

***An Earth Rights Manifesto*** by Alanna Hartzok, Earth Rights Visionary and United Nations NGO Representative for the International Union for Land Value Taxation

An Introduction by Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould

The inspiration of *An Earth Rights Manifesto* is activating the JFK LEGACY, A VISION FOR ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND WORLD PEACE,

“Our original idea was to create a world peace movement based on JFK’s American University Peace Speech. Along the way we discovered that world peace required a transition from an Economy of War to Peace from Alanna Hartzok and her Earth Rights Visionaries friends. The more we learned about the economics of 19<sup>th</sup> Century American, Henry George the more we realized that the best way to build peace was based on a foundation of George’s perennial wisdom teachings of economic justice.

“Now here’s the amazing part. This started for us in 1992, when our daughter got a dream message from Paul’s deceased father to look into the Fitzgerald history [going](#) back to the 1169 Norman invasion of Ireland. Out of the blue Georgist researcher Edward Dodson (researcher & faculty member of the Henry George School of Social Science and Director of the School of Cooperative Individualism) recently sent us a 1911 news story from the weekly magazine THE PUBLIC, published from 1898-1919. It reported that JFK’s grandfather, Boston’s Mayor John Fitzgerald, was promoting public finance solutions based on Henry George’s economic justice. George’s masterwork, PROGRESS AND POVERTY, launched major movements in several countries by the end of the 19th century.”

Describing the perennial wisdom made manifest through Georgist economics, Hartzok has written: “...all gifts of nature should be fairly shared and not subject to private profiteering. The solution is a public finance policy that removes tax burdens from labor and production and shifts it to the unearned income from land and natural resources. Even when partially implemented this approach shows that we can build an economy that is both fair, free and decentralized. Neoliberal economics was created by elites who paid universities to teach two-factor economics, only labor and capital, and made land (the earth itself) a subset of capital. The intention of this intellectual crime was to obfuscate the perennial wisdom teachings on economic justice.”

“This was the alpha and omega moment we’d been waiting for. The exciting energy of the Fitzgerald Legacy that JFK brought to his presidency had been enlivened again in our reality. To start our job is to encourage all 2024 presidential candidates to include Mayor Fitzgerald’s Georgist solutions in their platforms. As this message spreads across the country it will bring Americans together from all sides of the political spectrum, just as President Kennedy was doing with his vision for world peace.”

## **An Earth Rights Manifesto** by Alanna Hartzok,

I write this manifesto in the hope that all people might be moved to engage in a conversation to find clarity for a way forward, a way to end poverty, homelessness and hunger, and to build a world that works for everyone; including the animals and plants, indeed for life itself. Through our sincere conversation I am certain right action will follow and we will create a world where justice will keep the peace and thus will we end the scourge and abomination of war once and for all.<sup>1</sup>

UK resident and Irish scholar Kevin Cahill wrote a magnificent book titled *Who Owns the World*<sup>2</sup> which is the first compilation of landowners and landownership structures in every single one of the world's 197 states and 66 territories. *Who Owns the World* covers the history of landownership as far as written history allows and shows the division of landownership in every region of the globe. Cahill identified the person who owns the largest proportion of the world's land and documents that person's landholdings.<sup>3</sup> That person was Queen Elizabeth when Cahill's book was written and now is King Charles III. The King reigns in 32 countries and territories having a total land mass of 6,698 million acres which will bear his name as superior or ultimate owner. In contrast, the United States as a country has 2,400 million acres while Russia has 4,200 million acres. As Cahill says, this is "a phenomenon never to be seen elsewhere on earth.... The word "own" is used deliberately, being the word her Canadian Attorney General's office used to describe the legal status of all of Canada's vast territory."<sup>4</sup>

