

every part of the world and with the most diverse outlook — for instance, from Helen Keller, from Dorothy Thompson, the American authoress, and from Count Leo Tolstoy. One that has for me a particular appeal was paid by the Austrian journalist, Bruno Heilig, who suffered torment in the Nazi concentration camp at Buchenwald. Relating how after his escape to Britain he read *Progress and Poverty*, he says that it was with growing excitement that he read the chapter on How Modern Civilisation May Decline. "It was as if history had been written in advance, the thought impressing me that simply by altering the tense of verbs from the future to the past, one could turn the form of prophecy into a narrative of fact . . . There is hardly a page or paragraph which does not apply almost literally to the happenings in Germany itself."

When giving expression to his hopes for world peace, Henry George puts first, as always, the necessity of ensuring justice. He rediscovers for himself the truth that whatever blessings of peace and prosperity mankind desires,

the first essential is the seeking after righteousness. Towards the end of *Progress and Poverty* he says:

"I have in this inquiry followed the course of my own thought. When, in mind, I set out on it, I had no theory to support, no conclusions to prove. Only, when I realised the squalid misery of a great city, it appalled and tormented me, and would not let me rest for thinking of what caused it and how it could be cured. But out of this inquiry has come something I did not think to find, and a faith that was dead revives."

I, too, have found something of which I had not previously thought. My link with the philosophy of Henry George has brought me the valued friendship of a great number of people here and in many lands across the sea. The long picture gallery of memory contains the portraits of many who have passed from the stage, but there are many whom to meet is great happiness, and new friends both young and old are continually added to the number.

To have known and to know them is a joyous privilege.

## The Movement In France

By A. DAUDE-BANCEL, Editor of *Terre et Liberté*

THE Georgeist idea was promoted in France at the end of the nineteenth century by Albert-Maximilian Toubeau, the father of our friend Max Toubeau, and by Eugene Simon, former French ambassador in China, who had known and valued (in this latter country) the rent tax practised for many centuries in old China. Charles Garnier, Chief Inspector of Schools was also of their number. Having learned of the existence of Henry George, they decided to organise in Paris 1889, on the occasion of the centenary of the French Revolution, an International Congress of Agrarian and Social Reform, which was presided over by Henry George. This Congress brought together the majority of the militants of the Socialist Party who, however, tended rather towards nationalisation of the land than towards taxation of its value, while at the same time denouncing with George the evils of ground rent and unearned increments from urban and rural land. This tendency was emphasised by Leon Walras, the celebrated lecturer from the School at Lausanne, in his authoritative "Studies in Social Economy", 1896. Nevertheless, until the years which followed the war of 1914-1918 the different, successive directors of the *Socialist Revue* showed great sympathy towards Georgeism.

About 1920 the Georgeist theses were taken up in France by a rich American industrialist, Fels, who founded the *Single Tax Review* edited by an ardent supporter, Georges Darien. Unfortunately Fels and Darien died soon after, and the *Review* with them.

### *Sam Meyer and the Georgeist Movement*

Sam Meyer was a very clear-sighted man and attracted towards economic and social questions. He knew very well the works of my master and friend, Charles Gide.

It was probably from reading the authoritative "History of Economic Doctrines" (of the Professors of Law, Charles Gide and Charles Rist) that he was put on the track of Georgeism, of which he was in Belgium, in France and abroad, one of the most ardent and well-informed champions. He founded the Georgeist revue *La Terre* ("The Land") at Brussels in 1924 and had translated by R. L. Lemonnier, and published at Brussels and Paris, in 1925, "Progress and Poverty", the best known of the works of Henry George. He set up at Brussels in 1924 and at Paris in 1925 the Belgian and French sections of the Georgeist movement linked to the International Georgeist Movement with its headquarters in London and he became one of the vice-presidents.

In 1925, Sam Meyer came to live in Suresnes, in the suburbs of Paris, where he built himself a fine house. This move enabled him to enter into direct contact with the Parisian economists, and notably with the world-renowned Charles Gide, then professor at the College of France. In February 1925 Albert Cauwell, chief editor of *La Terre* died at Brussels. Sam Meyer therefore asked Charles Gide who, in France, could replace his departed colleague. After thinking for a short while Charles Gide named me, advising Meyer to talk over this proposition with me, although I was rather a Walrasian (disciple of Leon Walras, an advocate of land nationalisation) than a Georgeist (believer in taxation of land values in country and town); but, he added: "You will be able to understand one another."

