

Five and Twenty School

III. Ebb and Flow

When the war broke out in Europe in 1939 the effects on the Henry George School in the U.S. were not immediate. Enrollments continued to go up, and in fact 1940 and 1941 were peak years, with over 1,000 graduates of the basic course each year, in New York alone.

But, as Henry George observed, the tide can still be seen to advance in some places while it has already begun to recede. It was, of course, inevitable that the war should take its toll with this as with all civilian efforts.

In 1939 the pattern of school extensions in various cities was not yet what it is today. Many were still going along under the impetus given by John Monroe, on a loosely organized volunteer basis. Some extensions, however, began to be operated on a more permanent basis with a full-time director and an office. The first ones, in 1939, were Chicago with John Monroe; St. Louis with Noah Alper; and Montreal with Strehel Walton. Later came Philadelphia in 1941 with Joseph Stockman; and Los Angeles in 1943 with William Truehart. (All are still going strong.) Contributions were given by New York headquarters, supplemented by local contributions.

As the European war waxed, Americans were divided on the issue, and so were Georgists. Feeling on both sides ran high in the school and the controversy reached the proportions of a split, until that fateful day, December 7, 1941, took the matter out of the realm of discussion.

One by one the teachers said goodbye as they headed for the armed

forces, war work, or, in some cases, camps for conscientious objectors. Margaret Bateman, who had come to New York from Canada, replaced Frank Chodorov as director early in 1942.

Students and potential students too, were involved in the war effort, and so it was that 1942 to 1945 were ebb-tide years.



But—and this is important—the work did go on. It was not like World War I, which crippled beyond recovery the great Georgist political efforts that had been going strong prior to the war. This seems to me to indicate that Oscar Geiger was right in his diagnosis of the Georgist movement, and that the educational work was truly a solid foundation that would make continuous growth possible.

In 1944 the school bought the building it now occupies at 50 East 69th Street from the Dommerich family, and moved into it in June. This beautiful building, the school's finest home, served not only as headquarters, but also as a morale booster to Georgists the world over.

Came the war's end and the return to civilian life. I came back, too, from service with Uncle Sam, and was offered a job at the school as office manager. In May, 1946, Miss Bateman resigned and I became acting director, and in 1948, director.

In March, 1947, Anna George de Mille, president of the board of trustees and the last surviving child of Henry George, passed away, and was

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by Robert Clancy

succeeded as president by John C. Lincoln. In her last years Mrs. de Mille had been working on a biography of her noted father, and just before she died it was accepted for publication by the University of North Carolina Press. *Henry George: Citizen of the World* appeared in 1950, and a special celebration dinner was held by the Henry George School.

The Freeman had been converted to The Henry George News in 1943, and in April, 1946, Alice Elizabeth Davis became, and still is, editor.

The postwar work picked up and the school began expanding again. New full-time extensions were started in Boston, Ohio, Detroit, San Francisco and other locations. Of the volunteer extensions, a stout handful remained—notably Hartford and Pittsburgh. San Diego started on a full-time basis, but entirely self-supporting. The New Jersey school, founded in 1935, also became self-supporting. National annual conferences were held, with a different extension as host each year. The school and its branches started joining adult education councils. Numerous advanced courses were added to the curriculum. The Chicago school launched its Commerce and Industry program, and teaching experimentations were carried on in practically all extensions.

The first postwar surge seemed to reach its height in 1949. Then the Korean war, 1950-53, put something of a crimp in the work, but not enough to cause another ebb-tide.

All branches of the school, however, did have to work extra hard to attract students. A weird sort of "prosperity"—with threats of atomic war and depression hanging over it—

left lots of people who formerly would have been students, with no time, energy or inclination to study economic and social problems.

Then there was the era of McCarthyism, overlapping the Korean war. I doubt whether this manifestation really hurt the school, though we had our share of telephone accusations, demands to discontinue sending notices of classes, etc.

On the international Georgist scene, there were conferences sponsored by the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade—in 1949 at Swanwick, England; in 1952 at Odense, Denmark; and in 1955 at St. Andrews, Scotland—each succeeding one attended by an increasing number of school delegates.

Besides the schools already going in England, Denmark and Australia, new Henry George Schools were started after the war in New Zealand, Spain and Formosa. In 1955 a trip around the world was undertaken by Norman S. Casserley, on behalf of the school, which opened up possibilities for more expansion, particularly in Israel and India.

The Correspondence Division also expanded its work internationally and translations in Spanish and French were made, with more in the offing.

In 1954, the school observed the 75th anniversary of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*. The Robert Schalkenbach Foundation came out with a handsome new edition of that classic, the first new one since the 50th anniversary edition in 1929.



The school and the foundation collaborated on observances during the year, which included presentation ceremonies and exhibits at The Cooper Union, the New York Public Library and the Library of Congress; the school's annual conference held in San Francisco, where *Progress and Poverty* was written; and a nation-wide lecture tour of the U.S. by Dr. Viggo Starcke, leader of the Danish Justice (Georgist) party.

Within the past couple of years, full-time extensions have been formed in Oakland, California; Denver, Colorado; and Toronto, Canada; and vol-

unteer extensions in Sacramento, California; Tampa, Florida; Edmonton, Canada; and Great Falls, Montana, where the director is mayor of the city.

This year, the Henry George School celebrates its own 25th anniversary (it is actually in its 26th year).

How far have we come, in relation to the school's long range goal? What does the future hold? What can we reasonably hope to accomplish? In the next and last article in this series, I will examine certain problems and prospects of the Henry George School of Social Science.

(To be continued)