What the King owns in personal property in the UK is about 637,000 acres."<sup>5</sup> In *Who Owns the World*, Cahill describes in great detail the legal machinations of the Crown's ownership rights. He says that these are a "manifest continuation and legitimisation of feudalism in the modern world". Of the rights asserted in Magna Carta I he tells us that the barons "did not question the King's feudal superiority and his overall ownership of the land of the realm..."<sup>6</sup>

One of the most important questions of our time is not just who owns the world, but how SHOULD the earth be "owned"? And this question of earth ownership has been central to my own life's quest. I want to share with you some of what I have learned in this regard, as detailed in my award-winning book, *The Earth Belongs to Everyone*.<sup>7</sup> I have come to the realization that the ultimate claim of ownership of the earth's land and natural resources cannot be made on the

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<sup>1</sup> Ownership of Land and Control of the Earth <https://worldservice.org/issues/febmar96/letter.html>

<sup>2</sup> Cahill, Kevin. *Who Owns the World: The Hidden Facts Behind Landownership*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company Ltd. 2007. First published 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 42-48.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 43.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 52

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 45

<sup>7</sup> <https://theiu.org/books/>

basis of prior claim, discovery, purchase, military conquest, and ability to maintain and secure possession, constitutional law, or length of residency.

Ultimately the only rational, supportable, moral, just and ethical basis upon which a claim of ownership can be made is by birthright to the gifts of nature and that cannot be an exclusive claim. The claim by birthright can only be legitimate if it is acknowledged that all other human beings have an equal claim to land and natural resources. The deepest ethical dimension of territorial rights recognizes that humanity is one and indivisible in its fundamental claim to the earth as the birthright of all.<sup>8</sup>

We people of the planet owe a great debt of gratitude as well as profound apologies for the manner in which we have treated indigenous people who have lived longer and closer to the precepts of natural law than most of the several billion of us. Colonization declared their lands “terra nullius” meaning void of human habitation as church and state considered native people to be savages and subhuman.<sup>9</sup> We can understand the Native American word *wetiko*<sup>10</sup> to mean those whose consciousness is that of being separate from the earth and from each other, whereas native people viewed the world as a whole and all human beings as related to all of nature. They said in their greetings and prayers *Mitákuye Oyás’iŋ* meaning “all my relations.”

John Mohawk,<sup>11</sup> a Native American leader and university academic, said this in his essay on *The Problem of the Modern World*: “When land became a “commodity” and lost its status as provider and sustainer of life, Western civilization began its history of subjugation and exploitation of the earth and earth-based cultures. For five centuries people have been coerced from their landholdings. The problem, in the English-speaking world, has its roots in the sixteenth century.”<sup>12</sup>

Mohawk was speaking of the Enclosures Period,<sup>13</sup> when masses of common people in Britain, Scotland, Ireland, and elsewhere were forced off of their customary commons and other landholdings.

Enclosure could be accomplished by buying the ground rights and all common rights to accomplish exclusive rights of use, which increased the value of the land. The other method was by passing laws causing or forcing enclosure, such as parliamentary enclosures. The latter process was sometimes accompanied by force,

<sup>8</sup> Hartzok, Alanna. *The Earth Belongs to Everyone*. The Institute for Economic Democracy Press, 2008.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.theindigenousfoundation.org/articles/the-doctrine-of-discovery-and-terra-nullius>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.innertraditions.com/blog/wetiko-in-a-nutshell>

<sup>11</sup> Mohawk, John (1945-2006) <http://www.pbs.org/warrior/content/historian/mohawk.html>

<sup>12</sup> *Thinking Indian: A John Mohawk Reader*. <https://birchbarkbooks.com/products/thinking-in-indian>

<sup>13</sup> Hartzok, Alanna. “Democracy, Earth Rights and the Next Economy” E. F. Schumacher Lecture 2001 <https://centerforneweconomics.org/publications/democracy-earth-rights-and-the-next-economy/>

resistance, and bloodshed, and remains among the most controversial areas of agricultural and economic history in England.<sup>14</sup>

