

## Sunshine State Conference Echoes

WHAT is Florida—a place with a mood all its own. It is south but not southern — in the U. S. but sometimes in architecture and accents, quite foreign. In this hospitable climate the 24th annual HGS conference was held in the Barcelona Hotel in Miami Beach from July 3rd to 7th. Extension directors came from ten states and from Canada, Colombia and the Dominican Republic.

A leisurely registration and visiting session during the first afternoon was presided over by sisters Roma and Neva Bianco of New York. Hostess badges were also worn by Mrs. Ray Abrams of Miami Beach and Dorothy Sara, the handwriting expert who made several radio and TV appearances during the weekend. Miss Sara has a long teaching record at the HGS headquarters in New York.

After a buffet supper there was a social evening with Ray Abrams, Miami Beach HGS director, as host, calling on various persons with a flair for entertaining. George Collins of Philadelphia, and later Lancaster M. Greene of New York, sang with joy and verve. Claude W. Arnold of Fairhope, Julian Hickok of Philadelphia, Robert Tideman of San Francisco, and Robert Clancy of New York told entertaining stories. And so to bed, but not until various groups had set off on short walking expeditions along Miami's "gold coast."

July Fourth was a busman's holiday for HG buffs. There were meetings all day, but the seasoned Georgist seems to revel in unlimited listening to his favorite subject. In the morning two sessions ran concurrently. One was a discussion on public relations with James Ramsay, Calgary, Alberta director, as chairman, in which Harry Polard, Los Angeles director, explained

very simply how they get publicity—lots of it—and how they prepare releases and arrange TV interviews. As the interest in panel shows has grown, he has had to "produce professionals." To do this he arranged practice sessions for TV programs composed of graduates who have now become adept at interviewing. Behind all this is the thought of generating interest in people to learn more about the Henry George philosophy.

In Long Island, Stan Rubenstein, the extension director who gave the basic course on radio for 13 weeks, has been invited to continue it for another 13 weeks. Where a year ago he would have thought it hard, he said he was amazed to find how easy it is. His enthusiasm about this "idea presentation" comes through in the broadcasts.

Henry B. Cramer, a member of the San Diego HGS board of directors, told of interest and responses gained from writing letters to county, city and state officials regarding specific local cases where properties are known to be underassessed. He mentioned several persons now in politics who at some time have been influenced by such Henry George material as the survey in San Diego. The message is important, he said.

Robert Tideman reported on excellent TV shows which have been briefly reported in HGN from time to time. The present Bay Area plan is to compose several documentaries from films that were made during long taped interviews. He also commended E. Robert Scrofani for the excellent program and skillful management of the Property Tax Conference for Bay Area Decision Makers in June (July HGN reviewed several addresses briefly on pages 3 to 6).

George L. Collins, Philadelphia director, urged use of current magazine articles dealing with urban problems, land use and taxation, as these become more frequent. He believes in building on what others have said in national signed articles where they can be focused on the relevance of the HG proposal. Classes can benefit by connecting ideas to which they have been exposed in the news and it is profitable to use land price and use situations as they occur, he affirms. Such references can also be useful in copy designed to announce the course where students are invited to study the proposed remedy, land value taxation.

The other session, in Spanish, was on mass media and the Henry George reform in Latin America. A resolution was passed leading to the exchange of taped programs for use in classes and radio stations. Spanish Georgist magazines and literature will also be distributed free of charge to key personnel connected with the mass media of the Spanish speaking world.

Mitchell S. Lurio, Boston director and trustee of the HGS, spoke of studies he made of a book *The Theory and Measurement of Rent* by Professor Joseph S. Keiper and associates, of New York University. Mr. Lurio criticized the book for falling far short of an understanding of the scope and extent of the rent of land. He then introduced Ted Gwartney of Southfield, Michigan, who gave a pictorial account of the city's phenomenal growth (see page 5).

George Collins opened the evening meeting and Robert Clancy very appropriately reflected on the American credo as expressed in the Declaration of Independence (see page 9). The next speaker, Stan Rubenstein, also opened up a broad sweep of history and made a strong plea for more use of historical background in presenting our point of

view (see page 11). These two talks contained such thoughtful elements that they came up as topics of conversation in several small groups after the meeting.

