

INVITATION TO NEXT YEAR'S INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

THE EIGHTH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE TO PROMOTE LAND VALUE TAXATION AND FREE TRADE WILL BE HELD JULY 29 TO AUGUST 4, IN ODENSE, DENMARK

Convenors: The International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade and the Danish Henry George Union.

Seat of the Conference: The Folk High School, belonging to the Association of the Smallholders in the Island of Funen. Situate about 2½ miles from Odense, the School has its own extensive grounds and is a new and splendidly equipped building. Erected in 1945, it takes the place of the one that was destroyed by bombardment during the war.

Membership: Open to all who are duly enrolled members either of the International Union or of the Danish Henry George Union (Annual Membership fee of either body is a minimum of 5s.) and who pay the special Conference Fee of £1 any time before the Conference starts. The fee is waived for students of the Henry George School of Social Science and of the Danish Ecotechnical School.

Stay at Conference: The School is a residential college. Terms for full board and lodging (in twin-bedded rooms) will be 12s. 6d. per day (English) or \$2 (American or Canadian). Special terms for sharing large dormitories will be 8s. 6d. per day—All subject to any alteration in the exchange value of Danish money.

Programme: This is being prepared and will be international in its scope in all that is relevant to the educational and legislative advancement of the Henry George movement. Papers will be presented on the principle and policy; its advocacy; its practical application; reports from various countries; its importance for peace and prosperity the world over. Excursions, Public Demonstration, etc.

Travel and Fares: From England, the main party will leave from Harwich on Monday, July 28th, to be on the spot on July 29. Others travelling from elsewhere should time their arrival in Odense not later than (say) 6 p.m., July 29. Fares from London to Odense (return) are at present: First class throughout £25; First class on boat and third on rail £23 10s.; Second class on boat and third on rail £16 10s. (Second class on boat is little inferior to First class.) Special arrangements are in view for youth parties travelling in the "between decks" accommodation. Return fare will be approximately £9 per person.

Touring in Denmark: Members intending to make a more extensive stay in Denmark (either before or after the Conference are asked kindly to arrange that for themselves through the usual tourist agencies. But as it may be possible to make up parties to go off on such tour immediately after the Conference, those who would like to join should communicate their wish to the Union, saying how many days they can spare.

It is essential to give very early notice of the intention to come to the Conference and to give date when it is proposed to travel to Denmark, saying whether through England or not, because all accommodations must be booked well in advance.

The International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade, 4 Great Smith Street, London, S.W.1, and Henry George Foreningen, Osterled 3, Copenhagen Ø.

CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT IN CALIFORNIA

The first week of August, 1951, marked the official beginning of operations by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation of the vast land reclamation, water and power project, the Central Valley Project of California. The huge Shasta and Friant Dams, Tracy pumping plant, Mendota, Contra Costa, Friant Kern Canals will help insure the 500 mile long Central Valley against drought, or flood, and substantially increase the present supply of hydro-electric power. These great public improvements have taken 14 years to build, and cost about \$700 million, all of which has been advanced by the U.S. Treasury, and most of which is "reimbursable under the Reclamation Law."

The Reclamation Law is a federal statute. The U.S. Constitution contains limitations upon the power of the federal government to tax land values, which the courts have construed to mean that any such tax must not only be laid upon all land "uniformly," but that it must be apportioned according to population. Thus the land in a single valley could not be specially taxed by federal law, no matter how much benefited by a federal built irrigation system. The federal authorities can get revenue by selling water and power to land holders, or their tenants. They can refuse to sell water for more than 160 acres to any one person, but they cannot tax land values to pay the cost of public improvements, or compel those who fail, neglect or refuse to use the land to pay anything towards the cost of the project.

It was the same inability or unwillingness of Italy to get landholders, as such, to pay the cost of Mussolini's vast "Bonifica Integrale" reclamation projects, of 1928-34, that has contributed to inflation, and made the task of opposing political opportunists so very complicated, since the last war.

Knowing full well that the U.S. Constitution, as now interpreted by the courts, does not allow the federal Congress to recover the cost of a Central Valley Project, Tennessee Valley Project or other Public Improvement, from those holding land benefited directly by such costly works, the landlords, chambers of commerce and countless "front" organisations with high paid lobbyists in Washington, are vigorously joining forces in support of flood control, irrigation, harbour improvement and other projects costing more billions than I would dare mention. Senator Paul Douglas, of Illinois, has labelled many of these "pork barrel" projects, and tried to slow them down. The support he was able to muster has been quite insignificant.

Had the sovereign State of California, instead of urging the federal government to take over the work, enacted state laws to govern its fiscal affairs, the cost of the project could have been rested on the benefited land, just as the California Irrigation District Law has long provided. The economic, sociological and political problems ahead are profound.

J. RUPERT MASON.

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