

AMERICAN JOURNAL OF ECONOMICS & SOCIOLOGY

Copy of letter from Will Lissner, Editor
to Otto K. Dorn, Pres.

Dear Mr. Dorn:

Since the board of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation will meet on October 25th, it occurred to me that you might wish to review some aspects of The Journal's work. I have gathered together data on our editorial work to which you may wish to give consideration.

Our Journal, of course, was established to foster and promote the study of special problems in the fields of economics, sociology and social philosophy which were defined in our prospectus. Its primary purpose, therefore, was to serve as a medium of publication for scholars who were working on, or could be induced to work on problems in which our group has a special interest. In previous reports to you I have shown how effective has been this aspect of our work.

But we had other hopes for our Journal. We hoped that as a by-product of our service to the interested scholars, we might, perhaps, convert some to our point of view; increase the sympathy with which our viewpoint is regarded in academic circles; overcome the prejudice against Georgists as naive panacea-mongers outside the academic pale; and most important of all, induce some among the scholars of this country to study the issues that our social philosophy raises. It is on these aspects of our work that I would like to contribute some information.

The data below have been compiled from the files of our Journal and refers only to scholars who have collaborated with us. It does not cover the whole field, unfortunately, for there are some Georgists and Georgist sympathizers unrepresented, either because we have not had an opportunity to get in touch with them or may not have heard about them. But it covers, I believe, the great majority of Georgist sympathizers and adherents in the universities and colleges.

1 - American scholars of academic affiliations
who are Georgists:

Defining Georgists as persons who believe that land reform is a basic element of social reform, that it is best achieved by a program that includes land value taxation, it can be said with certainty that there are forty-eight Georgists among American scholars of academic affiliations.

Many are full professors and associate professors, some assistant professors, instructors, lecturers. They teach in institutions throughout the country. Most are older men, but there is a large minority of younger persons. Economists and Sociologists predominate, but there are also political scientists,

historians, geographers and geologists and a scattering of others: anthropologist; city planner; research chemist; bibliographer; forester; and several teachers of philosophy.

When we established our Journal, we had trouble finding a dozen for our editorial board. The number has increased four-fold since that time. This is an encouraging fact. I wish I could point to our Journal's efforts as the responsible agent. Alas, I cannot. The fact is that the younger men on the list were converted by the older men right in the universities, with only four exceptions. As far as I know, the number of converts that our articles have made among these forty-eight is four.

2 - American scholars of academic affiliations who are Georgist sympathizers:

Georgist, as used in section 1, has been defined very narrowly. I felt that it would be better to understate the situation in the colleges and universities than to risk overstating it. Hence, I created a special class to include a various group of sympathizers who number forty-four. Their composition by age, position and affiliation is very similar to the forty-eight.

This group includes one professor who is a great admirer of Henry George and has published several evidences of that admiration, but of whose understanding of land value taxation I am doubtful. It includes one historian who converted at least one graduate student and has encouraged his students to study our history sympathetically, but who was not included among the Georgists because I have no other information on his convictions. It includes a number of rural sociologists who favor land value taxation, but only as one among a number of measures for improvement of land tenure. It includes specialists in other fields who would support us if land value taxation were a current issue, but who do not discuss it in their studies because it is outside their field. It also includes some who account themselves Georgists but who have, in my opinion, a muddled view of Georgism.

Perhaps some might wish to add many, most or even all in this group to the former group. I would prefer to be more circumspect, at least until there is further evidence of conviction. At any rate, however, I am happy to say that most of this sympathy arises from our efforts (and not, I hope, the muddled ideas of a few!) In the names on this list we have convincing evidence of the impact of our work in the universities and colleges. To summarize:

Georgists	48
Sympathizers	44
Total	<u>92</u>

3 - American scholars of academic affiliations who have collaborated with us, but whose convictions and sympathies are not known:

Thirty American scholars of academic affiliations have collaborated with us, but their convictions and sympathies are not known to me. It may be that a number of Georgist sympathizers, or perhaps even a few Georgists, are hidden in this group. Some, indeed, have studied collateral problems. Unfortunately I have not had the time necessary to investigate them further.

4 - American scholars of no academic affiliations who have collaborated with us:

Fifty-nine independent American scholars have taken part in our effort. Among them are seventeen whom I account non-Georgists. I admit that here also the line has been sharply drawn. It includes for example, a member of our editorial board, Prof. Mortimer J. Adler, on leave from the University of Chicago, who once avowed his admiration for Henry George and who has never declined us aid. However, he is the only member of the board who has not taken an active part in the work in recent years (possibly because he is too busy with the Great Books Course), and I understand he is responsible for dropping "Progress and Poverty" from the Great Books curriculum. I may be accused of being narrow-minded, but it seems to me that a Georgist or a Georgist sympathizer would not have allowed that to happen. This group includes several free traders who are not land value taxers, and several persons who perhaps ought to be accounted sympathizers.

