

IU NEWSLETTER

IULVTFT

NO. 6

NOVEMBER 1968

Dear Reader:

The first issue of the IU NEWSLETTER appeared in October 1966 as an organ for members of the International Union. The response has indicated that it is a welcome vehicle for the exchange of information and views not suitable for other Georgist publications.

The NEWSLETTER has been transferred to my editorship. This action was taken at the 12th International Conference, of which a report appears in the following pages. I gladly assume the task and I am editing it from Jackson Heights, N.Y., U.S.A. (After a period of more than 20 years as Director of the Henry George School in New York, I am currently on a sabbatical leave.)

The Georgist movement is growing and the International Union affords a medium for Georgists of all countries to keep in touch with one another, through the Conferences, through correspondence and visits, and now through the NEWSLETTER. I shall do my best to continue the service this publication performs for a growing movement.

The NEWSLETTER can be only what you make of it. There are numerous matters it would be useful to ventilate. The discussions on terminology in past issues revealed that whilst we are working and thinking in a certain way in our corner, and perhaps assuming that our colleagues around the world are doing likewise, the shock of encounter reveals differences we never suspected. But such exchanges are worthwhile. The issues which unite us are, or should be, more important than those which separate us. It is inevitable that, working in different areas under different conditions, we should develop some differences in interpretation and application. Reaching out to explain our views and listen to others, to understand and help one another, will strengthen our own individual work as well as the world-wide movement.

Besides terminology, there are other points that need further discussion, some of which were raised at the 12th International Conference. What is the best method of applying the Georgist remedy - the taxation of land values, community collection of economic rent, or leasehold tenure under the state? How important is it to abolish other taxes? What about the perplexing question of money and inflation? Let us be prepared to hear a variety of views amongst ourselves on these and other matters - some good is bound to come from such an airing. Who knows? We may even find some agreements with one another!

And so I hope to hear from you in the near future.

Yours for our common cause,

Robert Clancy
Robert Clancy, Editor

The IU NEWSLETTER is distributed to members of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade. (Minimum annual dues, £1, or \$2.40, or equivalent.) For matters relating to the Newsletter, write to: IU NEWSLETTER, P.O. Box 52, Jackson Heights, N.Y. 11372, U.S.A. For all other matters relating to the International Union, write to: IULVTFT, 177 Vauxhall Bridge Rd., London S.W.1, England.

12th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON LAND VALUE TAXATION AND FREE TRADE

CASWELL BAY, WALES, SEPT. 7-14, 1968

About 125 members and friends of the International Union gathered at a lovely spot in South Wales - Caswell Bay - for the 12th International Conference. A spell of beautiful weather enhanced the attraction of seeing old friends and meeting new ones, hearing thoughtful discourses on many phases of Georgist principles and practice, and of course participating in the discussions.

Delegates were housed in three different hotels: the Caswell Bay Hotel where Conference meetings were held; the nearby Redcliffe Hotel where a lively variety of informal meetings took place; and the more distant Osborne, from which delegates were chauffeured to meetings in a mini-bus, although a few hardy souls ventured the 40-minute walk around the cliff to get to meetings.

The Conference was counted as being the 12th, beginning with the first international Georgist conference called in Ronda, Spain in 1913 - although the Union itself was not formed until 1923 when the Conference was held in Oxford, England. Succeeding Conferences were held in Copenhagen, Denmark, 1926; Edinburgh, Scotland, 1929; London, England, 1936; New York, U.S.A., 1939; Swanwick, England, 1949; Odense, Denmark, 1952; St. Andrews, Scotland, 1955; Hanover, W. Germany, 1959; New York, U.S.A., 1964.

