

HENRY
GEORGE

OCTOBER, 1973

NEWS

Semi-Centennial International Union Conference

Members of the International Union for Land-Value Taxation met September 8th through 14th for their 1973 International Conference at the Villiers Hotel, Douglas, Isle of Man. President Ashley Mitchell welcomed them the first day, and that evening gave his opening address. He noted the occasion marked the fiftieth anniversary of the Union's formation, that he was the last survivor of its founders, and that he had attended every conference it has held.

On Sunday, Fred Harrison spoke on "The History that Might Have Been," suggesting alternative measures be considered to deal with the land problem, based on varying policies used in different countries. Dr. Roy Douglas, talking on "Adam Smith and Free Trade," observed that Britain's return to free trade was prompted more by the climate of the times than by Smith's efforts.

Monday there was a discussion of a paper by Knud Tholstrup, on whether land speculation causes inflation or *vice versa*. Jack Irving, chairman of Mec Vanin, the Manx National Party, then traced the history of land ownership on the Island, underlining the growing concern about its land problem. Frank Othick reviewed the British land-tax system, and V.G. Saldji, treasurer of the Union, spoke on the basic principles of site value rating. In the evening, the mayor of Douglas gave a reception, which local councillors and members of the House of Keys (the Island's Parliament) also attended.

Hector Wilks opened Tuesday's agenda with a discussion of his experiences in making the second Whistable valuation, emphasizing the ease of site valuation as compared to valuing both land and buildings. Ted Gwartney delivered a paper in behalf of Malcolm McCarthy, reporting on the Port Credit experiment, and then his own case study in assessment reform. Joseph Zashin recounted his success in obtaining publicity concerning unfair assessments in his home area. A showing of the film "One Way to Better Cities," presented by V.G. Peterson of the Shalkenbach Foundation, closed the day.

A panel discussion on Wednesday covered two sub-

jects: "Site-Value Rating - Objections Examined" and "Wider Implications of Site-Value Rating." Harry Pollard delivered his paper on philosophical Georgism (see HGN, September, 1973), and George Glover presented an instructive illustrated talk on Hong Kong.

Thursday Gustav Bohnsack and Dr. Roy Douglas spoke on land reform in Germany and in the British Isles. Will Lissner, editor of *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, highlighted the effects of off-shore oil-drilling on land values. V.H. Blundell read a paper by Rolland O'Regan, president of the New Zealand Land Value Rating Association, urging that tax assessment be based on land's selling price, not its annual market value. After brief remarks by Bill Newcomb, Julian P. Hickok, Stephen Martin, Bill Farr, and Shirley-Anne Hardy, Perry Prentice wound up the afternoon with a talk on land speculation in Europe. In the evening, Dr. Geoffrey Esty discussed his recent visit to the Orient and Southeast Asia's land problem.

Harry Pollard enlivened Friday with a demonstration of one of his Mini-Courses. Robert Clancy reported the activities of the Henry George Institute, and summarized his paper, "The Good News and the Bad News." The sessions closed with John M. Kelly's talk on the moral and ethical basis for Georgist reforms, which was coupled with a reading by Richard Grinham from Frank McEachran's "Will Not Find Easy Acceptance." A general membership meeting followed. Officers and an executive committee were chosen, Ashley Mitchell being re-elected president with a standing ovation.

But all was not "strictly business." Ample time was provided for luncheons, teas, dinners, a tour of the Island, and an opportunity for the conferees to meet old friends and make new ones. A grand banquet Friday evening ended an enjoyable, successful and worthwhile Conference.

The editors are grateful to V.H. Blundell, secretary of the International Union, for his kindness in providing the details for the above report.

The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation

By V. G. Peterson

Robert Schalkenbach was born on June 15, 1856, and died November 13, 1924. He was self-educated, a wage-earner at the age of twelve. He learned the printing trade and rose to be the head of John C. Rankin Company, one of the largest printing establishments in New York. For many years, he also served as president of the Typothetae, an association of employing printers.

In 1884, after reading *Progress and Poverty*, Mr. Schalkenbach became convinced of the truth of the principles it advocated, and later enjoyed the friendship of its author, Henry George. So strong was his faith in these principles, that he bequeathed most of his estate for the forming of an organization to "teach, expound and propagate the ideas of Henry George as set forth in his book *Progress and Poverty*, and in his other writings." Accordingly, in June, 1925 the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation was chartered by the State of New York.

