

The Freeman and We

by Robert Clancy

(In the first installment of this article, the story of the various Freeman magazines was told — The Freeman of 1920-24; The New Freeman of 1930-31; The Freeman of 1937-1943; and the installment ended citing the appearance of another Freeman in 1950.)

HERE were interesting Georgist involvements with The Freeman of the 1950's. Many Georgists subscribed to it. Writers whose names are not without interest to Georgists wrote for it, such as Raymond Moley and Louis Bromfield.

In 1951, The Freeman sponsored a seminar on "essential problems of the social sciences," conducted by Ludwig Von Mises, held from June 25th to July 6th at New York University. Of the 32 students who enrolled, seven were either Georgists or near-Georgists. They were Helen Cartier, John J. Devoe, H. B. Goldstein, O. B. Johannsen, Mildred J. Loomis, John T. Tetley and Leland B. Yeager.

At the end of the seminar, Mr. Tetley asked Professor Von Mises what he thought of Henry George. Von Mises said he would agree to discuss the subject with a group, and a meeting was arranged at the Henry George School. The group, though sympathetic in general with his free market theory, was unimpressed by his attempts to demolish the Georgist doctrine. (See Feb., Mar. and Apr. 1952 issues of The Henry George News for details of this controversy.)

The Freeman started to take general advertising in 1952. In the November 3rd issue there appeared a quarter-page ad headlined — "Henry George

—Social Thinker vs. Land Communist." It advertised a pamphlet by Spencer Heath, "Progress and Poverty Reviewed and its Fallacies Exposed." The reader was invited to send \$1.50 to The Freeman and receive a copy of *Progress and Poverty*, plus Heath's pamphlet. The pamphlet contained a laudatory preface by John Chamberlain. Heath, long known to Georgists, was arguing that the landowner should receive all the rent and disburse it himself in social services.

Coincidentally, Henry Hazlitt's name disappeared from the masthead with the November 3rd issue.

There was a storm of protest over this ad from Georgist readers, and The Freeman probably got more of a reaction than it expected. (Suzanne La Follette herself did not like the ad.) The main objection, of course, was the loaded label "land communist" and The Freeman's sponsorship. None of the letters sent in was printed. The ad continued to appear, the one concession to the protests being that it invited readers to write for the pamphlet "c/o The Freeman," instead of to The Freeman directly.

In the issue of February 9th, 1953, no names appeared on The Freeman's masthead—a forthcoming change of staff was announced—and no Spencer Heath ad appeared either in that issue or any issue thereafter.

In the following issue, February 23rd, Henry Hazlitt's name reappeared, this time as no less than the editor, with Florence Norton as managing editor. In that issue, "The Faith of The Freeman" which had



Suzanne La Follette

appeared in the first issue was reprinted, word for word.

Whatever the causes for this internal brouhaha, the Spencer Heath ads were certainly involved.

Under Hazlitt's editorship, The Freeman went along on a fairly even keel, but its old ghost, finances, haunted it again. Hazlitt gave up the editorship in January 1954. The Freeman continued a few more months, and then the Foundation for Economic Education took it over.

This Foundation—FEE, as it calls itself—was formed in 1946, with Leonard E. Read as president, to promote the ideas of a free market, restricted government and a natural economic order. Its chief activity was the printing and free distribution of literature, its support coming from voluntary donations. From the start, Georgists were attracted to FEE and wrote them volumes of letters, sent scads of literature, contributed funds, and even called on them personally to discuss Georgism. The FEE staff members were always cordial, always answered letters and received callers—but remained impervious to Georgism.

FEE's adoption of The Freeman brought even more Georgist clientele

to them. The Freeman was converted into "a monthly for libertarians," beginning July 1954. The editor was none other than Frank Chodorov. (Between Freeman magazines, Chodorov had edited his own paper, Analysis, then was associate editor of a Washington right-wing newsletter, called Human Events.)

Simultaneously with The Freeman, FEE published a pocket-size magazine titled Ideas on Liberty.*

Late in 1955 an advertisement appeared in The Freeman announcing a new weekly, The National Review, edited by William F. Buckley, Jr., a young man much admired in conservative or libertarian circles, depending on your semantics. The Review made no bones about calling itself conservative and opposed to liberalism, or what you will. Suzanne La Follette's name appeared as one of the editors. It may be that many Freeman subscribers went over to The National Review and that The Freeman's nemesis, finances, was again dogging its footsteps. For shortly after the Review appeared, FEE gave up The Freeman. Or rather, gave up the larger subscription magazine, retaining the pocket-size magazine, which it now called The Freeman, beginning January 1956. This is The Freeman which still appears monthly. There is no editor's name on the masthead. Anyone may receive The Freeman on request; a donation of \$5 is suggested, but that is not a condition for subscribing.

Whereas The National Review concerns itself primarily with the current political and social scene (with a dash of the arts), The Freeman deals mostly with more general matters, and offers to expound basic principles in

**FEE has recently put out a paper, "The Single Tax: Economic and Moral Implications," by Murray N. Rothbard, very critical of Georgist ideas. The subject of FEE and Georgism deserves an article by itself.*

connection with a free market economy and limited government. Articles appear by Leonard Read, F. A. Harper, John Chamberlain, Henry Hazlitt, Frank Chodorov and others. The realm of libertarian literature is also explored and there are quotations from James Madison, Samuel Smiles, Frederic Bastiat, the late Albert Jay Nock—but no Henry George. Nevertheless, The Freeman can, if it wants to, boast of numerous Georgist readers. Of course, there are many Georgists who have no use either for The Freeman or The National Review; but I think it may be said that a substantial minority of Georgists form a substantial minority of the readership of both those magazines.

Which magazine has truly inherited the mantle of The Freeman: The National Review, FEE's Freeman, or The Henry George News?

If you reckon from the point of view of a subscription and newsstand weekly magazine of social comment, it appears to be The National Review, especially as the one person whose name runs like a thread through all the Freemans is on The Review's staff—Suzanne La Follette.

If you reckon from the point of view of the magazine bearing the name, it is FEE's Freeman—but this only continues The Freeman begun in 1950, which broke the line of succession.

The Henry George News continues The Freeman begun in 1937, which can be said to have been in the line of succession, not only in point of time but also in spirit, since the first Freeman was Georgist in character.

Take your pick—and we have no serious objection if you take all three.

(The End)



IT HAPPENED IN DENMARK

"The Single Tax party gained three seats, raising its total to nine." This was the news from Denmark which was announced via radio and the press following the mid-May elections. With the Social Democrats and Communists losing ground, the Justice (single tax) party headed by Viggo Starcke, is again in the same pivotal position it enjoyed eight years ago.

The Danish Parliament now comprises seven political parties with the 175 seats in the single-chamber Folketing distributed as follows: Social Democrats (Government party) 70, Agrarian Liberals 45, Conservatives 30, Radical Liberals 14, Single Taxers (Justice party) 9, Communists 6, and German minority one.

A new government has been formed with a cabinet composed of nine Social Democrats, four Radical Liberals and three Justice party members.

A COMBINED JULY-AUGUST ISSUE OF HGN WILL COVER THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE HENRY GEORGE SCHOOL IN NEW YORK, JULY 6-12. DON'T MISS THIS IMPORTANT DOUBLE NUMBER WHICH WILL BE PUBLISHED IN AUGUST.