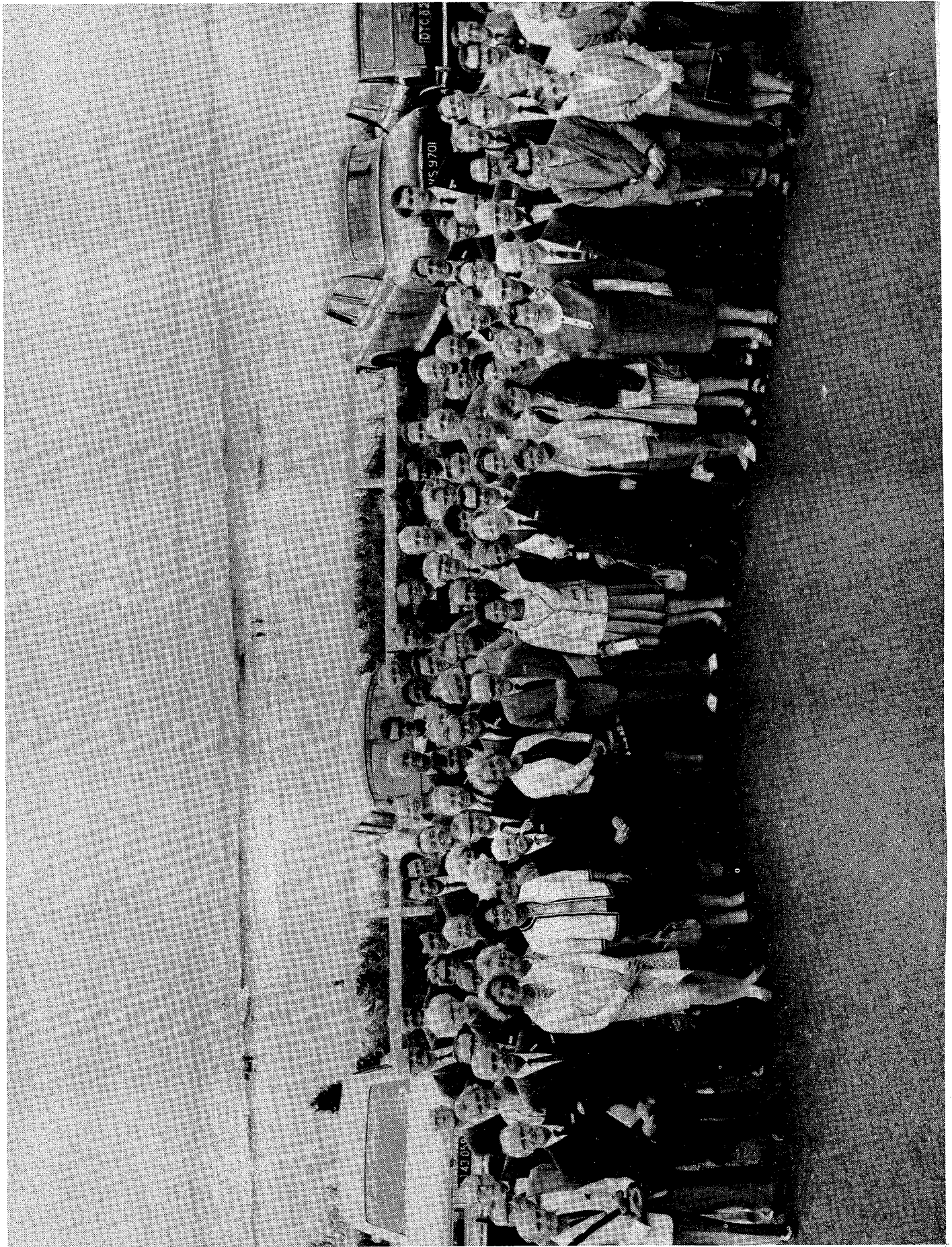
At the Caswell Bay Conference, besides England, Scotland and Wales, there were representatives from the United States, Canada, Denmark, W. Germany, Holland, France, Kenya, Israel, Australia and Hong Kong. In addition, Associate Members of the Conference (not in attendance) represented Norway, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Austria, Greece, New Zealand, South Africa, Nigeria, Japan, Korea, Colombia and the West Indies.

Reports of Progress

Saturday, Sept. 7, was devoted mostly to greeting arrivals and a social evening. The Conference proper began Sunday afternoon with a resounding thump from the gavel of chairman Edgar Buck of Wales. IU President Jos. S. Thompson unfortunately could not be present, but he sent warm greetings and his wishes for a good Conference. There were reports and messages from various countries, including the following:

Miss V.G. Peterson gave an account of the expanding work of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation of New York, which publishes the works of Henry George and related literature. Among other projects are the servicing of college professors interested in land value taxation, participation in urban planning conferences, promoting research on land value taxation, and publishing the scholarly quarterly, The American Journal of Economics and Sociology.

Miss Ilse Harder, International Secretary of the New York Henry George School, told of a German-language conference just ended in St. Gallen, Switzerland (Sept. 3-6). This was an outcome of the German correspondence courses conducted from New York (reported in the Feb. 1967 IU NEWSLETTER). About 30 persons attended, and besides W. Germany, Switzerland and Austria, there were delegates from the U.S., France, Poland, Israel and Jordan. Speeches included papers prepared by Johannes Lubahn on "Residential Land" (read by his son), Heinrich Richard of Bonn on "Mathematical Proofs of Land Value Taxation," Pavlos Giannelias of France on "Difficulties of Land Value Taxation," Philipp Knab of Vienna on "Land and Housing in Austria," David Ascher on "Progress and Time," and Robert Clancy on "Henry George and German Thought."



12th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR LAND-VALUE TAXATION AND FREE TRADE

Caswell Bay, Wales - September 7-11, 1968

Miss Harder also presented a message from Mr. Knab on Georgism in Austria. The influential Society of Housing Research has been induced to put land value taxation on its program for study and discussion. There are other signs of progress, though college economic teachings are not sympathetic to the Georgist philosophy.

A message from Erich Zincke of Hanover, W. Germany, was read by Gustav Bohnsack of the same city. (Mr. Zincke was the translator of the condensed Progress and Poverty into German, which made its appearance at the 1959 Conference in Hanover.) Mr. Zincke pointed out that the Bundesrepublik has already spent 100 billion marks to acquire land for building, and the situation will worsen unless the government discovers land value taxation. Mr. S. Sevenster gave a brief outline of the political situation in Holland, where Georgists are trying to influence parties of both left and right in the direction of land value taxation. Mr. Sevenster has written a book, Creative Justice, which he hopes to publish and distribute.

