

CONVENTION REPORT FROM SAN FRANCISCO

Almost 300 persons from eleven nations and eight American states gathered in San Francisco, from August 20-26, 1979, to commemorate the centennial of **Progress & Poverty**.

More than 100 speakers, legislators, educators, conservationists, reformers, authors, and tax critics addressed the key problems that George wrote about in his books. The activities were held in the Jack Tar Hotel, where many of the participants stayed.

Paul Nix, President of the Henry George School in New York, opened the proceedings by calling **Progress & Poverty** "a visionary work, which gives us an idea of what the good life is like". It was obvious from the first speech to the last, that the essence of the conference was to spark interaction, discussion, and action among the conferees. Conversations outlasted session coffee breaks and question and answer periods continued long after formal speeches were presented.

Special events highlighted each day of the convention, beginning with a reception hosted by the San Francisco school, in the Garden Room of the Hotel. Dr. Otto Butz, President of the Golden Gate University spoke at a luncheon where he gave a thoughtful but humorous talk on the sources (or lack of them) of wisdom in the academic and business communities. A reception held in the rotunda of San Francisco's historic City Hall was sponsored by the San Francisco Public Library Commission and the California Historical Society. John Molinari, President of the local Board of Supervisors, and Mrs. Carl Stern, President of the S.F. Library Commission, greeted the celebrants, and Pam Brooks, a local entertainer, closed the program with a selection of songs. A civic luncheon was held at the legendary Palace Hotel, where Henry George is reputed to still owe a bill. John Henning, who spoke at the luncheon, is a key executive of the California AFL-CIO, and a former ambassador to New Zealand. Henning praised the work of Rolland O'Regan, who is a leading advocate of L.V.T. in New Zealand.

The final two days of the conference began with a breakfast meeting which featured Author David Hapgood, and Assemblyman William Filante. Mr. Hapgood who wrote **The Screwing of the Average Man** and profiled George in **American Heritage**, confided that he went back and read **Progress & Poverty** after two Georgists wrote him thoughtful responses to his book. Filante, who represents two counties in the California Legislature, gave pointers on how he gets the word out on LVT to the executive department of the state government, particularly to the Dept. of Water Resources. The "main event" of the convention was held on Saturday night, when 300 people attended a banquet chaired by Dr. Val Jaros, with George Tideman, former executive Vice-President of the S.F. school, as keynote speaker. John Monroe, received the annual banquet award for his contributions to the cause, and Michael Curtis, of Arden Delaware, received the new member award.

Most of all, the convention reflected the diversity and common goals of Georgists from around the world. A compendium of all of the talks from the Conference is available from the Henry George School in San Francisco.

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