

# PERIODICALS

*Reviews of articles from periodicals and specialized journals here and abroad*

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## **POLITICS & GOVERNMENT**

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### *Bringing Back the "Single Tax"*

"The Tax To End All Taxes: Where Is Henry George Now That We Need Him?"  
by David Hapgood, in *American Heritage*  
(April-May 1978), 383 West Center St.,  
Marion, Ohio 43302.

Henry George (1839–97), perhaps America's most innovative economic theorist, may have been right in his notion of taxing land rather than the improvements on land. So writes Hapgood, author and former journalist.

Living in California just 10 years after the Gold Rush (1849), George observed that land, once cheap, was quickly concentrated in a few hands and then held off the market so that its price would rise. New settlers, unable to buy land cheaply, were forced to work for low wages and to suffer poverty in a land of plenty.

George rejected the standard radical proposals for land redistribution or nationalization. His remedy, set forth in his classic book *Progress and Poverty* (1880), was to allow private ownership of land but to let society collect the "unearned rent" on that land through taxation. The rent to be confiscated was the amount the owner could collect by renting out unimproved land, or if he had built on it, the portion of the rent attributable to the land alone.

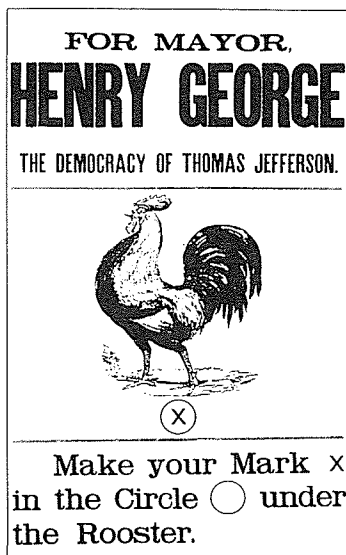
George's "single tax" would pay for all the expenses of government, eliminating the need for any tax on the earnings of either labor or capital. By letting society recapture the land values that society itself had created through sheer demand, the owner would be forced to put his land to its most productive use or give it up. Hoarding land would no longer pay.

Hapgood argues that George's "single tax" today would benefit both the decaying cities and the vanishing countryside by reducing sprawl and encouraging more intensive use of the best-located land, especially

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*With enthusiastic support from organized labor, Henry George ran for mayor of New York in 1886. Despite a lack of poll watchers—crucial in those days of stolen elections—George garnered a respectable 68,110 votes. Democrat Abram S. Hewitt won with 90,552, and the Republican candidate, Theodore Roosevelt, was third with 60,435.*

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acreage along new highways or subway lines. Moreover, George would probably have taxed polluters heavily to halt environmental degradation, and taxed away part of the profits from mining and extraction to recover the benefits owed to society. "Henry George," says Hapgood, "speaks to the present quite as eloquently as he did to the past."

*The Disenchanted Black Voter*

"Leaders Sans Troupes: Diregeants Noirs et Masses Noirs" by Laura Armand-Maslow, in *Revue Francaise de Science Politique* (Feb. 1978), 27 rue Saint Guillaume, 75341, Paris.

Politics for black Americans is currently marked by a curious dichotomy: There is a new unanimity and consensus on ideology and tactics among black political leaders, and, at the same time, a growing disinterest in politics among the black masses.

The consensus has been achieved, writes Armand-Maslow, a University of Paris political scientist, through a shift to the left by groups such as the NAACP and the National Urban League and a shift to the right by black revolutionary organizations that previously had failed to win mass support. The movement of black leaders into the political mainstream has resulted in a 400-percent increase in the number of black officeholders since 1958 (including the mayors of Los Angeles, Detroit, Atlanta, and Newark) and a virtual end to violent tactics since 1972.

But blacks have tended to concentrate their political activity at the