Dr. Ascher spoke of the land situation in Israel, where the "kibbutzim" (cooperative communities) are on a partial Georgist system, although in the cities there is much land speculation. Mr. A.R. Hutchinson of Victoria, Australia, told of work done in his part of the world. The Land Values Research Group, which he heads, has made several studies on how various townships would be affected by a land-value rating system and have been influential. A study of South Melbourne attracted much notice.

Mr. V. H. Blundell, Secretary of the IU, gave a summary of Georgist activities in Britain. Besides the Henry George School, there is the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values, which seeks to bring sound tax principles to the attention of public officials. Land and Liberty is gaining increasing attention, and from time to time conferences are held which attract influential persons. A number of Georgists have joined the Liberal Party and are exerting influence in its ranks.

Henry George School

The Sunday evening session (chaired by Ronald Banks) was devoted to reports from various Henry George Schools. Robert Clancy, Director of the New York Henry George School, now on a sabbatical leave, summarized the work and objectives of the School in New York and its various extensions in the U.S., Canada and Latin America. Mr. M.S. Lurio of Boston spoke of the revival of his extension, and Mrs. Mina Olson of Chicago mentioned that her extension will be host to the School's 1969 Annual Conference. Mrs. Olson also told of the Chicago Henry George Woman's Club which plans to "go national" next year. James Palmer of San Diego reviewed the work done in California and emphasized the need for education.

Canada was represented by Wilbur Freeland of the Alberta extension who told of substantial progress made in a short time by the School there, under the direction of James Ramsay; and a report from Harry Payne of Montreal was read. Miss Betty Noble of New Zealand could not be present, but sent a report on School efforts there. It is difficult, she said, to awaken interest in our courses in such a completely welfare state country as New Zealand, but some progress is being made.

Kul Bhushan of Kenya told of his Centre for Economic Inquiry, which is part of New Era College. This venture was started as an outcome of the 1964 International Conference in New York, his first, and within four years it has come a long way. Richard Grinham, Mr. Blundell's assistant in London, reviewed the School work in Britain. Besides the London area there are School centres in various parts of the country, and the courses, for which a charge is made, are being continually revised and are attracting a good calibre of student. Arnold A. Weinstein, President of the School in New York, concluded the evening with his hopes and prospects for the future, which include a proposed academic upgrading of the School.

Conferees expressed the view that the educational work of the movement was of the utmost importance, and should be sustained and strengthened.

Practical Questions

On Monday morning, with Mr. Blundell as chairman, Peter Hudson (a local government administrator in the London area) presented his paper on "Population, Environment and Institutions." He pointed out that, instead of viewing with alarm the increase of population, officials should pay more attention to the poor use of land, and the bad effects of land monopoly on housing and production.

Mr. Hudson was followed by Miss Mary Rawson (a town planning consultant of Vancouver, Canada), who spoke on "Speculation, Urban Renewal and Land Value Taxes." She posed the question of the public interest in relation to planning and government acquisition of land, and suggested that this might be a way of establishing the common right to land besides the method of land value taxation.

In the afternoon, William Thompson served as chairman for a session on land value taxation which various tax experts and officials were invited to attend. Mr. Hutchinson told of the progress of land value taxation in his country and asserted that the major factor in Australia's high living standard is the extent to which the rental value of land is collected by government for public services in lieu of taxation on labor and industry.

Ted Gwartney, assessor of Southfield, Michigan, could not be present, and Mr. Clancy summarized his paper, "The Southfield Story: a Lesson in Creative Taxation." Southfield has not only a Georgist assessor but also a Georgist mayor, James Clarkson, and both are making every effort to bring land assessments up to full value, and to give every deduction possible to buildings. The result has been a boom, with a doubling of population and a rate of building higher than any other city in Michigan. Mr. Clancy was assisted by Messrs. Lurio and Weinstein in answering questions about Southfield.

The late afternoon session, chaired by Dr. F.J. Jones, was devoted to questions of free trade and included the following papers: "The Fortunes of Free Trade in Britain," by Roy Douglas; "Free Trade: a Moral Issue," by S.W. Alexander; and "Free Trade, Free Enterprise; an Example," by a Hong Kong correspondent. Dr. Douglas, a university lecturer, reviewed the ups and downs of free trade in England, from the time of Adam Smith, who proposed it with some initial success; but protectionism reigned in the early 19th century until the repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846. The relatively free trade period that followed was one of prosperity for Britain. Free trade was seriously challenged in the late 19th century, but managed to prevail until the first World War. Thereafter it has declined steadily, until now Britain is strongly protectionist. Free traders today must be prepared to exert influence during today's crises, as the free traders did in the 1840's, said Dr. Douglas.

Mr. Alexander, President of the Free Trade League, contended that free trade and free enterprise are moral since they place all persons on a level of liberty and responsibility and grant no special privileges. It is protectionism that is immoral, and it has often used immoral means to gain its ends.

