

THE HENRY GEORGE MOVEMENT IN FRANCE

Cuttings received from French and Swiss newspapers and reviews reflect the continued diligence of our protagonists in France. The *Co-operateur Suisse* contained an article by Daudé Bancel on taxation together with an adaptation by G. Lunel of an account by J. L. Monroe of the effects of land value taxation in New Westminster, Canada. In *Languedoc*, a weekly review published in Narbonne, Daudé Bancel in "An Oriental Tale" explains land value taxation by means of an allegory. The same journal reproduced an abstract from Upton Sinclair's "Life of Henry Ford," revealing how the high wages paid to Ford's employees in his industrial settlement at Highland Park were absorbed by the landowners. A fortnight later there followed an article on "The Abolition of Slavery," by Graques. The free thinkers' monthly, *L'idée Libre*, Paris, published an article on "The Georgeist Movement," by Daudé Bancel. In *Juénée Vinicole*, Montpellier, the indefatigable Daudé Bancel published a long article, "What is Georgeism." Again in *Languedoc*, on the subject of Georgeism and the Co-operative Movement he examined the basis of social justice. During the same period Pavlos Giannelias contributed a long article to the *Révue Socialiste* giving details of the development of land value taxation in Denmark since the agitation arising from the famous Køge resolution of smallholders in 1902 led to the first general land valuation of 1916 and subsequent legislation. Many statistics were applied to show the beneficial effects on agriculture, building, industrial development and the standard of living.

In addition to articles in the general press the quarterly *Terre et Liberté* continues to circulate informing material in France and among French readers abroad. The January/March issue printed the text of the paper (*France faced with the Need for Radical Fiscal Reform*) read by Max Toubeau at a session of the International Conference at Odense, when Mr. Ole Wang presided. Articles by Jean Laurens, Daudé Bancel, Miss Peterson, Pavlos Giannelias and H. L. Follin deal with the fiscal injustice of the French Budget, the land revenue of farm land reclaimed from the Zuyder Zee, the cost of living in France, the Schalkenbach Foundation of New York, the land value of New York and the impact of customs restrictions on national antagonism.

The July/September number gave a large proportion of its space to the Annual General Meeting of the Ligue pour le Réforme foncière, fiscale et le Libre Echange. Other pages had articles on indirect taxation, farming subsidies, Danish agriculture and rising land values in U.S.A. There were also reviews of the French press and notices of recently published books on social questions.

Annual General Meeting in Paris

Although since the war and enemy occupation the Georgeist movement in France has not been able to attain more than modest proportions the Annual General Meeting of *La Ligue pour la Réforme foncière, fiscale et le Libre Echange* (League for Land and Fiscal Reform and Free Trade) shows encouraging signs of progress. Seven times as many were present at this meeting than on the last occasion, and among them was a considerable proportion of young people. The journal *Terre et Liberté* since its resurgence in May, 1947, as a cyclostyled sheet with 150 circulation has now become a well-printed quarterly of 8 pages with a circulation of 3,000, and the Ligue starts its new year with a satisfactory balance in hand.

The Ligue and its journal have been indebted to the help of friends outside France, beginning with a contribution emanating from an appeal made at the 1949 International Conference at Swanwick, but the progress has been due above all to the devoted labours of a small number of French Georgeists notably Daudé Bancel, Max Toubeau, J. Simonet and André Fevrier; and to these must be added the name of our Greek co-worker, M. Pavlos Giannelias.

The Annual General Meeting was held in the hall of the Musée Social, Rue Las Casas, Paris, on May 31, with M. Daudé

Bancel, President of the Ligue, in the Chair. In his address the President mentioned that the Ligue possessed 200 copies of a French translation of *Progress and Poverty* and a stock of other pamphlets, but he felt there was still need for a short up-to-date exposition in popular style of these aims. During the year MM. Simonet, Toubeau and himself had been able to address public meetings and a substantial amount of propaganda had been done in the general press, apart from circulating the main organ of the movement. The audience warmly applauded his reference to the recent help given by Mr. Robert Clancy, Assistant Editor of the *Henry George News* of New York. Later on Daudé Bancel proposed M. Jean Balibar as member of the Executive Committee, observing that the advice of a professor of mathematics would be particularly useful to an organization sometimes accused of being Utopian. The reports of the Treasurer, M. André Fevrier and the Auditor, M. Jean Tanguy were presented and adopted. Two veteran Georgeists, the Tolstoyan, Dr. Totomianz, and the retired Inspector of General Education, Charles Garnier, expressed their gratitude especially to the "generous tenacity" of M. Daudé Bancel and their satisfaction at the renaissance of the Georgeist movement in France.

