

## MAXIME TOUBEAU

1882-1969

IN OUR last issue we were able to announce only briefly the death of this distinguished leader of the Georgeist movement in France, the news reaching us too late for more adequate tribute to one who, in addition to being President of La Ligue Française pour la Réforme Foncière, Fiscale et le Libre-Echange and a Vice-President of the International Union for Land-Value Taxation and Free Trade, was a Commander of the Legion of Honour, Honorary Director to the Ministry of Agriculture, a Doctor of Literature and Law, a distinguished administrator and an admirable poet.

Although Maxime Toubau was only eight years of age when his father died, some reference to the father helps to explain the son's career, and it illustrates that unique and significant aspect of our philosophy, that at different times and in different circumstances men of active minds and sympathies seeking an explanation of social evils, have, unknown to each other, discovered the same universal injustice and the same natural remedy.

Albert-Maximilien Toubau, 1836-1890, was born in Belgium in such poor circumstances that he received only an elementary education and but for his delicate health might have become a miner. As clerk to a solicitor, however, his extraordinary thirst for knowledge led him not only to the studies necessary for the legal profession but also to a profound investigation of social philosophy, and from the 1870s he wrote for reviews, first in Belgium and later in France, where he became a citizen.

He was influenced by the Physiocrats and by the Belgian sociologist Professor Colins, who, amongst other doctrines, advocated the nationalisation of land. A. M. Toubau recognised land freedom as the basis of all freedom, but seeing the dangers and difficulties of the nationalisation method he published in 1880 a scholarly work, *The Metric Distribution of Taxa-*

*tion*, in which he advocated land-value taxation under the title of Metric Tax.

It was not until four years afterwards that Toubau read *Progress and Poverty*, and, recognising the identity of view, got in touch with Henry George. When in 1889 France celebrated the centenary of the great revolution, Henry George was invited to Paris to preside at an agrarian congress from which emerged a "Universal Agrarian Federation" of which A. M. Toubau was appointed secretary, only to die a few months later. Lacking his initiative, the Federation languished, but the seed had been sown.

Maxime Toubau had a brilliant career at the Sorbonne, in law, literature and philosophy. Entering the Ministry of Agriculture he eventually became director of an important legal branch until his retirement in 1948, but he had before this begun to write on economic subjects, especially for a periodical *La Terre*, founded in Brussels by a prominent business man, Sam Meyer. This journal became in 1929 *Terre et Liberté*, and the movement grew, with Daudé Bancel as editor of the journal, until in 1939 Sam Meyer was arrested and eventually shot by the Nazis. It was revived in 1947 by Maxime Toubau and Daudé Bancel but without the financial backing of Sam Meyer, and in the disturbed post-war atmosphere progress was difficult, especially among the younger generation.

When Daudé Bancel died in 1963, Maxime Toubau despite his advanced age, made a valiant effort to carry on the journal and the movement, but failing health frustrated him.

He was faithful to the end to those ideals of justice and social duty which always inspired him. His verse, published only at the insistence of his friends, reveals the inner man, the poet-philosopher as sensitive to the outward beauty of creation as to the eternal longings of the spirit, but throughout faithful to the supreme duties of life.

For many of the biographical details of this notice we are indebted

to Maxime Toubau's eldest son, Albert Toubau, who shares his father's ideas. To him and his sister and brother, Madame Andre Gouaislin, and Claude Toubau, we especially extend our sympathy.

F.D.P.

## Land Boom in Texas

THE CONSTRUCTION of two inter-state highways and a related loop around Fort Worth, of the three hundred mile long Trinity River Canal to the Gulf of Mexico, and the \$500 million 20,000 acre Dallas-Fort Worth Regional Airport is contributing to a big escalation of land prices, reports *The New York Times*, March 24. Before the opening of sections of new roads the only access to the isolated open plains was by horse wagon or helicopter. Now speculators are buying land anywhere they can find it around Fort Worth.

Federal government spending will also include \$50 million for additional roads and freeways to the airport, which is designed to handle the jumbo jets of the 1970s and 1980s. The bulk of this road system must be completed by late 1972 when the airport is scheduled to open.

Economists are projecting a doubling of urban population in the metropolitan Dallas-Fort Worth region within twelve years. A multi-billion dollar industrial, commercial and housing investment will take in shopping centres, parks, a "sub city," a \$26 million apartment complex, and ultimately an entire city within two cities.

"What has this done to land prices?" asks *The New York Times*. "For the ranchers, it has been a gold mine. The price of raw land for the regional airport has jumped from an average of \$1,059 for an acre two years ago to \$4,000 and \$5,000 an acre today. If the land has any kind of road frontage, it may command \$10,000 an acre."