The Hong Kong correspondent (present in person but desiring anonymity) described Hong Kong, one of the very few British crown colonies left. There is a good deal of free enterprise and free trade there, and the land is owned by the crown and leased out. Despite growing problems, such as steady immigration from Red China, the colony is thriving.

Monday evening was a free period and informal groups met and continued the discussions. Meetings resumed on Tuesday morning (with Dorothy Edwards in the chair); when conferees heard Victor G. Saldji (a business executive) criticize "The Land Commission's Betterment Levy." "Betterment" means the increase in land values resulting from public improvements, etc. The Land Commission Act of 1967 has been hailed as a good reform, but despite superficial resemblance to land value taxation,

it really is a burden on improvement. It is a capital levy that applies only when land is improved, as opposed to land value taxation which is applied whether or not land is improved.

Philosophy

Tuesday afternoon was devoted to discussions of philosophic aspects of Georgist teachings, with Fred Jones and James Walker as chairmen. "Henry George and Karl Marx - 30 Years After," was the subject of Mr. F. McEachran's paper. He referred to a paper on George and Marx he had prepared for the 1936 London Conference. At that time, he foresaw an increasing trend toward collectivism, since Marx's socialist solution of the economic problem was much more widely known than George's free-economy solution. He pointed out that events since then have justified his prediction, and he foresees still more collectivism, but feels that the philosophy of freedom has a good chance of eventually prevailing. (Mr. McEachran is the author of a recent book, Freedom - the Only End.)

This dissertation was followed by "Contrasting Philosophies of East and West," by Mr. R.J. Rennie of Glasgow, Scotland, referring to collectivism vs. freedom. The drift toward collectivism, he said, is speeded by unsolved economic problems both in developed and undeveloped countries; and he warned that unless the free world adopts Georgist principles, it is headed for another "dark age."

Frank Dupuis and Robert Clancy shared the platform for a discussion on "Human Rights," occasioned by the 20th anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights. (See page 9.)

Ronald Banks, a leader in the Liberal Party, continued the philosophic theme with a review of "Political Philosophies in Great Britain." The Liberal Party up to 1914 more or less espoused the principles of a free economy, and in its latter days, land reform. But since then, the Conservative and Labour parties have dominated the scene; and especially since the depression, both have stood for planned economies, though in different degrees. But some free-market advocates have joined the Conservative Party, and the Liberal Party is again growing, so there are hopeful signs.

The evening was given over to four short papers by persons associated with the British Henry George School (L.G. Martinsen, chairman). Two were on housing: "House Purchase on the Margin," by Julia Bastian, and "New Homes for a New Society," by F. R. Giggs. "At its root," said Miss Bastian, "the housing problem is simply a problem of poverty." She referred to hidden costs and taxes that make it difficult for the marginal purchaser of a house, but added that even with these costs reduced, the landlords would reap the gain. The price of land must be kept down, and land value taxation is the best way to accomplish this. Mr. Giggs said that millions of families will live in sub-standard houses unless a new approach to housing is made. Present urban renewal programs, involving government planning and spending, are actually promoting the uneconomic use of land. An incentive system must be found, and authorities should study land value taxation from this point of view.

William Thompson in his paper, "Nothing New Under the Sun," quoted the Roman historian Livy who said, in narrating the repeated frustrations of land reformers, "And once again history repeated itself." Mr. Thompson said that history is still repeating itself in the blockage of sound land reform. "Justice and Jurisprudence," submitted by Mr. W.D. Farr, who was not present, was read by Luke Bentley. Mr. Farr cautioned that we should always distinguish between justice, which is the natural law, and jurisprudence, which is man-made law.

Tutors, Town Planning and a Tour

A Henry George School tutors' discussion was moderated by Mr. Clancy on Wednesday morning. ("Teachers" in the U.S., "tutors" in Britain.) Questions were put and

tutors gave views on such topics as opening the first session, the most important points to put across and how to encourage students to continue their association with the School. Though different methods are used in the U.S. (with Progress and Poverty as the text for the basic course) and England (with study materials and reading assignments based on P&P, but no text book), similarities are more striking than differences.

Later in the morning, Gustav Bohnsack (a city official in Hanover) spoke on "Town Planning and Land Value Taxes," with Peter Hudson as chairman. In 1960, a modest tax on vacant land, based on old assessments, was introduced in the German Federal Republic (W.Germany). Even this small measure has been opposed by landowners. We should realize, said Mr. Bohnsack, how powerful are the landed interests, often working behind the scenes. "Fighting for land value taxation is realistic and very hard."

A break in the "very hard" discussions took place Wednesday afternoon - midway in the Conference - with a bus excursion through the Welsh countryside. Old and new were seen side by side - traditional villages - new housing projects, thriving farms and abandoned coal mines - and there was a visit to the interesting Dan-yr-Ogof natural caverns. The late return from this tour gave conferees only time to hear two of the scheduled papers. One was on "Patents: a Right to Property," by N. Bilitch (Jessica Baker, chairman). Mr. Bilitch reviewed current patent practices, and he distinguished between discovery and invention. It is the latter, he said, which can be claimed as a property right. Although critical of patent law, Mr. Bilitch thought that the "right to the fruit of one's intellectual labor" should be respected. The subject was of great interest to conferees and occasioned a good deal of discussion.

