

Finding A Better Way In Conference

THE 22nd Annual Conference of the Henry George School at St. Louis, July 20-24, was the first one carried out during a major transportation strike, and perhaps the first to use a slogan. Thomas Edison said, "There's a way to do it better . . . find it." This was restated by John Tetley of Newark, New Jersey, as, there's a way to do it . . . better find it!

The bold aim of the conference did not make it any more formidable — instead a comfortable atmosphere of loose organization prevailed, and since Georgists find their right places and each other by means of convenient and unconscious radar, everything fell into place naturally and with the least amount of exertion.

As announced, for instance, meals were "ad lib" and a la carte, except for one luncheon and the closing banquet. "A la carte" suggests the freedom that was enjoyed by all who gathered in clusters at a variety of nearby eating places or in their air-conditioned rooms. No one will ever know whether more helpful results developed from the formal sessions or at the informal ones which followed. One sensed throughout an air of cheerful continuity.

All proceedings took place in the Sheraton-Jefferson Hotel, a few blocks from the Mississippi River levee which has been undergoing a fabulous re-designing. Although the air strike caused regrettable cancellations, the location of St. Louis near the center of the country made it possible for some sixty persons to come from as far away as Latin America and Canada and from the West to the East Coasts of the U.S. Among those present were 15 directors and more than 20 officials of the various extensions.

On the eve of the conference the accustomed friendliness and rapport of this group was established. It prevailed,

of course, to the end, as it has for years and will continue through years to come. St. Louis has had a big director for a long time, but Noah Alper stepped aside when a bigger one, Loral Swofford, came along offering the same genial hospitality.

A new note was set on the first evening when Loral Swofford presented a taped talk by John Z. White, a follower of Henry George, who has become a legendary figure in this movement and whose influence in Chicago during his life could not be measured. This was a stirring sample of oratory showing the art and inspiration of the early 20th century which is missing today. In those days there were no schools or classes for students of the Henry George philosophy, but there were speakers, and they were powerful. The only way to learn of George was to read his books or listen to these talks. The taped sample of Mr. White's address brought back to older listeners a remembrance of oratory, long and strong, without benefit of microphones, with logic as applicable today as it was then.

Another heirloom thoughtfully presented with the compliments of the St. Louis extension, was a copy of a letter by Anna George (with photograph) at age twenty (see page 2). It was reproduced in a folder featuring the arch, symbol of St. Louis, gateway to the West, and the historic old court house.

The outreach for the better way began on the first morning with Roy Davidson, San Diego director, as moderator. After a cordial welcome from Reverend Bill Little and Louis Basso, St. Louis city officials, Miss V. G. Peterson, Executive Secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, reported on one of the most comprehensive of the George programs. The newest feature, directed

toward city planners, will be covered in more detail next month.

Percy Williams of Pittsburgh, speaking for the Henry George Foundation, said it was organized 40 years ago at the birthplace of Henry George in Philadelphia. He has been secretary for all of those 40 years and has been steadily at work to the present, and will be, one hopes, for a long time to come. He has devoted himself and his organization to observing the operation of the Pittsburgh graded tax law and trying to spread the idea in his state. Requests come steadily for their literature—the latest having been from a commerce and industry association of New York City, as if they were seriously studying the graded tax law.

He represents also the Graded Tax League which is contacting assessors and city planners with letters by Professor Steven Cord, author of *Henry George—Dreamer or Realist?* and professor of economics at the Indiana State University of Pennsylvania. The continuing subject is urban renewal of cities. This league has gained vast experience in its 50 years of service.

The standard assessment in Pittsburgh reaches 100 percent, but since assessing procedures were turned over to the county, there has been no direct contact with these records. Land and buildings are assessed separately in Pittsburgh, so the city can fix a rate on land precisely double that of buildings. Officials are concerned that the value be kept as nearly as possible at full market value, though the county would be inclined to assess at less than market value. Mr. Williams believes the Henry George movement can never be successful until LVT is put into operation—they are continuing to make that effort in Pennsylvania.

Speaking for the Henry George School program in New York, Peter Patsakos said the correspondence courses were being given in French, German, Italian and Hebrew. The

French-speaking students are from France, Africa, and Haiti mainly. For students in Israel the lecture by Henry George on Moses has been translated and is meeting a response. A well known text, "Why The German Republic Fell," is being sold in Germany to interested students.