It was nice, on Friday morning to hear from Domenic Della Volpe, honorary dean of the Henry George School, after many years of residence in Florida. In teaching, he urged the importance of stressing the differences to be found in classes and terminology. For while taking into account more of the distinguishing features within broad categories would make more work and create more labels, much would be gained in accuracy.

Loral Swofford, St. Louis director, was chairman at this teaching session in which methods of testing students came in for a thoughtful discussion. Some felt that a set of standardized tests should be made available for extension directors. The chairman discussed the use of basic HGS material as part of a comprehensive course in economics for which academic credit is given at Sanford Brown College in St. Louis and told how testing was used in this experiment. He also reported on a continuing program in which clergymen of all faiths join a round table discussion of the moral aspects of the Georgist concept.

Pleasant indeed was the afternoon boat trip to Villa Vizcaya, the beautiful estate, now open to the public, built by James Deering—the man who made life easier for American farmers by manufacturing plows and other machinery. The great mansion, gardens and museums, reminiscent of a statelier time, bring the art and life of that era within the scope of an afternoon's visit for thousands of tourists.



The evening program was illuminating to many who had never met the Latin American personnel of the school. Hernan Sanin, the HGS director from Colombia, presided. He is a quiet man with impressive dignity who has created something of a benevolent revolution in his own right in Cali. There he has introduced hundreds to HG theories and in addition to teaching classes he is now editing and publishing a monthly magazine *Divulgacion*, as reported in the July HGN. Talks by Lucy De Silfa and William Camargo completed the program.

Saturday morning Robert Benton, Michigan director, called up the perennial topic, fund raising — but Robert Tideman met this with a disclaimer. Despite the fact that the Northern California extension credits more contributions than all other extensions combined, the San Francisco executive secretary said they don't "raise funds." Rather, they stress what the school is giving—increased identity, a program, a philosophy. The *getting* just comes naturally. When the checks roll in they are accepted gratefully but without surprise.

A popular session at each annual conference is the one known as Reports of Progress, where spokesmen from related Henry George groups give highlights of the year's work. Mina Olson, executive secretary of the Chicago extension, presided and told of the close association between the Henry George Woman's Club and the Henry George School and said that every member was a qualified teacher of basic economics. The club's programs are planned around economics and social studies. Mrs. Otto Siebenmann, the president, is also president of the Ninth District Illinois Federation of Women's Clubs, with which the Henry George Woman's Club has been affiliated since its founding in 1939.

## Schalkenbach

The first speaker, Miss V. G. Peterson, executive secretary of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, prefaced her report on the Foundation's work with the announcement that Perry I. Prentice has assumed direction of their program. A well-known speaker and writer associated with the Time-Life publications, Mr. Prentice was formerly the editor and publisher of *House & Home* and was responsible for its famous "land issue" in August, 1960. One of his many activities is the organizing and moderating of round tables discussing problems of the day. He is now at work on another of these, scheduled for mid-September, on the subject, "Where Should Our Cities Get Their Money From?" This round table will receive Schalkenbach support.

Remarking that our efforts are sometimes blessed in unexpected ways, Miss Peterson recalled that several years ago the Foundation brought out a reprint of Herbert Spencer's first edition of *Social Statics*, containing the chapter on "The Right to the Use of the Earth." Spencer removed this chapter from subsequent printings, bringing down upon his head the wrath of Henry George who took him severely to task in *A Perplexed Philosopher*. Ironically, the Schalkenbach copy seems now to be the only one in print and the call for it is therefore extensive. Thus, the author notwithstanding, new readers of Spencer are being exposed to the chapter which caused so much controversy eighty years ago.

A new edition of *Rebel, Priest and Prophet*, which tells the story of Father McGlynn, is the Foundation's latest publication and may be ordered from the HGS at \$3. (July HGN, page 1).

A book of readings on land value taxation, intended as a supplementary college text, is being prepared by Professor Mason Gaffney. Twenty-one

selections have already been made from the works of as many authors and a dozen more are waiting to be typed.

A revised Italian translation of *Progress and Poverty*, which modernizes the work done around the turn of the century by Ludovico Eusebio, will soon be ready for publication. The translation was made by Remo Manni, author and poet of Milan, and was checked by Henry A. Gieffers of New York. Mr. Gieffers, who was present at the conference, is associated with Fiat Motors. He gave examples of some of the difficulties which he had encountered in this mammoth task.