"Farm Policies for Land Owners in the U.S.A." was the second paper, presented by Woodrow Williams, an Ohio farmer. He summarized U.S. farm policies which include subsidies and price supports. These have kept up land values and help the big landowners rather than the working farmers. Taxation, too, is detrimental to the working farmer. Mr. Williams was pessimistic about current trends, but hoped that common sense, freedom and land value taxation might ultimately prevail.

Money and Inflation

On Thursday morning there were discussions on money and inflation, with Ronald Banks as chairman. Knud Tholstrup of Denmark, who could not be present, sent his paper, "Why Put Up With Inflation?" He was represented by Mr. A. Christiansen. Mr. Tholstrup's thesis is that inflation is caused more by unproductive drains on the economy than by the government's monetary policies. He cited high taxes, tariffs and privileges as contributing causes but said that land speculation is the biggest cause of inflation and that land value taxation would be its most fundamental cure.

Mr. M.S. Lurio (Boston, U.S.A.) took a different position in his paper, "From Gold to Token Money," holding that sound monetary reforms are needed to prevent runaway inflation. He traced the monetary system, particularly in the U.S., from a gold-backed system to the current Federal Reserve system and Keynesian controls. Mr. Lurio warned against the consequences of debauching the currency, citing historical illustrations, and advocated a return to gold.

Discussions that followed showed much interest in the money question but not very much agreement.

Later in the morning, with Luke Bentley as chairman, David B. Ascher, who is Chief Inspector of Land Registration in Haifa, Israel, spoke on "Land Registration and Land Value." He referred to William the Conqueror's Domesday Book, which included a complete list of land holdings in England. This unfortunately was not kept up. Dr. Ascher proposed a new "Domesday Book," a system of land registrations that would overcome faults of past and present systems - one that would be based on good surveys, would assure title, encourage honesty in reporting by not taxing transactions or registry, and would record the true value of land for tax purposes.

In the afternoon, conferees broke up into informal small group meetings, including the following: a discussion led by Benjamin Smith of Grand Rapids, Michigan, on taxing land according to its capital value; a continuation of the discussion on money, led by Mr. Blundell; a meeting of women, called by Mrs. Mina Olson, seeking a positive role for the women of the Georgist movement; and a ramble through the picturesque hills, with talk of many things, led by Jessica Baker.

A welcome event was a social evening and dance on Thursday evening, organized by Ronald O'Regan, the Conference's social secretary (not to be confused with Rolland O'Regan of New Zealand). There were recitations and group singing, Dutch cheese distributed by Mr. and Mrs. Sevenster, and dancing to live band music. The "Land Song", from the early days of the movement, was not forgotten.

On Friday morning, Kul Bhushan of Nairobi presented "Jambo Kenya" (originally scheduled for Wed. evening), a report on his country, its problems, the need for education, and his own efforts in the New Era College. His presentation was enlivened with color slides of Kenya and a recording of native African music.

At the late morning session, conferees heard a paper submitted by Rolland O'Regan of New Zealand (who could not be present) on "State Leaseholds - the Basis of Land Reform," Presented by Miss V.G. Peterson, chairman. Dr. O'Regan's thesis was that land value taxation is not sufficient for certain types of natural resources such as oil, timber and water. Such resources, he said, ought to be publicly owned and managed in the public interest. He also favored a national leasehold tenure for land in general. Dr. O'Regan realized that his ideas were not those of most Georgists, and indeed in the discussion following this paper, most of those present voiced their disagreement, preferring George's proposal of private tenure with full land value taxation.

Plans for the Future

In the afternoon there was a general meeting of members, with R.J. Rennie in the chair. Minutes of the last meeting, in New York in 1964, were approved, and new officers were elected. Ashley Mitchell was elected as President of the International Union. This distinguished Georgist of Huddersfield, England, served for many years as the Union's Treasurer, and he received a standing ovation after being elected as President. Joseph S. Thompson, the retiring President, was made President Emeritus, and a cable was sent to him, conveying the good wishes of the delegates.

A resolution to change the name of the Union was defeated. Suggestions for the venue of the next International Conference included Ireland, France, Netherlands and Kenya. The Executive Committee will take these suggestions under advisement.

Following the general meeting, there was a meeting of the Executive Committee. A Finance Sub-Committee was elected (also constituted as a Conference Arrangements Committee). Membership dues of the Union were raised to a minimum of fl per year (\$2.40 or equivalent in other currencies). Mr. Clancy was appointed editor of IU NEWSLETTER.