"Keyed-Up" Lectures

The Speakers' Bureau is an important part of the program and Mr. Patsakos said this is used to whet the appetite to go further, to enroll for a class, or to buy other literature, and generally to improve the image of the Henry George School. It is important to develop articulate persons who can converse on the subject of LVT. Some of these who are not suitable for teachers may then do very well as speakers. A brochure announcing available topics should be mailed out twice a year to various groups. If they are satisfied they will call and ask for a repeat engagement. Sometimes the speaker can ask the audience to fill out cards for a class at headquarters. Occasionally a class or seminar can be arranged right in the audience following a lecture.

All age groups can be reached, from junior high to the "golden age." But one can vary the topics frequently in accord with current interest. A speaker must judge whether he has the kind of audience that would be able to follow an explanation of the basic reform or one that should be cajoled into taking a course. In this case he tells what is *not* the answer and invites them to the school for the answer. The mechanics, Mr. Patsakos believes, are secondary — speakers should know their subject and be so keyed up that the audience catches the enthusiasm. A Speakers' Manual has been developed to help potential lecturers.

Phil Wallace, who was in training at headquarters in New York, will return to his home in Jamaica, W.I. this month to teach the Fundamental

Course. It will be remembered that 6 of Jamaica's 14 parishes came under LVT during Norman Manley's term of office, but the intended plan was not completed. On protest at the time a number of properties received exemptions and lots of big landowners escaped. Meanwhile, the tourist trade has made land prices jump enormously.

Under a new law no one can own more than 100 acres—but what use is such a law if the government commission has power to determine the use of land and buys the excess at market value? This means more bureaucracy and government control. There are taxes of every variety in Jamaica—on tourists and people leaving the country—and there is talk now of a sales tax.

In trying to bring the message of LVT to the people Mr. Wallace has found that political economy is way above people's heads. He finds it hard to dispel the mystery or fear of the subject, but recommends Henry George's pamphlet "The Study of Political Economy." He believes justice is the only solution to the economic and social problems and that LVT is the only means applicable that conforms to natural laws. "Let's continue to arouse the moral sense in a reform which involves not only the head, but the heart," he said.

The Moral and Ethical Pan American Way

William Camargo, Head of the Spanish Division, said bluntly that Latin America today is in a mess. If present trends continue they are going to a place much worse than hell—and the more one studies the situation the more desperate it appears. But you do get a ray, a very small ray, of hope for Latin America and the world. He referred to a man of whom the U.S. should have been proud—but what do we find? Less than a hundred persons at a conference honoring George.

To the south of us lies the fastest growing continent in the world. It has vast stores of platinum, beryllium and other important metals and minerals. The paralysis in production lies in the land tenure system. If it were improved, exploitation by their own nationals would not be possible. The co-operation of all Georgists is urgently needed to make education available.

Part of the ray of light originated at the Henry George School in New York six years ago when the school started to hold language courses. From that time the students began flocking in even when there was no advertising. Some of these students have gone back home and started little "talk sessions." One especially, at great personal sacrifice, went back and started an extension in his home city of Cali, Colombia.

He is Hernan Sanin-Vermont and his classes were overcrowded from the first announcement—he had to send at once for more books and divide the class which was overflowing the classroom. Already his influence has been felt in several schools and universities. But we must be persistent, he warned, not to allow enthusiasm to diminish. Mr. Sanin lectured to 150 in his first class. Many important people come from banks and industry — and as they complete a course and go among their friends they want to open an extension—thus the ideas spread. Many new economic ideas are being introduced in fast-growing Cali. It may well serve as an example to encourage other schools in South America.

Mr. Aldo Pardo, a new student of Mr. Sanin's, brought this message in Spanish, translated and condensed by William Camargo. "I greet you with sincerity and true love—this greeting we make in general to all men, women and children, to all the universe and to all the people of God." He said he had known poverty and therefore appreciated the necessity to spread the

words of Henry George in the true spirit of Christ. He wished all present to cooperate in trying to arouse a moral and ethical sense, which is the only way Henry George will ever be successful, and through the Henry George School we have the mechanics for increasing morals and ethics.

But there is more still to the Spanish speaking section. Encouraging reports come from Dr. Edwin Rios Maldonado of Puerto Rico; and a university professor, Alfonso Loaiza in Guayaquil teaches the Henry George course. Ecuador, Peru and Argentina are being exposed, and in the latter there is an old tradition of the collection of community rent, so it is not entirely unknown and could perhaps be reinstated. In Brazil a group of electrical engineers frequently write on LVT for engineering societies.

