

Summer 1976

## Trustees and officers elected

At a regular meeting of the board of trustees last April, several changes of officers were voted. Glenn E. Weeks was elected president; R. Dean Meridith, vice-president; Thomas A. Larkin, treasurer; William P. Davidson, secretary. Subsequent trustee action elected R. Dean Meridith a member of the School and, in turn, the members appointed the following new trustees: Jerome S. Medowar, Paul S. Nix, Jr., George L. Collins, Oscar B. Johannsen. David C. Lincoln has resigned from membership and the board of trustees. The board of Trustees currently consists of the following fourteen members,

with one vacancy: George L. Collins, William P. Davidson, Lancaster M. Greene, Edward C. Harwood, Oscar B. Johannsen, Thomas A. Larkin, Jerome S. Medowar, R. Dean Meridith, Paul S. Nix, Jr., William S. O'Connor, Agnes DeMille Prude, Leonard T. Recker, Glenn E. Weeks, and Arnold A. Weinstein. The Board of Members currently consists of the following eight members, with one vacancy: William P. Davidson, Lancaster M. Greene, Edward C. Harwood, R. Dean Meridith, William S. O'Connor, Agnes DeMille Prude, Leonard T. Recker, and Arnold A. Weinstein.

## Center continues to get publicity

The Center for Local Tax Research, the School's research arm, continued to disseminate information on effective property tax rates in the New York metropolitan area with a widely-publicized report on New York City released by Henry J. Stern, Councilman-at-large for Manhattan.

Citing the Center's data, based on 23,219 sales in the past year, the city legislator's report showed rates ranging from a high of more than \$12 per hundred of real value on commercial property in Manhattan to a low of \$1.15 per hundred on vacant land in Staten Island.

Recently, the Center's director, Philip Finkelstein appeared on the weekly Cable TV program, "Manhattan at large," conducted by Stern and his fellow councilman, Robert F. Wagner, Jr. After a discussion of the City's problems, many telephone inquiries from the listening audience were answered on the air by Finkelstein and the councilmen. Finkelstein also testified at a City Council hearing on taxation.

A task force on payments in lieu of taxes, set up by Mayor Gibson of Newark, has asked the Center to join its panel of experts on proposed tax reforms in the largest city of New Jersey.

Also in New Jersey, a complete analysis of the full value of land in Bergen County is being performed by

the Center, based on data compiled by Leon Saddler, a Bergen resident and graduate researcher.

Further west, in Wayne Township, Passaic County, the Center is studying the relation of assessments and other factors to actual and potential land use in a developing area.

Meanwhile, the Center continues its update on metropolitan area effective rates, with new data on New York and New Jersey. A special analysis of school district finance is also being prepared while testimony is heard in a major lawsuit on that subject. Another lawsuit in Nassau County resulted in a decision calling for full value assessments there, prompting a meeting of the Center with the County Assessor and a proposal for a special demonstration project for Long Island.

During a conference of the National Tax Association in Washington, the Director spoke at a meeting of the League for Urban Land Conservation, the group headed by Walter Rybeck seeking land value taxation in the capital district. Local finance and urban officials from many states expressed interest in the work of the Center for Local Tax Research, as it gains national attention.

## Conference

The Henry George School Conference 1976 was held in San Francisco on Friday and Saturday, July 2 and 3. A Friday morning meeting was devoted to the perennial question, "What Do We Teach?" The afternoon was devoted to discussion of the School's research activities (see story at left). The Saturday morning session dealt with a review of the organizational structure of the various organizations devoted to the teachings of George's concepts. In the evening, a banquet held, in conjunction with LEAF (Land, Equality and Freedom), heard an address by Ted Gwartney, Director of Assessments in Vancouver, British Columbia. Records of the working sessions are being transcribed and a more detailed report of the proceedings is slated for a subsequent issue of the NEWS.

*The following is a condensation of Mr. Finkelstein's remarks at the School's Convention in San Francisco, July 1976.*

HABITAT, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Vancouver resolved that land, unlike any other factor of production, should belong to all mankind, and may not be acquired and privately owned.

In calling for the socialization of land values, HABITAT struck not so much new ground as an echo of a truth once universally held: that the land, no less than the air above us and the sea around us, the sun and moon and stars that guide us, is free not subject to individual ownership, but merely entrusted to our care for as long as we are on earth.

