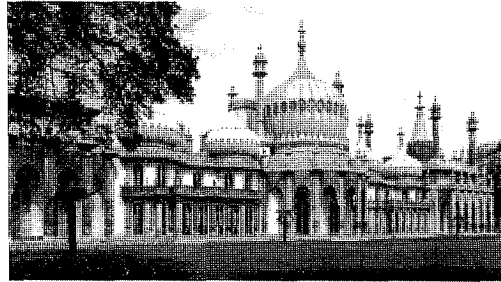


Our Future

The Twenty-Second International Union Conference in Brighton, England, July 27th to August 3rd

Report by Barbara Sobrielo

Delegates arrived during Sunday and were occupied with settling into their rooms at the Royal Albion Hotel overlooking the sea and the pier at Brighton, greeting old friends and meeting new ones. In all, there were 104 people from nine different countries. Official proceedings began after dinner that evening, with a short address of welcome from President Godfrey Dunkley.



The Royal Pavilion in Brighton

Monday morning was devoted to a celebration of the centennial of Henry George's death. Poignant readings were presented from obituaries of George, and Dr. Robert Andelson contributed a most thoughtful address. That afternoon, representatives of different Georgist organisations round the world summarized their attempts to bring Georgist influence to bear in the "first Georgist century".

Fred Harrison looked forward to the next century, and spoke of the cycles of chaos and stability that might give opportunities for getting the Georgist message across. Drew Harris, President of the Council of Georgist Organisations, discussed principles of organisational transformation. In a similar vein, Godfrey Dunkley and John Loveless examined the structures of the Georgist movement and suggested ways to make its message more attractive.

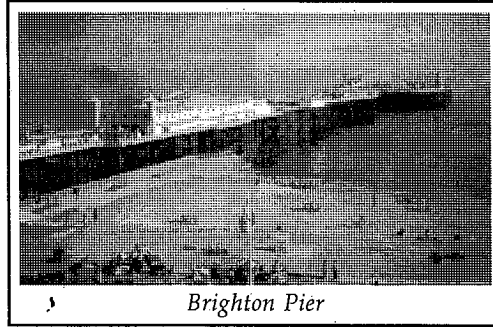
After dinner, Alanna Hartzok reported on her work as the IU Representative with the United Nations. Members were heartened by her energy and commitment. She was joined by Svend Dinsen, who reported on his involvement with Alanna at the NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations) conference in Denmark in 1995 and the Habitat meeting in Istanbul in 1996.

Tuesday morning began with the IU General Business meeting, chaired by the outgoing President, Godfrey Dunkley. The gratitude of members was expressed to Godfrey — and to his wife, Yvonne. Dr. Robert Andelson was elected as the new President of the International Union. The business meeting was resumed on Thursday, when the rest of the officers were elected.

Michael Hudson's talk, "Quantifying Rent: Tax Reform and the Barriers to Research," was well illustrated with graphs and charts, making a complex subject easy to grasp. Many members praised the high professional level of this presentation.

The afternoon brought the first of the Action Pact sessions — devoted to considering the Movement's future — led by Ted Gwartney and Frank Peddle. Sessions were devoted to exploring effective Georgist responses to such contemporary issues as the Welfare State, a Federal Land Tax, a Land Price Index, Budgetary Reform and Urban Crisis.

After dinner, there was a civic reception at the famous Brighton Pavilion, built by George IV when Prince of Wales. An opportunity was then afforded to tour the main rooms of the Pavilion and learn its history — and hear some amusing anecdotes.



Brighton Pier

On Wednesday morning, Cornelia Wunsch, an invited guest speaker from Germany, gave us a talk on land sales in ancient Babylon — which was extremely apropos of modern land problems! She was followed by James Robertson, on the role of rent in sustainable development — another paper that was particularly appreciated. The full text will be printed in due course in *Land and Liberty*.

The afternoon saw the second Action Pact session, led by Fred Harrison and Nic Tideman. Again, members pursued particular topics, such as Ecology, Religion, Aid Agencies, Russia, Law, and The Constitution. Later a questionnaire was distributed to members by Fred Harrison in order to distill the conclusions of the afternoon's discussions.

The day ended after dinner with a "book evening" at which some reprinted titles and new books were displayed. These are featured in the Publications List of the Henry George Foundation of Great Britain. The authors of some of them gave short talks and afterwards signed copies for purchasers, all helped along with a glass of wine.