People can learn from the Global Ecovillage Network<sup>15</sup> and permaculture movements.<sup>16</sup> The community of Findhorn in Scotland is one of the original “planetary light centers” emerging worldwide that are based on harmonization with the laws of nature.<sup>17</sup> I find of great inspiration the Russian Ringing Cedars movement launched by an amazing wise woman, Anastasia, the avatar of Siberia.<sup>18</sup> Her movement succeeded in its efforts to secure land for the people for ecological family domains, actualized by acts passed by the Duma, the Russian Parliament. Thousands of people have been leaving the cities to find their livelihoods in direct connection with Mother Earth.<sup>19</sup> And then there is the Lammas ecovillage in Wales.<sup>20</sup>

(2) A relatively few ultra-wealthy people own a disproportionate share of urban lands worldwide. In urban areas where land values are greatly concentrated, the problem of increasing poverty and wealth inequality can be addressed via fundamental tax reform. It is accomplished by removing the tax burden from people who work for a living (earned income) while shifting the tax base to the “land rent”, which is unearned income as land value is created by society as a whole. This will remove the urban bits of Mother Earth from speculation, hoarding and private profiteering. This tax shift off of labor and onto land rent would procure ample funds for needed infrastructure and other public goods. As Dr. Paul Collier, Professor of Economics, Oxford University and author of *The Bottom Billion* say: *Density is valuable and that value is reflected in the price of land. In the urban centers there are enormous rents on rising land values. The taxation of land appreciation offers huge scope for financing the cost of urban infrastructure.*

In “A Place to Live – Barriers to Affordable Housing in UK and Worldwide”<sup>21</sup> Heather Wetzel, Chair of the UK Labour Land Campaign, discusses the primary reasons why housing is out of reach to rent or buy for so many. She shares her concerns about our increasingly divided society of rich and poor and consequent social and economic problems. Heather puts forward land value tax and other fundamental policy proposals that can solve the housing and land problem and at the same time address environmental challenges.

Land rent for public finance (aka land value taxation) can be traced back thousands of years, as far in fact as the Vedic period from which came Hinduism and Buddhism.<sup>22</sup> It also threads

<sup>14</sup> <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/the-enclosure-act/>

<sup>15</sup> Global Ecovillage Network <https://ecovillage.org> Rob Wheeler is GEN’s United Nations NGO Representative.

<sup>16</sup> Permaculture <https://www.permaculturenews.org> also see many permaculture design courses online.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.findhorn.org>

<sup>18</sup> <https://anastasia.foundation> and <https://www.ringingcedarsofrussia.org/Main/English/index.php>

<sup>19</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law\\_on\\_the\\_Far\\_Eastern\\_Hectare](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Law_on_the_Far_Eastern_Hectare)

<sup>20</sup> <https://lammas.org.uk/en/ecovillage/>

<sup>21</sup> Wetzel, Heather. <https://theiu.org/a-place-to-live-barriers-to-affordable-housing-in-uk-and-worldwide/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.exoticindiaart.com/book/details/economic-principles-in-vedic-tradition-nan104/>

through the Abrahamic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The tax history of China<sup>23</sup> tells us that Mencius strongly supported this form of public finance.<sup>24</sup>

Land value taxation is the golden thread of perennial wisdom teachings on land justice that when implemented has yielded balanced, harmonic and fair societies that are attuned to Natural Law. Charles Avila, a leader in the Philippines and good friend of mine, is the author of the now classic work titled Ownership: Early Christian Teachings.<sup>25</sup> Avila tells us that Christianity lost its original economic teachings of Jubilee Justice when it became the religion of the Roman Empire. Land as “the koina” is held as a sacred trust in the Abrahamic faith tradition but under imperial rule became “dominium” which entailed the legalization of land acquired by conquest and plunder.