Someplace all of us instinctively  
(continued on last page)

# HENRY WHO? — the poverty of progress

by R. Dean Meridith

My initial thoughts were to deal with the question, "Is there life after ten lessons of P & P?"; and, then they shifted to questions of communications and identity.

I've asked a number of people if they know who Henry George was, and the answer which always comes to mind, comes from a woman who said, "No; but I once knew a George Henry!"

In just a few months, Jimmy who? has partially cleared up his identity problem, and has propelled himself into a candidate for the presidency of the United States.

After forty-four years (or, ninety-seven years, if you like) it is still, "Henry who?"; and, if people know of Henry George at all, it's, "Oh yeh, he was the single-taxer!"

We have no self-proclaimed Georgist as a candidate for the presidency; we have few, if any, self-proclaimed Georgists in the Congress or Senate or, other higher positions in government; we have few, if any, self-proclaimed Georgists in top positions of state, county, city and local government; we have no representative to the United Nations; we've been no match for the Keynesian and Marxist educators and philosophers; we have few self-proclaimed Georgists in our youngest generation, working with their peers or, asking for social change from old generations in power; we are virtually unknown to all forms of the communication media; and, we have failed to develop a cadre of leadership and organizations with nation-wide credibility and impact.

Why have the ideas of Henry George had so little influence? Frank Goble, President, Thomas Jefferson Research Center, suggests at least two reasons: a) Georgists have not fully understood his ideas, and b) they have not sufficiently understood the process required to translate ideas into action.

Goble contends, rightfully so, that George was not merely an economist, but also a social philosopher; and, that to understand his ideas about economics, that it is essential to understand his underlying philosophical premise . . . Natural law.

Henry George did not spend time explaining or defending the concept of Natural Law, because the premise had been advanced by some of the greatest minds in history, and was the basis for our Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

At the turn of the century, the scientific method gradually replaced

natural law; and, Darwinian Materialism has prevailed, as the basis for Marxism, Fabian Socialism, Freudianism and, the ever-present behaviorism.

"The problem for Georgists", says Goble, "is not merely to convince people of the merits of land-value taxation. The problem is much greater than this. It is to convince people that the abandonment of natural law in our institutions of higher education has been an incredible blunder. And, Goble quotes Walter Lippmann: "The prevailing education is destined, if it continues, to destroy Western civilization and is, in fact, destroying it."

The poverty of our progress is quite evident. There are Georgists who can ask (and have), "How can you talk of our progress, or be critical of our progress? You've been a Georgist for such a short time." Given the present state of the Georgist movement (if it can truly be called a movement), if I had devoted fifteen or twenty or, amazingly enough, thirty years of my life to the movement, I think I would be enormously embarrassed and dissatisfied with our progress.

The devotion and intelligence and efforts of so many, over a number of years, is immeasurable; but, there is no way we can rationalize-away the fact that we have little to show, for an expenditure of millions of dollars.

Where have all that devotion and energy and money gone? I submit that it has gone "to fight the enemy"; and, as Pogo said, "The enemy may be us!"

The American people are crying out for a return to our origins, and a way to move our society to the fulfillment of lives, with liberty with justice and, the pursuit of happiness.

The American people are no longer sure who they are, or whether they will have a future, because we don't know where we are, where we're tending and, thus, what it is that must be done, and how best to do it.

The American people are not certain that they can trust themselves, and the level of distrust of business and government has probably never been higher. And, it isn't apparent from either the private or the public sectors that either is guided by sufficiently noble purposes to merit our faith and trust.

We have tremendous problems within the Georgist movement; and yet, we have tremendous opportunities in meeting the needs of the larger society . . . in helping America find herself again. I

agree with Peter Drucker when he said, "Results are obtained by exploiting opportunities, not by solving problems!" We're going to have to become social-change entrepreneurs, and the needs of the larger society, and the risks necessary to satisfy those needs should shape who we are, what it is we must do and, how best to do it.

We have been too timid about advocating George's underlying philosophical premise and, worse still, we've tried to twist and contort George into the prevailing behaviorist molds, in the name of relevancy.

We haven't been relevant and convincing to the American people because we've cut the heart out of our world view, and we have tried to play this very serious game of life by someone else's rules. We've tried to put everything in its place, scientifically, without insisting upon the natural order of things. Too bad. It doesn't fit.