### *From 'The Land' to 'Land and Liberty'*

Sam Meyer then came to me and told me of my nomination and declared, "You will be free to edit the publication

as you please; I have confidence in your good sense." And he added, "If Governments were wise, in a progressive society, as Leon Walras had suggested, the redemption of the land by the State would certainly be possible; but since politicians are not wise—for they overwhelm men with unjust taxes in order to augment unceasing civil and military expenditure—nationalisation is impracticable. It is preferable to resort to the Georgeist tax on site values with a view to replacing progressively all the other taxes which overburden construction, production, distribution and consumption. The land being rented to those using it, this liberating tax would then be finally a rent-tax according to the definition of Albert-Maximilian Toubeau."

The argument was valid and I prepared myself with a view to a collaboration which was to be pursued without interruption from 1925-1940. We began by drawing up a programme which resembled that adopted in 1902 at Koge by the Danish small-holders.

Sam was a charming man, a perfect optimist, never suspecting evil. When, during the occupation, the sub-prefect of Villeneuve-sur-Lot, where he managed the business of one of his friends who had been called up, offered to facilitate his escape to Spain (for he had become suspect to the German authorities for his resistance activities) Sam replied "I will not go. I have never done evil to anyone." He paid with his life for he was arrested and died in the gas-chamber in Germany in 1945, aged 58, for his excessive confidence in the goodness of men.

He thought that the fact that his *Revue* would be published in Paris and managed by the Secretary General of the National Federation of the Consumer Co-operatives, with an honorary president as famous as Charles Gide, would make Georgeism rapidly accepted by people in France and Belgium. Although I am not a pessimist like Charles Gide, I put the problem to him in its true light: "The Frenchman, considered wrongly as a revolutionary and an innovator, is the most conservative being that one could imagine. He is also the most light-hearted of men and above all is not intellectually single-minded when he is a Parisian. In consequence one must not delude oneself. It is necessary to see the problem such as it crops up in reality: a very great deal of time will be necessary to conquer the Frenchman's hatred of novelty."

It was understood that we would create a movement rather than a political party and that we would address ourselves to the intellectuals rather than to the mass, without however neglecting those "lucky accidents" which would fall in our way, even if they presented themselves in the guise, rather rare, of intelligent and understanding politicians.

At this time I was chief editor of "Co-operative Correspondence" which was transformed into "Correspondence Co-operative and Social" by the insertion of Georgeist articles. Several years afterwards, at the death of Yves Guyot in 1928 I was asked by the late Senator James Hennessey, and by the sympathetic Max Sorel, president and general secretary of the Free Trade league, to edit this League's bulletin. By agreement between them and

Sam Meyer, *La Terre* became *Terre et Liberté* (Land and Liberty) by the insertion of free trade theses, which were dear also to the International Georgeists.

#### *Meetings and stumbling blocks*

We found a sympathetic welcome—if not a formal joining of the group—in the persons of several professors of the faculty of law and letters, at the Sorbonne and the College of France, and of economists, attracted above all by the personalities of Charles Gide and Sam Meyer. The majority of these personalities brought a more or less regular collaboration to *La Terre* at first and afterwards to *Terre et Liberté*. We had less success with French politicians who are not acquainted with the Georgeist themes and do not embark voluntarily upon enterprises which, far from bringing them votes, risk losing them. The Socialist party should have marched in step with us, for the militants of the heroic period had taken part in the International Congress in 1889.

Since this time, for most Socialists elected deputies the memory of Georgeism seems to have retreated to the background. They do not attach, on the whole, much importance to Co-operation or to Georgeism. Nevertheless, Sam Meyer was able to interest the late Andre Morizel and Henri Sellier, Mayors of Boulogne-s/Seine and of Suresnes, General Councillors and Senators of the Seine and certain of their colleagues of the General Council of the Seine who sanctioned, without success, a tax of 1 per cent on the site value in favour of the municipalities and departments of the Seine, to replace all the other local taxes. The optional 1 per cent tax proposed for the same purpose by Mr. Vincent Auriol, Minister of Finance in 1936 (and former President of the Republic) similarly came to nought.

We have since had more support amongst the co-operators and co-operatives. It was at the restaurant of the Co-operative Union of Paris in the Boulevard du Temple, that the inaugural banquet of the French Georgeist movement took place in 1926.

#### *Towards the Future*

Distant though our goal appeared, Sam Meyer and his colleagues judged it necessary to pursue our propaganda in favour of the liberating tax. Accordingly we agreed to publish in *Terre et Liberté* concrete examples of Georgeist achievements in the world in order to open the eyes of the ignorant and the haters of change. It is this which we did up to the war 1939-1945, which deprived us of the precious company of our lamented friend. Faithful to the memory of Charles Gide and of Sam Meyer, according to our own feeble resources, we have been working constantly since the liberation, in favour of our theses of fiscal justice and social emancipation.

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