Touching briefly on the work being done by the Foundation in the academic field, Miss Peterson said that the *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* had now passed the 2,000 mark in paid subscriptions. The Journal is a 112-page quarterly edited by Will Lissner, New York Times feature writer, who devotes his talents to the magazine as a labor of love.

The professorial committee known as TRED, which was organized some years ago, continues to hold annual three-day seminars on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. The latest of these took place June 17-19 and the subject was, "The Property Tax and Transportation." In the past year, two volumes have been published by the University of Wisconsin Press containing papers submitted at TRED seminars held in 1964 and 1965. These research works, which were underwritten by the Foundation, are entitled "Property Taxation — U.S.A." (edited by Richard Lindholm) and "Extractive Resources and Taxation" (edited by Mason Gaffney).

On October 14 the Foundation will conduct a panel discussion on "The Property Tax as a Tool for Planners," at the annual conference of the American Institute of Planners, in Pittsburgh. The panel is being organized by Mr. Prentice, who will also moderate.

After a long travail, a contract has been signed with Harold Mantell, Inc. for a second motion picture. It will raise the very challenging question why private enterprise cannot meet the housing shortage and rebuild our decaying cities. Hopefully, it will be ready for distribution in the next twelve months. The Foundation's first picture, "Land — and Space to Grow," made some ten years ago, is still being shown. About 700 high schools and an average of 50 independent television stations are requesting it each year.

William W. Newcomb of Melbourne, Florida, vice president of the Henry George Foundation whose headquarters are in Pittsburgh, said the 42-year-old Foundation, despite all difficulties and delays, is making substantial progress. This group has always directed its activities toward practical application of Georgist principles particularly in the field of local government.

While no additional Pennsylvania cities have as yet been courageous enough to adopt and test the graded tax, the degree of advantage which Pittsburgh enjoys from even the limited application of this plan has given encouragement to other city officials and is helpful as a working example.

Noah D. Alper, president of the Public Revenue Education Council of St. Louis, continues to make materials available in extensive quantities to professors and city officials who request them. These usually present specific cases showing where present tax methods fail. He believes more people want to know about true free enterprise, and his letters to St. Louis newspapers are often published and have attracted attention and interest sometimes resulting in requests for personal appearances.

Robert Clancy announced that the U.S. State Department had approved the Henry George basic economic course for distribution to foreign ser-

vice offices and students are being solicited by the State Department itself. Mrs. Lucy De Silfa, director of the Dominican HGS, was greatly encouraged when she called on the U.S. Embassy in the Dominican Republic, where this news was confirmed.

HALT the Homeowners Association for Lower Taxes, was represented by the founders, Gerald Schleicher and Dr. Samuel Scheck of Long Island. These men gave a dramatic report last year at the Montreal conference, with the help of slides and maps, on their exposures of greatly under-assessed land in Nassau County (HGN, Sept. 1967). Two men acting solely on their own initiative have done a great deal toward making their county and its officials aware of tax inequities. After much delay they now have the HALT charter they applied for a year ago.

One of the most interesting new features of the conference was the Latin American program reviewed by William A. Camargo of New York, Hernan Sanin-Vermont of Cali, Colombia, and Mrs. De Silfa of Santo Domingo, where a Spanish conference will be held next year.

John Tetley, New Jersey director, presided at a Sunday morning evaluation session and announced that he would say for all the rest that it was

the best conference ever, and everyone present concurred.

William W. Newcomb read a paper on "Capturing the College Student Ferment," and quoted a New York University student who said more than half the population was under 25 and by 1970 the majority would be under 21. He believes there is a deep desire among the young for a moral approach to remedy the inequities of our system and sees a need to channel student thought to land value taxation wherever possible. He suggests that high school graduates from HG classes should be directed to colleges for advanced study, possibly to challenge the economic courses offered there.

Harry Gunnison Brown, a dean among professors of economics, has frequently remarked that Henry George's proposal is given scant attention in textbooks and classrooms. Professors are thought to be avoiding this topic out of fear of not getting promotions. Since students tend to join large action groups Mr. Newcomb thinks it would be healthy to have these organizations "infiltrated" by properly educated Georgists. He recommends as a means of influencing professors establishment of chairs in land value taxation in universities, even if they have to be "set up with land-monopoly funds."

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