Let me conclude with a few thoughts from John Gardner, Common Cause:

"At the root of many, perhaps most, of the problems facing our social order is the shattered relationship between the individual and society.

Significant social change is accomplished by people with vision in their heads, and a monkey wrench in their hands.

People who control the course of events leave nothing to the technicians.

Ideals without a program are fantasy. And, a program without organization is a hoax.

We do not engage in educational campaigns for their own sake, nor research for its own sake; nor, do we make pronouncements or engage in debate on any issue unless we intend to fight that issue through to a conclusion.

Citizen action must be a full-time, continued presence. Effective communication is the most powerful single weapon in the public interest lobby.

Form alliances. Select a limited number of targets, and hit 'em hard.

Significant change depends on reaching the middle range of opinion. Citizen's groups should treat their membership as a cadre, not as a bloc; and, they should not have vast numbers, but active members."

I wish that I could say that our greatest communications problem was merely to make the difference between Henry Carter and Jimmy George per-

fectly clear to the American people. "Our work," as Henry George said in *The Standard*, "is not so much to educate men as to uneducate them, to

bring them back to natural perceptions and first principles."

## Time for action

by Glenn E. Weeks

Several months after the Henry George School of Social Science was founded in January 1932, a fund appeal was to read: "In the lecture field and elsewhere the fiscal aspects of the Single Tax have heretofore been largely emphasized; and while this method has its advantages, the prevailing chaos in state and industry, and the befuddlement in the minds of the highly placed, demand a more fundamental treatment of Henry George's proposals — a treatment that will meet all the current fallacious theories; a treatment that will oppose reaction of every kind; a treatment that will prove that Henry George's teachings point the only way out of our age-old and now threatening economic difficulties."

Recently submitted to the New York Henry George School's board of trustees for 1976-77 fiscal year funding consideration were various Georgist activity-related proposals totalling an aggregate of \$254,615.00

One cannot examine these requests without reflecting on our past progress and to assess our relative position in a substantially more complex economy and a society no less imperilled by adversary and social quandary than previously. As inheritors of the early Henry George School mandate tradition and founding effort, now, forty-four years later, we find that our efforts do not entirely fulfill our common expectation of widespread persuasive articulation of the alternative Georgist paradigm, although some progress can be noted. The question of continued programming activity based on past efforts in progress, therefore, again confronts us.

Some observations about our past and continuing efforts are appropriate. They are personal. Does our relatively slow progress result from a lack of scholastic achievement and/or effort to express our point of view? The evidence would indicate otherwise. Since this

past April, copies of Georgist materials that have come to my attention comprise a file approximately 1-1/2 feet deep. As I look through these papers, I am impressed, not with a paucity of effort and lack of responsible articulation on the part of Georgists, but with the plentitude of it. There is a veritable plethora of information being written. And yet the general public seems no better informed of Georgist economic and ethical relationships and is even less persuaded.

May I suggest some probable causes? First, the generous volumes of Georgist information are being generated without the discipline of a framework of specifically selected goals on the part of a "Georgist movement." Secondly, performance criteria for funded efforts has been objectively vague, the necessary result of unprioritized goals. The resultant dispersion of poignancy for lack of concentration is analagous to a diffused light source that defies identification and blends without distinction into competing illumination or lack of it, whereas if light source energies are concentrated, the source becomes clearly identified and potentially powerful. Consider the laser beam. Briefly, the Georgist movement has a goal prioritizing problem. Fortunately, this is a deficiency that can be overcome by utilizing available management techniques.

What must be done?

Before distinctly defined incremental achievement goals can be established for any endeavor, a guiding consensus of directional philosophy must be established. Philosophic statement that touches the meaning of man's existence is the heart of Georgist concern. Is it inappropriate, therefore, to state this worldview summation succinctly and objectively? I think not. It is imperative that we do so publicly and with determination. This is the cohesive bond that can bring focus to the pre-

eminence of the Georgist paradigm.