In the Caribbean he anticipates a school starting in the Dominican Republic this month, and in the Republic of Guatemala an extension will be opened by Carlos Riveros, a student and friend of Mr. Sanin, in Guatemala City.

Enroute to the U.S. from Colombia, Mr. Sanin had an interview with the vice president of Costa Rica for three hours. This is a very democratic country with elections and no army — the president won the election because he promised to lower taxes on production. There is a movement at present to tax only land and to reassess all property. Costa Rica's Vice-President Calvo is also very much interested and has promised the facilities of the university to teach Henry George courses.

The next session was introduced by George L. Collins, Philadelphia director, and it covered a variety of activities.

Loral D. Swofford, St. Louis host, talked of "Human Rights" and the revelation he received when he studied the material Robert Clancy had arranged for teaching this subject in

New York. As he thought more about this in the context of the reading matter (*A Perplexed Philosopher, The Land Question*, and modern viewpoints) he found that civil rights are only a small part of human rights, and in the classes they discuss and try to decide what are the rights of man. Are we concerned with everybody's rights, or only our own? All men should be economically equal, he said, this was the goal students set for themselves.

Many Faceted Georgism

John T. Tetley, director of the HGS of New Jersey, gave a very thorough report on "A Better Way Through Groups," with brief reports on Pennsylvania's Pittsburgh activity and the newer HALT in Erie (Homeowners Association for Land Tax), which is the successor to ELTA. California's Statewide Homeowners Association has reason to feel pleased with its efforts if for no other reason than that it probably created an atmosphere in which the election of a woman assessor (Hickman) could become possible.

PREC is the St. Louis Public Revenue Educational Council with Noah D. Alper as president. After the latest mailing to professors of universities the request for explanatory literature was far greater than ever before.

A second St. Louis group is the new one known as HARTA—Homeowners and Renters Tax Association, a successor to the Tax Inquiry Committee formed by graduates of St. Louis HGS in 1964. It has a 6-point program directed toward a practical understanding of real estate taxation.

The American Institute for Economic Research, Great Barrington, Massachusetts was mentioned as being Georgist oriented, with Colonel E. C. Harwood as the executive head. The Lincoln Foundation has gained attention through conferences on the land question which became national in scope when the results were published.

John Monroe, former HGS director in Chicago, was present but his friends wished for more information about the Institute for Economic Inquiry than he modestly gave. Mr. Tetley reported it as an activity separate from the school, which has for years enjoyed a reputation for distinction and which has won respect from many industrial firms.

Getting around to Newark, New Jersey, the EEI—Economics Education Institute, though he has no affiliation with it, is closely associated with the HGS and makes a very substantial contribution to the school's expenses. Finally Mr. Tetley named a committee of one—The Tax Inquiry Council, with himself as executive secretary—as a device for giving more importance to his letters regarding public questions.

There are many more associations that could be mentioned in the U.S. and abroad, but the list was already long. Elmer Russell Greenlee's Blue Bird Letters were mentioned with appreciation, and also the Taxpayers Digest, of Portland, Oregon. Erick Hansch, its editor, was present at the conference.

With a preponderance of adult participation, it was pleasant to have Kate de Fremery of San Anselmo, California urging more teaching efforts directed to the young people who are vitally interested in meeting the complexities of the world in which they find themselves. (See October HGN).

On Becoming What We Were

Heman Chase of New Hampshire, author of *American Ideals*, because of his assigned subject, became the "Good Humor" man of the afternoon. Several copies of his book were sold at the conference, and they are available also from the Henry George School at \$1 a copy. The proceeds of books sold during the conference were left with the host extension.

We are an idealistic country, he said,

and we ought to display our ideals, not try to export them. We should try to become what we used to be—a land of opportunity. Georgists know better than anyone that access to land is the basis of opportunity.

Mr. Chase was brought up in a Georgist family and took many Henry George courses, but it was specifically in 1953 at the HGS conference in Boston, when he heard Jerome Joachim of Chicago read a 3-minute paper, that he decided to try to write of his views. As he continued to think along these lines he reviewed national and traditional ideas, including many of the political and personal virtues we profess. He saw that our duty is to understand the social and economic bases of our ideals, practice them and display them to a world searching for justice.