The main address was given by M. Max Toubeau who reviewed the general situation in France, the origin and development of the land reform movement in that country, the progress of the Ligue and its journal, and the relations of the French movement with the International Union as shown at the Conference at Odense. He transmitted on behalf of Mr. Ole Wang, Chairman of the session on July 30, the fraternal greetings of the members assembled on the occasion of M. Toubeau's address to the Conference. The eloquent term of M. Toubeau's speech to the Ligue evoked enthusiastic applause.

The officers of the Ligue were elected as follows: *Honorary Presidents*: Dan Björner (Copenhagen), Robert Clancy (New York), A. W. Madsen (London), Max Sorel (Long Island). *President*: A. Daudé Bancel. *Vice-Presidents*: M. J. Vinseux (Paris), Mr. Baert Saintes, Charles Gasmer, Commander of the Legion of Honour (Paris). *General Secretary*: Max Toubeau, Commander of the Legion of Honour (Meudon). *Treasurer*: André Fevrier, Mesnil Esnard. *Executive Committee*: Mlle. Alice Sorel (Paris), Jean Balibar (Tours), Jean Réande (Paris). *Auditor*: M. J. Tanguy (Stampfer). *Technical Advisers*: MM. P. Giannelias, Paul Lambert, J. Simonet. Commemorated as Founder Presidents are the names of the late Charles Gide, eminent Professor of Political Economy, and Sam Mayer, victim of the Nazis during the war. F. D. P.

THE SOVIET UNION VISITED

At a specially convened private meeting held in London, August 14, organized at two days' notice by the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, more than fifty members and friends were addressed by Mr. Oliver Vickery, a San Francisco business man and associate of the Union's President, Mr. J. Rupert Mason.

Mr. Vickery recounted his experiences as a delegate to the International Economic Conference held in Moscow, April, 1952—where he had delivered a striking free trade speech said to be the first public pronouncement of its kind made in Russia since the Revolution—and told something of what he had seen during a six thousand mile tour of the Soviet Union following the Conference. Mr. Vickery illustrated his talk with uncensored cine films that he had taken during his visit and had contrived to bring out of the country without being detected by the authorities.

Mr. A. W. Madsen, Editor of *LAND & LIBERTY*, presided and gave some impressions of his own visit to Russia in 1934, one main object of which had been to discover what had happened to economic rent in a Socialist state. The photographs that he had taken then had helped a lot in showing that land monopoly was the root of all the trouble. Interestingly enough, Mr. Madsen's "visa" to the offices of the Commissars whom he visited was a copy of the letter written to the United Committee

in 1934 by Prime Minister Ramsay Macdonald excusing his Government for the repeal of the Snowden Finance Act of 1931 and admitting that this step indicated the power of certain interests.

PUBLICITY IN INDIA

The Libertarian Book House (Arya Bhuvan, 1st Floor, Sandhurst Road, Bombay, 4) advertises in the literature it has for sale books by such writers as Henry George, Tolstoy, Prince Kropotkin, Von Mises, Frank Chodorov. Its monthly journal the *Free Economic Review* (16 pages, annual subscription 3s. or \$1) deals broadly with economic subjects but a main feature is the space it gives to expositions of the Henry George social philosophy. For example in its May issue, it reprints (acknowledgments to our International Union) the Conference Paper *The Dispossessed are Overpopulated* by W. A. Dowe, of Australia. In the same issue is a contributed article *What Tax Structure Do We Need?* an exposition of land value taxation. In the June issue (acknowledgments to the *American City*, *LAND & LIBERTY* and again the International Union) are the articles *Saner Taxes for Real Estate*, by Harold Buttenheim, *Land Value Taxation in Practice*, by A. W. Madsen and (abridged) *Monetary Reform or Revolution*, by J. E. Holloway. We are also pleased to see in these columns such matters as the "Ten Pillars of Economic Wisdom," being the basic creed of the Foundation for Economic Education, Inc., New York. Providing education of that kind, the *Review* deserves an ever increasing influence, for its education is urgently needed in India as elsewhere.

