



ABEL BRINK

JOINT SECRETARY OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION  
FOR LAND VALUE TAXATION AND FREE TRADE

Among the younger members of the Danish Henry George movement no one is better known than Abel Brink for his devotion and his tireless energy. He is the kind of protagonist who is satisfied only in the assurance that with each day something has been done to advance the cause he has at heart. Prepared to tackle any kind of work if no other volunteer is available at the moment, he does so without any thought of credit or prominence for himself. He gives of his talents profusely and unselfishly; but his strength and his influence rest not alone in that; it is his modesty and his unfailing loyalty in all circumstances that have earned for him the high regard of his fellows.

Born in 1886, in Jutland, in the village of Askov, near the famous Folk High School, which is the "university" of the other high schools of the same kind, he had the advantage of that environment in his early years and through it became acquainted with the ideas of Henry George. He started life as a farm labourer and after having attended an agricultural school he migrated to the United States where he spent about three years, working mostly on the land. During that period he took a course of study at the agricultural department of the University of Minnesota. Absorbed by his interest in land value taxation he returned to Denmark, as he has himself expressed it, "to advance the cause of Henry George" in his native land. In 1914 he entered the University of Copenhagen and in 1918 graduated with honours in Political Economy. He obtained a position as Assistant Secretary in the Income Tax department, and a year after joined the staff of the Supreme Valuation Board, where he is now Secretary of the rural section and is chiefly concerned with the valuation of farm lands. In this official capacity he has done very valuable work and his training and experience, which he has gained in the field in every part of the country as a supervising officer, has made him an accepted authority on the subject of land valuation and agricultural economics generally.

The civil servant in Denmark is not, like his fellow in Great Britain, debarred from taking an active part in public affairs. He enjoys a large measure of independence, and with that freedom Abel Brink has not

spared himself as an advocate of the land value policy. For a number of years he acted as President of the Copenhagen League, and later as Secretary of the National Henry George Union. He has traversed Denmark from end to end as a lecturer and twice he has been candidate for Parliament, standing in the interest of the League of Justice. As an authority on the question of land value taxation, he gave informing evidence before the Parliamentary Commission on the Housing Question in 1918, putting before the Commission the facts regarding the progress of land value legislation in other countries. In fact, this side of our question is one to which he has devoted special research and he sees to it that all official records, reports and statistics concerned with this progress are available in the library of the Valuation Board for the use of his colleagues. He is joint author with Jørgen Pedersen of a valuable pamphlet on the subject and he makes it a frequent theme in his journalistic contributions to the Henry George journals and the metropolitan and provincial newspapers.

He attended the International Conference in Oxford in 1923 with Mrs. Brink as one of the representatives of Denmark and took a notable part in the proceedings with his address on "Henry Georgeism in Denmark: Experiences and Results." At Oxford, he was glad to make the closer acquaintance of many with whom he had been in correspondence for years. When the next International Conference—at Copenhagen last year—was contemplated, it was natural that he threw himself into the preparations with enthusiasm. His acknowledged position in the Danish as in the International movement found him well-placed with F. Folke, the President of the Henry George Union, as a responsible organizer acting in conjunction with the United Committee in London. An enormous amount of work fell on his shoulders; and here again, his readiness to do everything possible for the success of the undertaking, his modesty and his self-sacrifice made him a colleague with whom it is an honour to be associated. The outstanding result of the Conference, as our readers know, was the formation of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade and Abel Brink is one of the four who were appointed joint secretaries. In all his work, Mr. Brink has the sympathetic understanding and warm-hearted support of Mrs. Brink.

A. W. M.

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