To carry out its mandate, a number of goals were outlined by the first board, but since George's books were passing out of print, the republication of these works was obviously a primary need. A new edition of *Progress and Poverty* was released in 1929, fifty years after publication of the first edition. Within six months, two thousand copies of the new volume had been sold. In 1930, 1931 and 1932 George's other books, *Protection or Free Trade*, *Social Problems*, *The Land Question*, *The Science of Political Economy*, and *A Perplexed Philosopher*, were launched with appropriate publicity.

"Significant Paragraphs from *Progress and Poverty*," compiled by Harry Gunnison Brown, with a foreword by John Dewey, and twenty-two thousand copies of George's lectures in pamphlet form, were printed and distributed. Subsequently other publications were issued, including books by Joseph S. Thompson, Max Hirsch, Gilbert M. Tucker, Leland B. Yeager, Oswald Garrison Villard, E.E. Bowen and George Rusby, Alfred Chandler, and Francis Neilson. Foundation representatives, including Oscar Geiger, who later founded the Henry George School of Social Science, lectured at universities throughout the country; and essay contests on pertinent subjects, for college and high school students, were announced and prizes awarded.

At the suggestion of Will Lissner, who later became its editor, the Foundation in 1941 started The

American Journal of Economics and Sociology, a quarterly designed to encourage study and writing on the land question.

By 1945, the Foundation had distributed 150,000 copies of *Progress and Poverty*, new plates were needed, and a new edition was made ready. This was the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary Edition, in a handsome format designed by Wallace Kibbee, which was released in 1954.

In August 1960, Perry Prentice, editor and publisher of *House & Home*, devoted a special issue of the magazine to land, which dramatically illustrated the evils of land speculation and the advantages of taxing land more heavily. Its influence was widespread, and Mr. Prentice was enlisted to develop an on-going program. One of his projects was "One Way to Better Cities," a motion picture written by Stowe Phelps, which shows the causes of urban decay and explains how property tax reform could help prevent it. An immediate success, the film received several motion picture festival awards, and has been widely exhibited to audiences and on television.

A series of round table discussions on urban problems, co-sponsored by the Foundation and organized by Mr. Prentice, have been attended by representatives of some of the nation's leading civic organizations, as well as numerous educators. Under the Foundation's auspices, Weld S. Carter has toured widely among colleges and universities, assisting teachers in their presentation of Georgist principles. The Committee on Taxation, Resources and Economic Development (TRED), composed mostly of economists supporting land value taxation, was organized in 1961 with Prof. Arthur J. Becker as chairman, to encourage the study of this principle by others in the academic community. Space does not permit mention of the voluminous correspondence dealt with by the Foundation, or of the many other activities it carries on in an endeavor to keep faith with the noble purposes of Robert Schalkenbach.

V.G. Peterson ("Vie" to her countless friends) is executive secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, whose other officers are P.I. Prentice, president; Lancaster M. Greene, vice-president; Thomas A. Larkin, treasurer, and Frances Soriero, assistant treasurer.

Fall Semester Starts

As scheduled, fall classes began at the New York School during the week of October 1. Stanley Rubenstein, acting director, described the first week's enrollment as "gratifying." This was an understatement, as the response in fact exceeded expectations. Of seven classes in *Fundamental Economics*, three had to be moved into the auditorium to accommodate the large turnout. The *Seminar in Political Economy* was so heavily attended, it was necessary to divide it into two well-filled classes. The courses in *Money and Banking* and *History of Economic Thought* also had excellent enrollments.

In addition to the regular classes at the School, In-Service courses for City teachers, earning so-called alertness credit, are being given under the School's aegis with the approval of the Board of Education. A special High School Program is also in progress. This too is recognized by the Board of Education, which grants attending students appropriate high school credit for completion of the course.

High School Workshop Planned

The New York City Council on Economic Education has announced a one-day urban workshop for high school students, to discuss and analyze the major problems of New York City. The objective is to develop solutions which will benefit the people of New York and other cities. The workshop will take place on December 5, 1973, at the Henry George School of Social Science, co-sponsor of the event. Participation includes a luncheon for students and faculty advisors, at which the featured speaker will be Samuel M. Ehrenhalt, Deputy Regional Director of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, his topic being "Economic Problems of New York City." Awards will be given to the individuals who best represent their groups.

