

Report from Santo Domingo

by Fryda LaFond Ossias

It was with joy that I went to address the graduating class of the Henry George School in Santo Domingo on May 30th. The Director Lucy de Silfa had invited a member of the Board of Trustees of the New York School to participate.

The graduation ceremony almost did not take place because a thoroughgoing transportation strike had begun the night before and threatened to bring the nation to a standstill. But the determination and enthusiasm of 135 students were such that they managed to get there; the ceremony did take place with all its pageantry and was a great success! It was held in the beautiful auditorium of the new Biblioteca Nacional (the largest in the country's new Cultural Center). The program included a very moving recital of poetry and a drama-dance performance, rather controversial satire on Dominican modern history. Some of the important people portrayed in the drama, prominent political figures, were parents of graduates and, therefore, were in the audience as invited guests.

The valedictorian's speech was on freedom (economic and political) and the role that Georgist philosophy could play.

My short speech was in Spanish (my Spanish goes back to the days when my parents took me, as an undergraduate, to Havana for a summer vacation from my native Haiti.) I talked about the part new graduates will play in reaching and educating those not ready for our message in the classroom, and the task, a difficult one for the New Georgist, who must answer the questions: "Are you a Dreamer or a Realist" or "Is your message relevant for our time?" or "What does the gasoline situation have to do with land monopoly?" or "Where do you stand with regard to strikes?"

My visit was quite timely, for the strike focused the interest of everyone in the country on economics. Almost every TV and Radio program had something to do with problems of unemployment and inflation. The price of gasoline had jumped overnight from \$1.85 to \$2.39 (fixed by the government), and this triggered the strike. The newspapers dealt almost exclusively with the country's economic and political problems.

Matthew, my husband who accompanied me to Santo Domingo, and I were on a local TV Station and we were constantly questioned on the goals and purpose of the Henry George philosophy. The specific questions put to me were: "What is the purpose and What are the goals of the Henry George School in New York and the HGS in Santo Domingo?" I was granted an interview of one hour by the LISTIN DIARIO, one of the leading newspaper of the country. The editor in chief Don Rafael Herrera listened rather sympathetically and asked the usual questions we Georgist always face and resorted to the definition of land which of course stops most arguments. I was also interviewed on the School and its purpose, at

HGI invited to New HQ

The Henry George School has invited Robert Clancy to move the office of the Henry George Institute to the school's new headquarters opening this summer at 5 East 44th Street. The Institute will occupy offices on the third floor of the new building, the same floor as the library.

The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation will occupy the fourth floor of the new building, with the offices of the school on the fifth. This will place three of the national Georgist organizations in the new headquarters, with facilities for joint programs and activities throughout the year.

The 1980 Joint Georgist Conference will be the first major event in the new building.

the airport upon my departure for a radio program to be aired the following Saturday.

We travelled to the new HGS extension in Nagua on the North Shore, 3 hours from Santo Domingo, where a new class, in our Lesson V, that presumably had been cancelled because of the strike, was called to order within 15 minutes in spite of a torrential rain. This class had 92 enthusiastic students. Among them were young educators, farmers, lawyers, agronomers, some leaders of farmer's union, one or two radical journalists and one radio commentator.

I made some recommendations to Lucy de Silfa who in turn has some suggestions for the success of our philosophy in this land that is historically a land of opportunity. Santo Domingo is where Columbus put down his anchor and opened the new world. This is where, on the same island, slavery was later abolished for the first time in the history of the new world for a whole country, thus liberating one of the most important factors of production.

I have a vision of a New Economic Freedom: The Single Tax ... there! Where the land is so obvious and a lot less hidden than in the industrial nations, it could be there where the freeing of LAND, will bring about real freedom. And maybe once again this island will have another first and be an example for other nations.

Spancake Joins Research Center

Larry R. Spancake has joined the staff of the Center for Local Tax Research in a consulting capacity. Mr. Spancake, an instructor in Economics at Fordham University, has degrees in Economics from Pennsylvania State University and Yale University. He is writing his dissertation on the provision of housing services and the public sector, and collaborated on an article which appears in Volume 34 (1979) of *Public Choice*.

Both Mr. Spancake and George Kerchner, Senior Associate of the Center, are tabulating data for the sixth annual edition of "Effective Real Property Tax Rates," to be published in the fall.