Forty-two of these are Georgists. This disposes of the doubt that was raised when we began our work, whether there were scholarly resources within our movement adequate to sustain a quarterly. We sinned on the side of pessimism. However, before we go to the opposite extreme, it would be well to note that manuscripts from Georgists frequently require rewriting and heavy editing to make them acceptable. We can no longer provide that on the scale we did in the early years, as you know.

But I am happy to say that our fellow-Georgists have been able to render a full measure of support for our work. It is only fitting I think, to note some of the names here, the names of contributors only (the list is limited to contributors and does not include other collaborators because it was compiled from the Journal's published file and not from our correspondence which, alas, for lack of funds, has had to remain unfiled):

J. Rupert Mason, Raymond V. McNally, Gilbert M. Tucker, Wallace Kibbee, Preston King Sheldon, Herman Ellenoff, Geoffrey W. Esty, George A. Briggs, F.C.R. Douglas, Ferdinand Mero, Roy A. Foulke, M.J. Stewart, B.W. Huebsch, John Haynes Holmes, Albert Pleydell, Ashley Mitchell, John L. Hopkins, John A. Zangerle, Saul Cohn, John C. Weaver, Anna George deMille, Louis Wallis, S. Vere Pearson, George L. Rusby,

Lawson Purdy, Harold S. Bottenheim, Lancaster M. Greene, Francis Neilson, A. Allen Bates, Wylie Young, V. G. Peterson, Harry Weinberger, William W. Newcomb, Robert Clancy, Alexander Boardman, Renate Oppenheimer, Grace I. Colbron, Charles Johnson Post, Jackson H. Raiston, Baldomero Argente, Joseph Sinnott, Phyllis Evans.

5 - Total number of contributors:

In the seven years that we have been publishing our Journal, we have published the work of 185 scholars. Scores of others have assisted in checking and refereeing manuscripts. In this respect, we have been in close touch with what is, for the size of our Journal, a most remarkably large group.

6 - Summary:

As far as conversions go, we can, as I noted, point definitely only to four. If we have been successful in this respect I can only say that I know of no evidence of it. But the evidence is overwhelming that we have increased the sympathy with which our viewpoint is regarded in academic circles; we can say now, as we have never been able to say before, that ninety-odd college teachers, at least, look upon our doctrines with sympathy. From the fact that 143 scholars who are not active Georgists in the movement have taken part in our work, I think it is clear that we have very largely overcome the prejudice that existed against Georgists when we began our work. This is reinforced by the respectful consideration given our ideas in recent publications, by the recommendation of our Journal to foreign documentation institutions by the learned societies in economics, sociology and philosophy, and by the continuing flow of manuscripts (five times more than we can accomodate) from the universities.

The time available to me has not permitted me to make a bibliography of the articles on problems of Georgist theory that we have published. They are well know, however, to you and your fellow directors of the Foundation, so perhaps this can be left to some later time.

When we began our work, the Marxists were making great inroads in the colleges and their journal, Science and Society, enjoyed a great prestige. We were unknown. The position is now reversed, thanks largely to historical circumstances, but also, I think, to our efforts. Because we sought to fetter the contributors to Science and Society in the interests of their ideology, the Marxists can now obtain the collaboration of only a small group of scholars and the prestige of their journal

has waned. Ours is known and respected here and abroad. Our contributors are assured of the utmost freedom and of honest dealings. We have insisted that our job was to publish a scholarly journal, not an ideological one; a scientific, not a propaganda vehicle.

My study has yielded results more gratifying than I supposed it would. But we must not allow that to make us complacent, or to believe that we have succeeded in our task. Our studies have not yet yielded the results which would make the argument for the Georgist case compelling to the skeptic. No one has yet tackled the job of finding out the total of economic rent in the country, for example. In fostering such studies, we have a great deal of work to do. Moreover, we have reached a few hundreds, whereas we must aim at thousands; our work is read by a few thousand, but if we are to be successful, we must reach tens of thousands. As we agreed, when we launched our effort, we must be prepared for a long pull. But as we approach our first milestone, our tenth anniversary in 1951, I think we can say that now the tide has turned.

Now, at last, in this limited field of our manifold activity, I think it is safe to say that we have reached a point of development from which we can be sure that we, or our successors at least, will see the day when the Georgist advocates of ethical democracy will be the social philosophers who are sweeping the campus, rather than the Marxist advocates of economic slavery. Considering the substantial sums of money and the tremendous amount of effort that we have sunk into our venture, this prospect is consoling, and even heartening. It will take much more work, and continuing expenditures of our limited funds, but the fields are ripening for the harvest.

Cordially yours,

Will Lissner.