The American political economist Henry George rediscovered these key economic teachings about land justice and set them forth in his *magnum opus* Progress and Poverty,<sup>26</sup> which launched him to worldwide recognition. His lectures throughout the United States and in the UK, Ireland and Australia made a lasting impact as there are numerous organizations working today to implement land value taxation. Among them is the International Union for Land Value Taxation, a United Nations NGO, for which I serve as Administrator.<sup>27</sup>

Sun Yat-Sen, considered by many to be the “Father of Modern China”, built his Three Principles of the People in part upon the teachings of Henry George. Sun Yat-sen said that land value tax as “the only means of supporting the government is an infinitely just, reasonable, and equitably distributed tax, and on it we will found our new system.”<sup>28</sup>

Leo Tolstoy was another fan of Henry George. He had a large portrait of him by his writing desk where he wrote several letters to Tsar Nicholas urging him to implement land value taxation. Tolstoy feared that if the land problem was not addressed a violent revolution could break out. In his last novel Resurrection<sup>29</sup> there is a scene wherein a nobleman is giving land to his serfs. Asking them how they would fairly share the land, the nobleman reads to them a passage from Henry George’s Progress and Poverty.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> <http://globalartscollective.org/China-land-tax-history.htm>

<sup>24</sup> Taxes were also progressive, meaning the families that owned larger, more fertile pieces of land would pay more than the families with uniform land allotments. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mencius>

<sup>25</sup> Avila, Charles. *Ownership: Early Christian Teachings*. Jointly printed by Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books and London: Sheed and Ward Limited 1983.

<sup>26</sup> George, Henry. Progress and Poverty. <https://www.henrygeorge.org/pcontents.htm>

<sup>27</sup> <https://theiu.org> The International Union for Land Value Taxation

<sup>28</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three\\_Principles\\_of\\_the\\_People](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Three_Principles_of_the_People) Sun Yat-Sen and Henry George

<sup>29</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection\\_\(Tolstoy\\_novel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Resurrection_(Tolstoy_novel))

<sup>30</sup> [https://www.cooperative-individualism.org/tolstoy-leo\\_on-the-land-policy-of-henry-george-1899.htm](https://www.cooperative-individualism.org/tolstoy-leo_on-the-land-policy-of-henry-george-1899.htm)

When the universal wisdom teachings of “sacred rule economics”<sup>31</sup> are not put in place, wealth and power inequality grows along with numerous other social problems. Violent revolution is often the result. Such was the case in France after King Louis XIV asked his court physicians, as they had knowledge of how the blood circulates through the body, to study how wealth was circulating throughout his kingdom. Later to be known as The Physiocrats, these founders of classical economics coined the phrase <sup>32</sup> *"l'impôt unique"* ("the single tax") and urged the French kings to levy taxes on land instead of labor.<sup>33</sup>

Mirabeau the Elder said that if enacted the *"l'impôt unique"* would be a "social advance equal to the inventions of writing and money." Alas, the French Kings paid no heed. The monarchy was formally abolished during the French Revolution (1789-99). Louis XVI died at the guillotine in 1793. His death marked the end of a thousand years of uninterrupted French monarchy.<sup>34</sup>

The insights of classical economics beginning with the Physiocrats continued forward through the next one hundred years when the work and writings of Henry George launched a major movement for land value-based tax reform with his book Progress and Poverty. George was one of the leading figures at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, being as well-known at the time as Mark Twain and Thomas Edison. His lectures drew great crowds throughout the US, Britain, Ireland and Australia. He was twice a candidate for mayor of New York City.<sup>35</sup>

But power elites who drew vast amounts of wealth from unearned income derived from land and natural resources saw this movement as a threat to their interests. They financed departments of economics at Columbia, Princeton, Cornell and the Chicago School. Hence the inability of the current reigning body of economic thought – neoliberal economics – to solve the problem of gross wealth inequality while still maintaining the benefits of individual freedom.<sup>36</sup> Neoliberal economics corrupted the field of economics as it denies that Land, the classical economics term for all the gifts of nature, is a specific factor of production and considers the Earth itself to be a mere subset of Capital. Classical economics has three factors – Land, Labor and Capital – while neoliberal economics has only two - Labor and Capital. The corruption of economics was the great intellectual crime of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>37</sup>