Another general meeting, chaired by Mr. Blundell, discussed papers from absent members. One was from Eric Standring of Perth, Australia, proposing an International Secretariat for the Union, with greatly increased activities. It was generally felt that these proposals were far beyond the present possibilities of the Union, but the spirit in which they were made was appreciated. Another paper was from Spyros Metzidakis of Athens, Greece, on terminology (see page 12). By this time, however, delegates must have been talked out, as there was not much discussion on what might otherwise have been a very provocative subject, judging from the lively discussions in past issues of the NEWSLETTER.

Dr. Ascher presented to the Union a replica of "the oldest map in the world," a 3rd century A.D. map of Palestine which he said was "the beginning of a land value map," showing shipping, fisheries, etc.

Hail and Farewell

The final event of the Conference was the Banquet on Friday evening. Chairman was Edgar Buck, who also opened the first session. After a good repast, speakers included Lancaster M. Greene, Vice-President of the New York Henry George School, and Ashley Mitchell, the new IU President. Both reminisced about long careers in the Georgist movement. Mr. Mitchell recalled his early days when the Liberal Party was actively promoting land value taxation. Mr. Greene told of his first International Conference, the one in London in 1936. Other speakers included Mr. E. Hougaard of Denmark, who spoke briefly, recalling a Danish saying, "Never miss an opportunity to keep your mouth shut"; and Mr. Blundell, who expressed his gratification with the constructive and stimulating nature of the Conference and his anticipation of further progress. Richard Grinham, Mr. Blundell's able assistant, was presented with a gift on the occasion of his coming marriage and the less happy occasion of his leaving the employ of the Henry George School.

The evening wound up with a Welsh choir (the Phil Jones group) of 20 male singers who regaled the conferees with traditional and popular songs in the impressively harmonic Welsh style of singing.

Thus concluded the 12th International Conference for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade. As members drifted off Friday night and Saturday morning - with new friendships made and old friendships renewed - there were many favorable comments on this Conference. Besides the pleasure of meeting with kindred souls and the "re-charging of batteries," delegates left with a wealth of new knowledge and information which they will find useful in promoting the Georgist philosophy back home.

Already many people are looking forward to the next International Conference, wherever and whenever it may be held.

CONFERENCE SIDELIGHTS

One unforgettable personality at the Conference was Mr. F. Dyer of Cornwall, 90 years old. He frequently got up to speak from the floor, but unfortunately, not every one caught every word he uttered. However, he received every one's undivided attention when, on the social evening, he danced gaily around the room with Julia Bastian... At the other end of the age-scale was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Walker, 7-month-old Jane. She put up with the entire Conference good-naturedly, and even appeared to be enjoying herself... A daily sight was the tide at Caswell Bay. It ebbed and flowed a long distance over the smooth wide beach. Some intrepid souls took a dip early in the morning. Others waited for the warmth of the day for their dip, at the risk of missing a speech or two... Liquid refreshments in the hotel lounges lubricated many a late session, and Americans learned how to order a half bitter for one bob and four. Especially comforting after the chilly Dan-yr-Ogof caverns... Nearest town was The Mumbles. Nobody in or out of this little town seemed to know how it got its name. An old Britannica (under "Oystermouth") reveals the following: "The headland terminates in two rocky islands, which to sailors coming up the channel would appear like the breasts of 'mammals,' whence the comparatively modern name, The Mumbles, is supposed to be derived"... Your editor spent a pleasant post-Conference week-end in Devon, courtesy of Ronald O'Regan, the Conference's social secretary, who went beyond the call of duty with this invitation... Mr. and Mrs. Ben Smith of Grand Rapids, Mich., took a post-Conference trip to Scotland and Ireland, talking Georgist philosophy. Ben and the philosophy were featured in an article in the Irish Independent. It will be interesting to hear of other post-Conference peregrinations... A welcome post-Conference event was a social evening at the London Henry George School, hosted by Vic Blundell, where some who had been to the Conference met some who hadn't. One visitor was Prof. C. Lowell Harris of Columbia University, New York... Some Conference delegates went on to Edinburgh for another conference - that of the Liberal Party - to exert some influence there...

HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE UNITED NATIONS

1968 is the 20th Anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and has been designated Human Rights Year. In the Georgist philosophy, the concept of rights is very important, and the UN Declaration has attracted the attention of Georgists. Following are excerpts from two papers submitted to the 12th International Conference for LVT and FT, and from two other articles on the subject.

* * *

The American Declaration of Independence, 1776, and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of Citizens, 1789...were the culmination of a century of active thought... It is like a cold douche to turn from these declarations to the text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights - later referred to as the Charter - originally approved by the United Nations Assembly at Paris, 10th December, 1948, and now, in this officially-appointed Human Rights Year, due to be celebrated and reviewed at a meeting of delegates in Teheran, December 1968...

The inconsistencies and evasions of the Charter appear, on examination, to have arisen from the perception that under what was called freedom the mass of people found and still find themselves threatened by poverty and unemployment, so that any new statement of human rights must somehow help to allay this fear. The sponsors of the document had either to show that these evils were caused by violation of essential rights, and to denounce such violation, or to re-state human rights in such a way as to accord with artificial measures of protection and relief, as if these evils were natural and inevitable. They chose the latter alternative and produced a document which the most selfish land owner or trade monopolist could sign; but it has done little or nothing to enhance the value of human rights in the eyes of the people.