PERSIA'S PROBLEM

The Need for Land Reform

The press has made many comments about what is happening in Persia. This extract from a *Manchester Guardian* leading article, August 22, appears to go to the heart of the matter:—"Dr. Musaddiq's policy was to strengthen the great landlords whose estates dominate some provinces of Persia against the threats of reform for which the Shah stood. He took control of the royal domains and put an end to the Shah's steady distribution of his lands to the peasants. The disappearance of Dr. Musaddiq does not, unfortunately, mean the disappearance of landlord influence in Tehran. The absentee owners, who have abandoned feudal obligations without abandoning the rents based on them, have plenty of other champions, among them Qavames-Saltaneh, whom the Shah tried unsuccessfully to substitute for Musaddiq. The Shah has before him a long struggle with the landlords before he can get the system of land tenure reformed, and in that struggle he has few powerful allies. The civil servants and professional classes have anomalous privileges of their own to defend, which makes them readier to co-operate politically with the landlords than with the peasants. Even the urban workers, Tudeh and non-Tudeh alike, are more concerned to increase their advantage over the villager than to help him. If the restoration of the Throne and the Constitution is smooth and rapid the Shah may have some initial advantages for this work of reform, and the backing at least of the army. But it will hardly be accomplished without some degree of turbulence, recurrent crises, and sullen resistance from the landlords and their friends. It cannot safely be set aside. Rural poverty and rural chaos are too real not to afford splendid opportunities for Russian mischief-making. The landlords do not even pay the taxes for which they are nominally assessed; only the smallholders pay. But a settlement of the land question in Persia, by a distribution of ownership on the lines which the Shah has already indicated by example, could set a standard for the Middle East which might eventually go farther than any industrial or oil-drilling development to stabilise the whole area."

The Secretary of the Legation of The People's Republic of Bulgaria in London has received at the request of the Attaché, Mr. I. Raschkov, full particulars about the aims and objects of our International Union together with a large selection of the papers presented at our last two International Conferences. This material has been acknowledged in a letter expressing grateful appreciation.

LAND VALUE RATING

A County Alderman's Views

As we reported in a previous issue, the *Municipal Journal*, June 12, contained a contributed article which suggested that locally collected entertainment taxes should be made available to local authorities, and a leading article which, in rejecting the proposal, reiterated the *Municipal Journal's* support for site value rating and the repeal of de-rating.

The sequel to this episode appeared in the *Municipal Journal*, July 3. The contributor concerned, Essex County Alderman Charles Leatherland, declared his own support for both these measures. Nonetheless he maintained that since the need of local authorities for additional revenue is immediate, some form of extra assistance is required now to tide them over until the national economy assumes a different complexion and until the whole question of local government finance has been fundamentally reorganized.

"I am prepared to march with the editor of the *Municipal Journal* along the road that leads to the shrine of Henry George, the Philadelphia philosopher who first put the taxation of land values on the map. I think the rating of site values would help our local finances enormously. I think, too, that on grounds of morality there is much to be said for it. But that march would take us along a very long road, with some very steep ascents, and with the risk of skidding—at some of the nasty corners—right back to the spot at which we first started.

"The taxation of land values was introduced in this country in the Budget of 1910*. It aroused a storm. There was no very great harm in that. But it was repealed. It was introduced again in the Budget of 1931.* And it was repealed again. If it were ever introduced again in this country, and there were a change of government it would certainly be repealed once more. So if we are looking for a quick, certain source of extra money with which to aid our local finances, I fear that to look in the direction of the rating of site values would be to indulge in wishful thinking.

"It is not as though the rating of site values were one of those politically non-controversial topics about which general agreement could be obtained. If that were possible, I would say, let us have it now. But no Conservative Government is going to introduce it. And no Conservative Government is going to allow such a measure to remain on the Statute Book for more than ten minutes after it comes into power.

"A Labour Government certainly might introduce it again. The party's new statement of policy promises a 'full review of local government finances, including the possibility of the rating of site values.' But all that is mentioned there is 'a possibility.' And we who are on local government finance committees want the money this year, now. It is true that alongside that reference to site values, Labour's policy statement contains a definite pledge to repeal de-rating, both of industry and agriculture. But the chances of the Parliamentary Labour Party being able to persuade Mr. Butler to adopt this as an agreed measure are fairly remote. And again we need the money now."

* This legislation is examined and the fate it suffered recounted in *LAND VALUE TAXATION IN GREAT BRITAIN: PARLIAMENTARY SURVEY COVERING YEARS 1906 TO 1951*, By A. W. Madsen, presented as Paper No. 10 to the 1952 International Conference in Denmark. Price 1s. 0d., obtainable from our offices.

"PENALIZED" FOR IMPROVING COTTAGES

Objecting to the proposed increased assessment which more than doubled the rateable value of a pair of semi-detached cottages at Sedgeford, Norfolk, Major C. Ingelby asked the West Norfolk Valuation Panel: "Are you opposed to the agricultural worker having the best house that can be built for him? An owner puts up good accommodation and he is penalized for it." The valuation officer maintained that because structural alterations had been made to the cottages their assessment should be raised from £5 gross, £3 rateable, to £12 gross, £7 rateable, and £10 gross, £6 rateable. The panel decided on an assessment of £8 gross, £5 rateable, on one cottage, and £6 gross, £4 rateable, on the other.—*Farmer and Stockbreeder*.