The principles and policies of land value tax are based on Natural Law. Just consider the territorial ways of nature whereby parent birds claim a space (location) in a tree (natural resource), to build a nest out of mud and twigs (natural resources) and once the baby birds are

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<sup>31</sup> <https://brucedetorres.substack.com/p/roundtable-16-sacred-rule-economics>

<sup>32</sup> [https://www.worldhistory.org/Louis\\_XVI\\_of\\_France/](https://www.worldhistory.org/Louis_XVI_of_France/)

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.landandliberty.net/the-physiocrats-and-the-meaning-of-their-single-tax/>

<sup>34</sup> [https://www.worldhistory.org/Louis\\_XVI\\_of\\_France/](https://www.worldhistory.org/Louis_XVI_of_France/)

<sup>35</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry\\_George](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_George)

<sup>36</sup> Universal Declaration of Individual and Commons Rights to Earth <https://theiu.org/international-declaration/>

<sup>37</sup> Gaffney, Mason. *The Corruption of Economics*. London: Shephard-Walwyn Ltd. 1994.

hatched, they labor on land by flying round and about to find worms and insects (nature) to feed and care for their baby birds until they are fully launched into the wide world.

The reason there is hunger and homelessness on the planet is because humanity is out of step with Natural Law. Let us consider the problem of exploitation of oil, minerals, gold, silver, diamonds and other gifts of nature. Millions of people have died in fights over land and natural resource control.<sup>38</sup> Oil and other natural resource extraction should be made strictly on the basis of (1) agreement of those living near the extraction sites; (2) on a not-for-profit basis yet with fair returns to labor and capital; (3) clearly detailed environmental rules and regulations and (4) full socialization of the resource rents (surplus value/unearned income). Natural resources and their rents should be carefully utilized and fairly distributed in order to uplift the standard of living of all. Careful stewardship of mineral resources would entail maximum efforts for recycling as well as using the resource rents to fund renewable energy and other needed public goods local to global.<sup>39</sup>

The Alaska Permanent Fund (APF) is an important model for establishing fair share rights to oil and other mineral resources.<sup>40</sup> The APF, with a current total fund value of over \$75 billion, collects substantial oil royalties based on the Alaska State Constitution<sup>41</sup> as the state retains the rights to all minerals and other natural resources.<sup>42</sup>

The APF Dividend Program<sup>43</sup> gives each person in Alaska an annual payment based on an equal share of the dividend amount. The 2022 Permanent Fund Dividend was \$3,284, the highest ever in the history of the Fund. For a family of four this would be over \$13,000.<sup>44</sup>

At the World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty I presented a paper titled “Socializing Land Rent while Untaxing Production.”<sup>45</sup> This paper begins with this succinct statement from the founding document for the UN Center for Human Settlements (Habitat): “The unearned increment resulting from the rise in land values resulting from change in use of land, from public investment or decision or due to the general growth of community must be subject to appropriate recapture by public bodies (the community).”

“Socializing Land Rent while Untaxing Production”<sup>46</sup> is a good summary of the key ideas and presents a clear way forward beyond right and left that harmonizes the needs of both the

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<sup>38</sup> <https://www.addictedtowar.com/about-what-ive-learned> and The recent Cree Massacre in Saskatchewan <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0gMGhrkoncA> and children’s animation <https://www.netflix.com/title/81354432>

<sup>39</sup> Hartzok, Alanna. *op.cit.* 109-133.