* * *

- FRANK DUPUIS

In the United Nations Declaration of Rights, there is a recitation of a lot of things the framers think would be nice to do...but nothing about the right to use land or the right to the fruit of one's labor in any of the 30 articles.

I have a suspicion we are not going to get the full "single tax" adopted unless we can regain recognition of natural rights. As Jefferson and his fellow thinkers formulated the rights that inhere in the person - life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness - and political forms to help implement them; so George and his fellow-thinkers formulated the means to realize these rights in the economic domain - the right of access to land, the right to the fruit of one's labor, the free market, and the duty not to interfere with one's neighbor in the exercise of his rights.

Without this recognition, planners might become interested in land value taxation as one instrument among many to plan society - but the results would be very different from what Georgists are seeking.

* * *

- ROBERT CLANCY

At the meeting of the Esperanto Section of the UNESCO Friends' Club in Barcelona on February 17, Professor Jose Anglada lectured in Esperanto on "Human Rights and Social Science." On account of this the 20th Anniversary of the UN Declaration being proclaimed Human Rights Year, the theme of this lecture was timely indeed. Further, the mention of Social Science evoked the thought that some new and unusual ideas would be expressed. And this was exactly the case, because the lecturer did not limit himself, as is customary on these occasions, to praising the UN Declaration, but dealt also with "The Way to Permanent Peace and General Prosperity," citing the Declaration of Fundamental Human Rights approved in 1949 by the 7th International Conference for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade. (Copies of the texts of both these declarations in Esperanto were distributed to the meeting.) (contd.)

Regrettably, the UN Declaration makes no mention of those fundamental human rights, which are based on premises of Social Science that must be known before it is possible to understand the importance of the matter, both nationally and internationally... This science gives the basic solution to social problems. For permanent peace and general prosperity, it would be worth investigating and studying the fundamental causes of poverty and war and how they can be eliminated.

- From Boletin de la Federacion Espanola de Esperanto, June 1968
(Translated by Mrs. Lynne Nichols)

* * *

The most helpful way in which the United Nations could help to secure the rights of humanity would be to revise the Charter. Possibly, the initiative now taken to make 1968 a "Year of Human Rights" is the prelude to calling a Conference for reviewing the Charter.

Anything said or written to make natural law an inspiration then must be warmly welcomed. Papers presented at various conferences of the International Union could give valuable impulses. There are also worthy treatises by members of our movement, along the lines of natural law, such as Philipp Knab's Die Steuer im Lichte des Nat-urlichen Rechtes (Vienna, 1957) and F. McEachran's Freedom - The Only End (London, 1966).

The most powerful ally for any kind of reform is public opinion. Therefore, the educational and propaganda work carried on by the International Union, the Henry George Schools, and kindred institutions, is of the highest importance. Its keynote is Justice, which includes Liberty.

- OLE WANG, Tonsberg, Norway

----- o o o -----

WHAT IS A MIRACLE?

Two men were out on a country walk and one was trying to define a miracle to the other. He said: "You can see that cow over there contentedly grazing. Well that is not a miracle. And you can see the green grass and the thistles where the cow is grazing. That is not a miracle. And if you look aloft you can see and hear the skylark singing. That also is not a miracle. But if you saw that cow sitting on a thistle and singing like a lark, that would be a miracle."

- From "Justice and Jurisprudence" by W.D. Farr

----- o o o -----

In the July-August 1968 issue of Vaterland, a German homeowner's magazine (edited by Joh. Droste, who attended the Georgist conference in St. Gallen, Switzerland), Henry George's picture was featured on the front cover, with the following caption:

Henry George / *1839 in Philadelphia, / 1897 in New York / ein Mann, dem die Zukunft gehört. Die kapitalistischen Staaten werden sich ohne die Bodenwertsteuer nicht retten können.

(Henry George - born 1839 in Philadelphia, died 1897 in New York. A man to whom the future belongs. The capitalist nations will not find a solution to their problems without land value taxation.)

Press publicity on the Georgist philosophy and the St. Gallen Conference (see page 2) were also obtained in the St. Galler Tagblatt, Die Ostschweiz and Volksstimme.

IDEAS ON PROMOTING THE GEORGIST PHILOSOPHY

LOCAL GOVERNMENT - the starting place By H.T.A. McGahan, New Zealand

I'm sure we'd make far more progress by adopting a legal approach rather than an economic one. It would bring us down to earth and we single-taxers would be the greatest gainers.

Democracy can be restored only when a suitably re-organized local government is created with the power of collecting the total sum of taxation payable by the individual. Hence the name "single-tax" isn't so outmoded as some of our colleagues imagine...

