

## SOVIET LEADERS READY TO HEAR MORE ABOUT GEORGE

by Richard Noyes

A handful of Soviet thinkers and planners want to know more about the ideas of Henry George.

As delegates to a three-day workshop at the University Club in New York City in August, they came across his concepts during talks with economists and scholars from the United States and other western nations.

The subject of the workshop: How to collect economic rent for social purposes.

It was Dr. Ivar Raig of Tartu, Estonia, who said, midway through the second day of the conference, that George's ideas seem to be a merging of the best parts of two theories of government.

"You have capitalism and we have socialism, and they (have turned out to be) a fiction," he said.

"It is time to work out a new theory as society emerges from a long struggle between the two.

Igor Nerush of Leningrad, Director of LENNIP gradostroitesva in that city, joined Raig in asking George Collins, as Director of the Henry George School of Social Science at New York, the workshop's sponsor, to assemble a team which can travel to eastern Europe as soon as possible to say more about ideas they were being introduced to here.

Raig, a member of the Supreme Soviet of Estonia, is also a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, as is another member of the visiting delegation: Dr. Mikhail Bronshtein of the University of Tartu.

Collins said, as this issue goes to press, he is already at work organizing the team which will travel to eastern Europe, probably in the spring of 1991.

Dr. Nicolaus Tideman, who teaches economics at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, will probably be one of them. So will Ted Gwartney, real estate analyst for the First Nationwide Bank in California.

It was Tideman who organized the August workshop. Gwartney delivered one of a dozen papers heard and discussed during the three days.

of which will be to bring a team of Americans to Estonia and Russia next year to "teach Henry George".

The quotation is taken from a news release drawn up by Pat Aller of Schalckenbach on the basis of the taped record, and sent out at the close of the three-day event.

Raig said, "As a scientist, I thank Henry George and his follower, Robert Schalkenbach . . . George's ideas are especially interesting and useful for us, since our country is poor and higher taxes are not the best solution. Right now we are trying to copy the Swedish or Finnish tax systems, but these are not right for us and we shall make new mistakes. We must study George's theories because we can use them in our countries. Maybe this conference will help us find a new, unique way to apply them. Although they have not been widely used, and changing tax laws is difficult, we must work out, now, a new system, and it may be better to start from the beginning with new ideas.

I propose that you teach George's ideas, through his writings, and translate them into Russian, so that Eastern Europe will be able to use these ideas, and to organize seminars there showing how to put these ideas into practice. I invite Schalkenbach Foundation economists to Estonia and have another project, that you teach Henry George School course in Estonia's Sangaste Castle after it is restored. If you take my suggestions, you have a chance to realize your ideas in practice in Eastern Europe. there is an old song by the Beatles, 'Power to the People', 'Property to the people' is my new version.

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