<sup>40</sup> <https://apfc.org>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.adn.com/opinions/2021/11/20/alaska-must-remain-the-sole-owner-of-its-natural-resources/>

<sup>42</sup> <https://www.adn.com/opinions/2021/11/20/alaska-must-remain-the-sole-owner-of-its-natural-resources/>

<sup>43</sup> <https://pfd.alaska.gov>

<sup>44</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265647236\\_Alaska%27s\\_Permanent\\_Fund\\_Dividend\\_Examining\\_its\\_Suitability\\_as\\_a\\_Model](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265647236_Alaska%27s_Permanent_Fund_Dividend_Examining_its_Suitability_as_a_Model)

<sup>45</sup> Hartzok, Alanna. *Socializing Land Rent while Untaxing Production*. Presented at the World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty, 2013. <https://theiu.org/socializing-land-rent-untaxing-production-2>

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.earthsharing.org.au/2013/04/hartzok-socialising-land-rent-and-untaxing-production/>

individual and society. The sufficiency of rent from unearned income for funding public goods is set forth in both theory and practice.

The 2024 Earth Day celebration held at the United Nations on the Spring Equinox will bring forth the key principles and policies of Earth Rights – both caring for and sharing Mother Earth. John McConnell was the founder of this original equinox Earth Day, first proclaimed by the City Council of San Francisco in 1970. McConnell was clear about principles for the global economy and for an economics of peace. When he spoke of justice he meant “economic justice” which he defined as “an equal sharing in all the worlds’ natural resources.” In his “Planetary Inheritance Declaration” he wrote:

Among the equal rights of men is the right to an equal share in nature’s bounty, a right of each man to his planetary inheritance – his share of land, water, minerals... No one can, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity or any other man’s posterity, of the right to his portion of Earth.<sup>47</sup>

We can address and remedy the systemic roots and intent of organized violence, of what my colleague and author Fred Harrison calls The Predator Culture. “Understanding the territorial basis of political power and wealth is the pre-requisite,” he says, “for making sense of issues as diverse as genocide, narco-gangsterism, terrorism and fascism. The struggle over land and resources is at the root of all of today’s global crises.”<sup>48</sup>

Together we CAN turn the world away from the forces of dispossession, depopulation, and destruction and to move into a consciousness of profound respect for the creative forces unfolding evolution, of harmoniously blending with the “autopoesis” – life’s capacity to be self-organizing. There is a universal wisdom that is so much deeper than any human science. This wisdom can help us put in place an economic system that will enable each and every member of our human family to secure basic material needs while protecting the earth’s ecosystems for future generations. Everyone can then enjoy the adventure of mental, creative and spiritual expansion during their brief sojourn on Mother Earth.

I ask that humanity join together with the clear intention of securing the birthright of all people to the Earth, our planet home, that we may ALL take responsibility for her care and protection. How we hold the earth is how we hold each other.

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<sup>47</sup> Weir, Robert M. *Peace, Justice, Care of Earth: The Vision of John McConnell, Founder of Earth Day*. Kalamazoo, Michigan: Press On Publishing, 2007. 198.

<sup>48</sup> Harrison, Fred. *The Predator Culture: The Systemic Roots and Intent of Organised Violence*. London: Shepherd-Walwyn, Ltd. 2010. (quote from back cover)



1-717-357-7617 (*Hartzok speaking at the UN about Financing Public Goods can be viewed [HERE](#) and the Declaration of Individual and Common Rights to Earth can be viewed [HERE](#)*)

-Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould, as the featured speakers of the [Roundtable Series](#)\* created the [Economics Justice World Peace Proposal](#) and its kick off campaign, “[AN OPEN LETTER TO KING CHARLES III.](#)” Email: gould.fitzgerald@verizon.net Phone: 781-729-7701

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\*Launched in 2021 by Kris Milligan, the monthly [Roundtable Series](#) was inspired by VALEDICTION: Three Nights of Desmond and VALEDICTION: Resurrection, a two volume memoir by co-authors Paul Fitzgerald and Elizabeth Gould

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