We have just had our fourth Local Government Commission set up. The three previous ones achieved little, mainly because of the narrow parochialism adopted by local councils. But I feel certain that this one is going to make drastic changes. All the signs seem to point that we are going to have some form of provincial government again, though the name regional is more often used, and I'm doing my best to help the Commission along. At the recent Counties' Conference I made it my business to meet all its members, plus other important people associated with local government. These people know what my county is doing in improved local government and I hope I can turn our experience to the eventual benefit of local government and the single-tax.

TEACHING JUDGES By Benjamin F. Smith, Grand Rapids, Mich., U.S.A.

If we establish before the fact (LVT) that the legal land tax base is the land price plus the capitalized tax, we will, in effect have Land Value Taxation. It might be much, much easier to "teach" several lawyers and judges the facts of life than a majority of the people. The Negro civil rights revolution got its first victory in the courts, and so might we.

A SCHOOL ON WHEELS By Jeremiah F. Enright, Liverpool, N.Y., U.S.A.

Perhaps we could get Henry George buses to travel the countryside of each nation as a "Library and School on wheels." These H.G. buses could be driven by retired Georgists who like to travel! Some of these buses could be tractor and trailer setups. They would serve in three ways. Teaching the courses nightly, at a given stop-over; a Georgist library to sell our books, and lend out; and to recruit students for stationary schools and correspondence courses. These buses and tractor-trailer trucks could have sleeping quarters. The H.G. buses or trucks would be given schedules and two way telephones and two-way radios installed in each, to keep in touch with home headquarters while on the road. The schedules would be set up to have stop-overs for 12 weeks each at various villages to hold classes and bring Henry George into hard-to-reach places. The home of the School and its courses would be printed on the sides of each bus and tractor-trailer. This would be free advertisement at its best!

----- o O o -----

MAYOR DALEY of Chicago achieved notoriety by his handling of rioters during the Democratic Convention. Perhaps a word to be said in his favor is that he has been proclaiming September 2nd as Henry George Day in Chicago for several years. This is Henry George's birthday, and the coincidence of its coming on Labor Day this year (an American holiday falling on the first Monday of September) was noted in the Proclamation. "Labor, too," read the Mayor's Proclamation, in part, "must be reminded of the great contribution this man gave exposing the deplorable condition of labor in his time and drawing blueprints for labor's future." (A copy of the Proclamation was sent to us by Robert A. King.)

TERMINOLOGY

LANGUAGE AND REFORM By Spyros N. Metzidakis, Athens, Greece

It seems to me that from the time of Babel, people have not understood that in order to make possible the creation of a just and moral world based on peace and fraternity they must teach themselves to understand each other. This fact is not in its nature a question of difference in language. It is of no importance that I was originally taught to speak in Greek, most of you in English, and some of you in some other language, but it is of great importance that a German attributes to the word "Gleichberechtigung" a different meaning from that attributed by an Englishman to the word "Equality."

Thus when a German says that "Die Gleichberechtigung ist ein erforderliches Element jeder entwickelten Gesellschaft" and an Englishman that "Equality is an essential element of any advanced society," though they apparently agree, they substantially disagree, since a quite different condition is meant by each one of them. And this disagreement will naturally show itself in the definition of the measures that need to be taken to make this equality a reality - since two different aims are to be achieved. Accordingly, to bring about unanimity in measures, the formation of an "international language of meanings" instead of an "international language of words" must be our prominent care. This "international language of meanings" is what I have defined as the "same kind of language"...

I would therefore suggest that Conferences of Social Science be initiated and that the subject of the first conference be the definition of the terms that are most frequently used during any discussion on economic and social matters. These definitions, as determined by the Conference and unanimously accepted by its members will be fixed and the terms used in the strict sense during the following conferences. The terms that we must define should begin with the most basic ones, such as land, labor, capital; extend to the more complicated ones, such as productive procedure, distribution of wealth, trade, property; and reach out to the real meaning of such terms as liberty, equality and non-interference.

A CLARIFICATION By John T. Tetley, New Jersey, U.S.A.

I have a smattering of General Semantics and am impressed by the statement, "the map is not the territory - the word is not the thing." We use words as labels for concepts and of course, we use words of high abstraction.

"Rent" is a high abstraction word... I start with David Ricardo's formulation of the observation that some land yields a product which is in excess of what the same application can secure from the least productive land in use. Said Ricardo, I believe, "The rent of land is determined..." To clarify this, for my own thinking, one bushel of turnips may be produced on the land - least productive in use, and on "B" land, two bushels of turnips. As I understand it the additional bushel of turnips may be considered - labeled "Rent." Whoever holds the title deed to land "B" might permit another to grow turnips on this land, providing one bushel of turnips were handed over to such title holder (sometimes referred to, or considered, payment and receipt of "Rent").

"FRUITLESS WRANGLES" By Janice Fielding, Kent, England

Wouldn't our enemies rejoice at the thought of us dissipating our energies in fruitless wrangles over names and words - as if the general public whom we are trying to influence gives two hoots what hair-splitting definition we use. As for the opposition, I bet they have no difficulty in defining their terms. I bet they don't waste their time arguing about rent - they know what it is only too well. They spend their time more usefully sabotaging our work while we are pre-occupied with words and not deeds.