Robert Clancy, New York director, stepped to the microphone with a talk "To the Ladies" and this will appear later. He mentioned that Monsignor L. G. Ligutti of the Food and Agriculture Organization had suggested that he attend a world conference on land reform under the sponsorship of the FAO in Rome in June. Mr. Clancy was unable to attend but he reported that he has been in correspondence with Dr. E. H. Jacoby, Chief of the land tenure branch of FAO. Dr. Jacoby has expressed interest in LVT and promised that this would have a prominent place in the agenda.

With the interest focused momentarily on the women in Georgism, it was appropriate to call on Edith McBrady of Chicago, president of the Henry George Woman's Club. Their attendance has increased over last year and meetings have been stimulating. As a result they have been able to contribute more liberally to various Georgist causes. Many of their members are teachers in the Henry George School.

At an evening session on this full conference day, Harry Pollard, Los Angeles director, presided. He intro-

duced Woodrow Williams of Columbus Grove, Ohio, whose address "What Taxes Do to Farmers," was pre-empted last month. Lancaster M. Greene of New York followed with a discussion of "What Taxes Do to Investors."

The Tax Drain on Savers

The corporation prospers if it serves well but it is a conspicuous target for politicians, Mr. Greene said. They take 48 percent of its earnings before shareholders get a look. If it pays out they demand from 20 to 60 percent of the remaining net earned. Then personal income is taxed in some cases as high as 91 percent. This taxes savers double, on the theory of "ability to pay." If the saver-investor decides to sell and invest in another management the Internal Revenue Service demands up to 25 percent of the gain he may have made. This is the reason why many holders do less and less trading.

Mr. Greene has been an investment counselor for 43 years and was a founder of the New York Security Analysts, whose function is to seek better information from managements. "If we had the principle of taxing according to benefits received and untaxing constructive effort," he said, "our society would flourish and incentive to savers would be infinitely increased." Mr. Greene is an officer in both the Henry George School and the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation.

Dr. Irene Hickman of Sacramento was the final speaker on this first full conference day (see page 5).

The session billed as "A Better Way Through Promotion" pleased many people especially, because this topic so thoroughly appreciated by advertising experts had not been introduced before at school conferences, and the ideas were useful to staff members.

Robert Benton, Detroit director, was the chairman, and the first speaker was Rollyn Smith, a direct mail specialist. "Communication," he said, "begins

with you." There must be right presentation and the right audience. Newspapers reach perhaps 35 percent of the people, and TV perhaps 50 percent, but these are expensive media. Direct mail is also expensive but it has the advantage of being more personal in its manner of arrival. He was critical of name lists, because "America is on the move," an occupants' list was recommended instead.

An economy measure recently achieving good results is the "piggy-back" method—it saves money by collecting several non-competitive appeals in the same envelope. He emphasized sitting down and figuring out an advertising budget and a program. Single efforts seemed fruitless and wasteful—plan to follow up at the right intervals. In other words: "the right audience with the right message, at the right time."

Ralph L. Wunderlich, another direct mail executive, spoke in a similar vein. You must define the problem, believe in your product and explain how it works. You must also point out results and benefits, then ask for action—ask for someone to do something! By knowing your prospect well you can tell how the idea fits. Remember men work for honor, recognition, and other intangible as well as tangible symbols. They still want to stand as individuals, so appeal to them on these terms to help them fulfill this aim.

If you had 300 students and only 30 to 50 come round to help after you call for volunteers, what are you lacking? What happened to the others? You spent 10 weeks training them, and except for an unfirm one-sixth, they are all being "plowed back into the landscape." Try stimulating them with a monthly newsletter even if it is only one page—this affords continuity.

How do you get names? Consider using the user! Students who are sold offer a prime example. If you could get 5 or 10 names from them this would provide an excellent and selec-

tive list, and it would be a good place to make a test. Don't overlook the advantages of using the news columns of the newspapers. If you have speakers who can attract attention, offer them as speakers to clubs and other groups. Your brief news item announcing a talk by a prominent person costs only a 5-cent stamp. The editor will be happy to print news.

Mr. Wunderlich did not feel, as did the first speaker, that newspaper advertising was too costly for the Henry George School appeal. Although it is a mass medium one can make a careful selection in a part of the paper that seems most appropriate for the school message. This, then, is not necessarily waste circulation.

Three C's for Success

Advertising must contain three "C's" — said the speaker. (1) Never underestimate the *character* of your audience, make your copy believable, (2) *creativity*—man responds to emotional appeals—recognize him as an individual rather than a thing, (3) *continuity*—don't start with a one-piece program and then stop, and don't clutter your advertisement with a lot of stuff. Make one point, and make it well. Then another, and another. Such a campaign has a very good chance of being a success.