Although attendance at the workshop was expressly limited to fifty, about seventy applications were received within two weeks following the Council's announcement. Efforts will be made to accommodate as many of the overflow as possible.

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Our Readers Write

The deletion of several words from my letter (HGN, June, 1973) has me saying the contrary of what I wanted to emphasize. The second sentence, fourth paragraph, should have read: "So the School should forget about Henry George the *economist* and concentrate on the *social reformer*."

— F A F
Boulogne, France

I recently acquired a book called *Ten Blind Leaders of the Blind*, by Arthur M. Lewis, published in 1910 by Charles H. Kerr & Co. In it the author mentions "economists such as Mill the elder, Cherbullez, Hilditch and others [who] have demanded that rent be turned over to the state to the end of removing taxation." These are new names to me, and I wonder why I never heard of these precursors of George.

— Vic Wasicki
St. Louis, Missouri

A commentator on Station KOOL-TV broadcast a letter I had sent about a news report that Navajos anticipated \$16,713,000 over the next year in oil, gas, and mining royalties. The letter noted that none of this income is from any labor on the tribe's part, but is a tribute from others for permission to work on land, which is nature's gift to us all. My closing point was: "These moneys belong in the public till. Let's put them there and thus make other taxes unnecessary."

— Robert Sage
Sun City, Arizona

Ambassador Amuzegar of Iran told the New York Society of Security Analysts that 175 years ago a "security analyst" named David Ricardo said: "It is not the rent of land that determines the price of corn. It is the price of corn that determines the rent of land." The ambassador pointed out that the cost of land at the margin of production determines how much more productive land may claim, and that since Iran's oil lands are productively far above marginal land, the difference could be expected as rent. The law of rent has not changed since Ricardo, and will not change in the centuries ahead.

— Lancaster M. Greene
New York, N.Y.

Gaston Haxo: Sixty Years a Georgist

It would take many, many pages to print a biography, or even a proper profile, of Gaston Haxo. In fact, a comprehensive account of his activities, his endeavors, and his accomplishments is disseminating and fostering the philosophy of Henry George would "fill a book." So, in the limited space available, dates and details must give way, for the most part, to a regrettably brief statement of appreciation and tribute to this dedicated and devoted Georgist.

Gaston Haxo, then a recent immigrant from France, first became acquainted with George's ideas in 1912, when a street-corner political rally attracted his attention. At the start he was puzzled, but soon was intrigued, by the novel views of the speaker who, he recalls, was explaining the true source of wages — and why they declined. He spent five cents for a Georgist pamphlet, spent much of the night reading it, and (to quote him), "That did it; I had discovered a new world."

Within a few days, Gaston joined the Land Value Tax Party, and shortly thereafter became a member of the Manhattan Single Tax Club. Some weeks later, when the club honored Francis Neilson, at the time a member of Britain's Parliament, at a banquet in a large hall crowded with enthusiastic guests, he enjoyed his "biggest thrill." That night, truly, a Georgist was born.

Throughout the ensuing sixty years, Gaston Haxo not only has maintained his fervent interest in Georgism, but has energetically worked to promulgate George's principles and to further their adoption. One sad circumstance did interrupt his Georgist activities,

a more urgent personal need, to care for his dear wife during her illness of several years; Gaston watched over her, to the exclusion of almost all else, until her untimely death. Gaston then turned again to his destined labors in the Georgist movement.

Though he heartily endorses the value of education in promoting Georgist ideas and proposals, Gaston is an avowed and outspoken advocate of politics as a means toward the desired end. "Only through political action," he has said, "can the principles of Henry George ever be enacted into law, and it will never be too soon to begin." Six decades ago, during the Wilson-Taft-Teddy Roosevelt presidential campaign, he sought write-in votes for the candidate of the Land Value Tax Party. Today, approaching his eighty-sixth birthday, he still gives generously of his time, his energy, and his finances to aid the cause he so devoutly believes in. In between, he has consistently supported every Georgist organization and activity that has come to his attention.

In recent years, Gaston Haxo has lectured all over the United States and in Canada. He directs the Henry George Society, headquartered in St. Petersburg, Florida, whose aim is to organize politically to "demand an end to the undemocratic land system which causes most of our social and economic ills." He continues to write extensively, and is completing a new pamphlet, "America at the Crossroads," shortly to be published. His dedication and efforts must be an inspiration to believers in George's ideals, who should be grateful to him for it.

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