As an action agenda, I will propose to our Board of Trustees the following program:

- (1) The convening of a representative group of responsible Georgists to form a consensus statement of the Georgist worldview and to articulate the Georgist moral purpose. A short publishable monograph is the goal.
- (2) Expansion of the *Henry George News* to be more inclusive of diverse Georgist expression and to serve as a clearinghouse vehicle for relevant Georgist activity information.
- (3) The development of 'goal focus,' a prioritization of Georgist program activity through a five-year plan oriented to the "Management by Objective" approach.
- (4) The subsequent creation, through a selected group of qualified Georgists, of text material that can serve as a comprehensive analysis of the Georgist paradigm in the modern context of expression. The paradigm standardization is the goal.
- (5) The development of media consciousness and area image creation tied to area specific research and standardized paradigm expression for selected audiences. Abstraction levels are to be predetermined.
- (6) Selective funding and objective performance evaluation to actualize the prioritized program. Specific time frame allocations are necessary.

Purposeful articulation of Georgist moral concern is particularly timely in the formation of a distinct identity profile. In the current synthesis of popular issues, strong focus on selected achievement goals will enable Georgists to prioritize programming in a more meaningful manner. A distinct identity profile and selected action goals will go far in moving the Georgist alternative to social injustice back into the mainstream of public consideration.



## Theater pays tribute to de Mille

Agnes de Mille, granddaughter of Henry George and a trustee of the School, was honored by the American Ballet Theater at Lincoln Center early in July. "The tribute," Joseph Gale wrote in the program notes, "is as much an obeisance to de Mille's gallantry and courage as to her imprimatur on dance and long association with American Ballet Theater."

He was referring, of course, to Miss de Mille's remarkable recovery from a serious cerebral accident suffered in May 1975 shortly before a scheduled performance of her Heritage Dance Theater at Hunter College in New York.

Her association with American Ballet Theater goes back to its inception some

35 years ago. In that period she choreographed, among other ballets, "Three Virgins and a Devil," "Rodeo," and the memorable "Fall River Legend." In addition to the award-winning "Oklahoma," she did such Broadway hits as "Brigadoon," "Paint Your Wagon" and "Carousel."

These feats have been accomplished in what she calls an "intrinsically American" fashion. Her strength, she says, is not in the lyrical development of movement so much as in her ability to tell a story through her choreography.

Agnes de Mille is a charter member of the National Council of the Arts, the advisory board for the National Endowment for the Arts, and is an ardent

advocate of Federal tax dollar subsidies for the arts. "Most of the money is being thrown away," is her critical comment on the way such subsidies are being handled. "It's being used for political purposes. They're spreading it around geographically, like Kiwanis, because every state has its senators and congressmen," she said.

"Our intent in the beginning was to help the highest and the best," she continued, "The whole tendency today is to help the unknowns and the unproven, but all that does is to encourage mediocrity. And a mediocre ballet company is worse than no ballet company."

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respond to this fundamental belief about the land. Some people, like the North American Indian, and some tribes in Africa, actively pursue their belief, formerly to their detriment, perhaps now, to their honor. The Indian did not barter Manhattan for the equivalent of twenty-four dollars anymore than he sold out his happy western hunting grounds, or the African traded on his jungles and forests. The very concept of ownership was foreign to people for whom the land and everything on it belongs to all. The Indian and African did not understand that ownership means more than one's own use, but actually means the denial of use to everyone and everything else; a doctrine of exclusivity of more recent and perhaps, dubious parentage.

A clue to the origin of the western notion of land ownership may be

discerned in the very term *real property*. Despite the popular acceptance of the terms as somehow distinguishing types of property on the basis of land and things attached to it like houses as more rooted in reality, reality has nothing to do with the case. The word *real* is really the Spanish *re-al*, the Latin form of royal, meaning that which belongs to the king. Kings, after all, asserted their divine rights not to inspire the worship of their subjects, but to claim a superior right to a portion of the earth the deity had presumably created for all man. Royalty or rather realty, may well be the original crime of expropriation.

The modern State, as successor to the kingdoms, may forego its claims to divine origin, but not its interest in real property. The right of eminent domain — how medieval the very term — permits the State to assert a superior

public interest in any part of the land. The power to tax, to zone, and to regulate use, are all evidence of the superior and more fundamental interest of the State in land. Even the Bill of Rights, which expands constitutional guarantees to individual Americans, provides only "just compensation" for the taking of real property, but cannot stand in the way of the taking itself.

Making the distinction between land and improvements is a vital first step in any movement to liberate the land. Understanding the role of land, its ownership and use in any situation, comes next. And moving towards full access of all people to land will be the way both the developing world and the developed world can work together in a single planet.

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