Following the two speakers, the school directors held a round table discussion on a "sales manual" — developed by the St. Louis extension for the purpose of aiding school graduates in interesting their friends in the course.

A spontaneous welcome awaited Dr. and Mrs. Harry Gunnison Brown at the luncheon on Friday, with W. Philip Cotton, Jr. of St. Louis as chairman. It is always a pleasure to be with old and trusted friends, and Dr. Brown, author, lecturer and distinguished professor, has been a tried and true friend of the Henry George School for many

fruitful years. A partial text of his address on "The Power of Incentive Taxation" was in the July HGN.

After lunch most of the conference family went off merrily on a short sightseeing tour. But, as someone said, no matter how extended it might have been, it would have been lost on most of them because there was so much private discussion and enjoyment. We can perhaps mention one early port of call — Busch's Brewery — shall we just leave it at that?

The evening too was reserved for entertainment, this time at the Show Boat on the Mississippi. Since the audience here is an important part of the play, you can use your own imagination as to what took place.

Saturday already? A session destined to be remembered by some as the conference high spot was at hand. Oscar Ehrhardt, Secretary-Treasurer of the Joint Council, AFL-CIO spoke well for labor. John Poelker, the Comptroller of the City of St. Louis, spoke of "Taxes and Government," giving insights into the whole confusing problem from the standpoint of a city official.

The Georgists congratulated themselves on having gained a little more maturity when, in a genial joke at their own expense, they admitted that in the past they have been known to "take people apart" for expressing views like these. This year, having found a better way, they considered this subject as it looks to persons in the arena where issues must be met in their present context and under present laws.

Very welcome at this point was the message from M. S. Lurio, president of a finance company in Boston (see page 14). Following these talks a rush of questions showed the tingling interest on both sides of the table. Robert Tideman, San Francisco director, refereed most ably.

In the afternoon there was another directors' round table session, this

time on lesson materials. All agreed that a better way should continually be sought to improve the courses, particularly the first one, Fundamental Economics. Mr. Clancy reported that a revision of the third basic course in Economic Science has been completed and should be ready for the fall term.

All too soon it was time for the banquet, which signals the end. In the absence of the school's president, Joseph Thompson of San Francisco, Lancaster M. Greene of New York presided. There were messages from good friends at home and abroad, and two fine addresses which are condensed on pages one and three of this issue. Others will be coming along next month.

Gratitude for a Leader

A moment of recognition in which all could share with feeling was the presentation by Miss V. G. Peterson, of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, New York, of a surprise gift to Dr. and Mrs. Harry Gunnison Brown. In appreciation of the years during which he has been an exponent of the principles of Henry George, to a large degree at personal sacrifice owing to the unpopularity of the subject, and of the prestige his scholarship has lent to the Henry George movement, he was awarded a holiday visit to England in the near future where he will give a series of addresses. Dr. Brown was

for many years a professor of economics at the University of Missouri. At present he and Mrs. Brown divide their time between their home in Columbia, Missouri and Central Lake, Michigan.

Still fresh and full of vigor, the company sallied forth to visit "Gaslight Square." There the entertainment was lusty and varied, but even at its alluring best Don Freeland of Canada reported that he was discussing taxation principles oblivious of the feminine charms. Such, alas, is the rugged character of Georgists.

The finale on Sunday morning was held in check by the good chairmanship of Loral Swofford, the host, who asked only two questions of each director and extension representative — give the high spot and the low spot of the year. This provided a good resumé of a year's work and brought all to that wistful moment when goodbyes must be said or adroitly avoided. Loral Swofford is one who does not like to say goodbye and so all those in the room just stood up and said a tender thank you with applause, long and meaningful.

Here and there as friends parted one heard the words floating back, "see you in Montreal next year!" Yes, Montreal, next year's Fair city, will see another milestone in the Georgist movement as it holds to its principles of justice and true reform.

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and she prepared a number of charts showing lots and their locations with the assessment figures in wide contrast to each other. Her audiences got the message, so there was no occasion to do any mud slinging. She wanted an honest, responsible campaign based on the highest principles, and since she is that kind of person, that was the only kind of campaign she could have. But will her county be able to believe and

understand these superior standards later when the reassessment figures are made public?

"We aren't going to get any movement unless we stir the people," she said. For this purpose she used the charts, many of which she made herself. People went around talking of these revelations and apparently believed what she said. "This," said Dr. Hickman, "got Sacramento County a new assessor."