political vilification. George's campaigns of 1886 and 1897 have some continuities. Both of those campaigns highlighted land value tax in an urban context. Both pitted George against abusive political machines and both ended in triumphant defeat. I want to draw your attention to the differences in the two mayor campaigns, one that has implications for understanding history of single tax movement.

In 1886, Henry George ran as the candidate of an independent labor party which was largely the creation of NYC's Central Labor Union. George's third party candidacy galvanized the usually divided NYC Democrats into united action against George, and their candidate, Abram Hewitt, won the election.

In 1897 George himself ran as a Democrat. To be sure he was still the enemy of Tammy Hall, New York City's famously corrupt political organization. George's own organization, which called itself the Jeffersonian Democracy of Greater New York, proudly claimed that it was the national representative of the party within the city. This was stretching a point, but the Georgites did back up that claim, with support of influential Democrats, including Democrats of the Democratic National Committee and they got moderate support from the party's standard bearer, William Jennings Bryan.

How did the rebels of 1886 turn into the legitimists of 1897? Henry George was born into a Jacksonian Democratic household, and his father in fact was a political appointee for a period of time. For most of the time that George was developing his land theories, he was in fact a partisan Democrat, particularly in the 1870s. Still in his early years as a radical Republican, and later years as an Independent candidate, George was not a participator in the kind of tribalistic partisanship of the guided age. George's converts, too, came from both major parties as well as several

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St. Louis Georgists host booth at NCSL

The St. Louis chapter of Common Ground-USA members repeated their success of last year when they hosted a booth at the National Conference of State Legislatures meeting this year in Philadelphia.

"Many legislators and staff persons remembered us from having visited our booth last year," said Al Katzenberger, one of the hosts of the booth at the Philadelphia meeting of the NCSL held August 6-9, 1997. Besides about 1400 copies of Common Ground-USA's updated "Revenue Source" legislative outreach

brochure, another CG-USA hand-out piece was developed for distribution this year. Last year many persons asked about the Internet, so a postcard was developed with Georgist web pages addresses (See insert bottom of page 2). The front side of the postcard was the Henry George image and text developed by Jim Busey (see the May-June 1997 issue of GroundSwell).

Another addition to the Georgist handouts this year from the booth were

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