There was much interest on Thursday morning in the very well-illustrated and organized presentation of the work done in Cape Town, South Africa in preparation for a site value rating

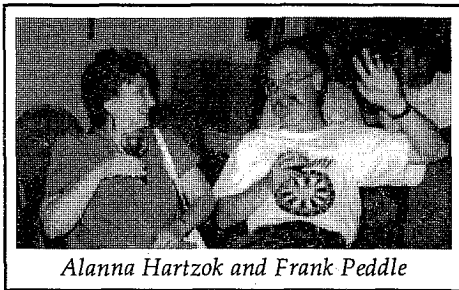
system. The group of eleven South Africans made a very valuable contribution, not only with the formal talks but with their social involvement throughout the week. In addition to the advertised sessions, special meetings were held between the Cape Town municipal representatives and a picked group of experts, whose professional knowledge and experience were felt likely to be of practical value.



The Sygmans from South Africa, with Godfrey Dunkley

After coffee a young man, Tony Gosling, representing "The Land is Ours" campaign, described its take-over of a derelict site in south-west London. Tony illustrated his talk with a series of coloured slides showing, amongst other things, quite complex structures erected from materials to hand — and the provisioning of the groups by growing food on waste land. He certainly got the sympathy of members, and we could hardly get more close to "grass roots" than with this session!

In the afternoon, most members went on a coach outing to Firle Place, the ancestral home of the Gage family. It offered a glimpse of how land rent sustained the British aristocracy, and was an enjoyable break from the rigours of papers and discussion.



Alanna Hartzok and Frank Peddle

Russian representatives Galina Titova and Tanya Roskoshnaya occupied the whole of Friday morning

with an account of the current state of play in promoting Georgist ideas in Russia.

After dinner, some members felt sufficiently energetic to take a walk down Brighton's famous Palace Pier, and some dignified delegates were seen on the carousel and even the ghost train.

Saturday saw the presentation of short papers with offerings from Harry Pollard, George Curtis, David Smiley, Karl Williams and Julian Gross. The subject matter varied widely from Christian ethics within the Georgist message to methods of putting over the idea in a classroom situation.

In the evening the Banquet took place, with entertainment by

a group of eight barbershop singers from a nearby town. During the week the dinner menus had reflected the dishes of different countries and these were followed by raffles with prizes donated by different nationalities. The Banquet evening raffle had many prizes from South Africa, where the generosity of the Cape Town contingent helped to ensure that nearly everyone won something.

The Conference closed with a session, chaired by Ole Lefmann, followed by a barbecue lunch on the hotel terrace overlooking the sea. The organisers received praise for the smooth running of the Conference and choice of the hotel by the sea. The Conference Arrangements Committee would like to thank all the delegates for the helpful part they played in this successful gathering, and we look forward to the next occasion when, hopefully, we shall all meet again, and more will be able to join us.

Excerpts from Dr. Robert Andelson's Keynote Address

Probably no human being who ever lived is more worthy of being memorialized than "the Prophet of San Francisco." Yet he would be the first to say that memorializing Henry George is not what we, as a movement, should be primarily about. Not words of tribute to his name but action to advance his cause, is what he would expect of us. Therefore, my remarks this morning are not uttered merely to express reverence and appreciation for one whose nobility of character matched the brilliance of his intellect. They are uttered, above all, to prepare us for the ensuing days this week in which together we shall be seeking more effective ways to move his vision toward reality....

Our movement has managed to survive while [others] have vanished, because of the intrinsic truth of the idea for which it stands. It is a testimony to the power of that idea that now for a century since its great expositor drew final breath, even when the textbooks relegated him to a mere footnote... even when false nostrums like Marxism and Keynesianism crowded to the forefront, there has never been wanting an elect few, a "remnant" as Albert Jay Nock, echoing Isaiah, put it, to catch the vision and keep the flame alive.... But we keep the flame alive, not as an object in itself, but so that when the opportune time arrives, torches may be kindled from that flame that will light the way to a more just society. My friends, I submit to you in all sincerity that that opportune time is now upon us.

Things may look depressing on the surface, but... our window of opportunity is open wider than it ever was before. Whole new frontiers beckon for the application of Henry George's insights.... The computer has made available to us powerful new ways of concretizing and refining our message... and the Internet, new ways of disseminating it.... Another promising new frontier is today's concern for the environment. Another is public disillusionment with long-entrenched systems of taxation.... Another is Russia. Who could have imagined, when I spoke at Cambridge in 1984, that only seven years later the Iron Curtain would collapse?