

(continued from first page) people are forced off their lands due to expropriation or are swallowed up by the dominant consumer culture."

Added to all this are the increasing pressures put on cultures by diminishing natural resources. Since the 1980s, Mr. Roodman pointed out, arable crop land has declined globally, especially in third world countries. This has been due to a number of factors impacting simultaneously. As many developing countries in the third world countries rush to industrialize, their use of natural resources expands exponentially. This, in turn, produces increased pollution, increased soil erosion, and, as farming and conservation techniques themselves tend not to modernize as quickly as the industrial sector, there is an increasing lag between industrial progress and the maintenance of agricultural stability. Coupled with these factors is an inevitable growth in population, which puts further pressures on an already fragile infrastructure.

## Calling All Georgists!

Have you ever wondered what exactly a Georgist is? Or where they come from, or what they do? Every summer the curious have the chance to meet their fellow Georgists for four days of seminars, workshops, and some good old fashioned fun. For most of us in the New York area this year's annual conference couldn't be easier to take part in. Sponsored by the Council of Georgist Organizations, the events will take place in nearby New Jersey, August 7th - 10th, with a special **New York City** day on Saturday, August 9th. Planned are a series of academic lectures and debates, training exercises, education programs, and a special Georgist salon where everyone is invited to show off their creative genius. For the Saturday in New York, there will be a bus trip to the Henry George gravesite in Greenwood Cemetery in Brooklyn, followed by a tour of lower and midtown Manhattan, showcasing historic events and locations from Georgist history, celebrating the centennial anniversary of George's last campaign for mayor of New York City, while illustrating glaring examples of the effects of present day speculation. And no one should miss a special appearance by Henry George himself, delivering an exciting soapbox speech in the middle of Washington Square Park.

If you wish to help out or would like to learn more please call the school at 212-889-8020.

In the face of this dire news, Mr. Roodman also pointed out that, in the modern industrial nations, progress has been made in curbing many of the causes of pollution. There have been environmental regulations put in place during the last ten to twenty years that have, especially on local, mostly urban levels, dramatically decreased toxic emissions in the atmosphere and cut back on the dumping of waste in rivers, lakes and streams.

To combat these problems more effectively, however, Mr. Roodman went on to say, we have to go beyond the level of regulation and control; we have to go to a deeper, structural level. That level is the level "at which the economy and politics interface." "Those industries which pollute," explained Mr. Roodman, "profit in some way, directly or indirectly, from polluting and are very slow to change. They can have enormous political clout. It is difficult to hold polluters accountable for the damage they do."

Mr. Roodman then went on to describe a plan to use taxation as a way to discourage both pollution and natural resource depletion. One way in which to do this would be to tax air and water pollution and toxic emissions in the atmosphere. In fact, some governments are already starting to do this, on a small scale. "Sweden was the first country to do so, in 1991. The Swedes shifted three per cent of taxation from the income tax onto taxes on chemical pollutants that cause acid rain. The idea is not to increase the overall tax burden but to change what we tax. A dollar taxed against pollution would be a dollar saved in taxes somewhere else. The Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom have also recently made similar small scale tax shifts in the direction of a pollution tax. I think it is not unrealistic to say that we could, some time in the near future, raise a trillion dollars annually from taxing environmental damage." What Mr. Roodman seems to propose is a sort of negative land tax, a tax not on the value of land but a tax on the value taken away from land. One strength of Mr. Roodman's argument for (continued on page eight)

## If It Plays In Peoria...

On April 8th, the Peoria City Council passed a measure to the Illinois House of Representatives petitioning the state to grant cities the choice to only tax land values in their communities. By the Illinois Constitution, the State reserves authority over all property taxes. But under Home Rule legislation individual cities may exercise great discretion regarding the rates and types of real estate and community taxes levied. John Kelly, who has rallied for LVT in Peoria since 1983, says that the political viability of the measure facing House hearings is uncertain, and that it must be introduced and passed onto the Senate before the House ends session on June 1st. But the legislation does have the broad support of the Illinois Municipal League, which tends to favor any shift toward local control of taxation. And such a move is not unprecedented: Enterprise Zone legislation, passed in Illinois twenty years ago, allowed cities to abate taxes on construction as a development incentive - a move that was extremely successful in Peoria. Now if the old saying holds true, "If it plays in Peoria..." perhaps we'll see Land Value Taxation play on ol' Broadway.

