

The World Is Our Campus

—ROBERT CLANCY

FROM MORE than one point of view, the Seventh International Conference was a great success. One of the features of the gathering was the frequent informal meetings of delegates from the various countries to discuss matters of mutual interest outside of the regular sessions. There were several such "conferences within a conference."

The largest and most continuous of these unprogrammed meetings were those of the spontaneously formed Committee on Education. This committee met at least twice a day (to say nothing of impromptu sub-committee meetings) throughout the entire week of the conference to discuss and exchange information on organizing Henry George study groups. These discussions were marked by an earnest practicality and a serious intention to apply the lessons learned when the delegates should return home.

The committee was on an international scale, as was the conference itself. Great Britain was represented by the following school leaders: V. H. Blundell, E. G. Popplewell and L. Stevenson, of London; Misses Betty Noble and Grace Levy, Manchester; C. Collier, Glasgow; H. R. Lee, Portsmouth; and others desirous of starting study groups in their communities. Mrs. Caroline Bjorner (wife of Bue Bjorner, president of the conference) represented the Danish educational movement, and I represented the school in the United States and Canada. Miss V. G. Peterson of the Schalkenbach Foundation also represented the United States on the committee, and her help and advice on Georgist literature was most valuable. Marcel Cortvriend, Belgian Georgist leader and co-editor of *Terre et Liberte*, sat in on the committee with the intention of learning how to start a school in his country. For Germany there were two representatives: Rudolf Schmidt of Berlin, who revived the Georgist movement in Germany after the war, with the Bund fuer Land und Freiheit, and who intends to start a school in Berlin; and Mrs. Helga Fischer of Wiesbaden, who is also anxious to bring the educational work to her city. The outstanding achievement of the committee was getting these three sterling Georgists started on schools in their respective countries. The possibility of a school in New Zealand was also discussed with the delegate from New Zealand, Dr. Rolland O'Regan, actively interested. There was also interest expressed by Robert Major, a Hungarian Georgist now living in Italy.

These school discussions followed more or less the pattern of the Annual Conference of the Henry George Schools held in New York in July. First, the problems were probed of getting a new school started, gaining recognition in the community, financing, etc. Then there were exchanges of ideas and methods on getting students. Teaching materials and methods were next gone into, and finally post graduate activities of students. In all these aspects of the school, the international flavor of the discussions added even more variety than at our own national conference. It was generally agreed that school problems must be met on a national basis, but with the same underlying aim—to educate as many thinkers and leaders as possible to the philosophy of Henry George.

One highlight of the committee meetings was a classroom demonstration in which Mr. Blundell and myself shared the role of instructor. All members of the conference were invited to sit in, and practically all did so, in spite of the late hour of the demonstration—it began at 10 P. M., after the regular evening session of the conference. Six members of the audience were recruited as "students" in this demonstration, which represented the opening session of a *Progress and Poverty* class. The different methods of the British and American schools were compared. In Britain, for instance, the first lesson begins with definitions of economic terms, while in America the first lesson is but an introduction to the subject.

Similarities between the British and American schools are that both are known as the Henry George School of Social Science and both have the same three basic courses with Henry George's works as textbooks. Somewhat different from the American and British methods is the Danish educational method, as set forth by Mrs. Bjorner. In Denmark, the school is known as the Ecotechnical High School, and the text for the basic course is Jakob E. Lange's *Social Economy*, a modernized adaptation of *Progress and Poverty*, something like *Economics Simplified* by Bowen and Rusby, the text used in the New Jersey school. Mrs. Bjorner, as the school's secretary in Copenhagen, organized classes throughout the country and has some 200 instructors at her disposal. The methods follow those of the Danish Folk Schools.

Besides the committee meetings, one regular conference session was given over to the Henry George School. I began the discussion with a paper on the school in America, [August issue,

Page One] which was followed by reports by Mr. Blundell of London and Mrs. Bjorner of Denmark. These resulted in a general discussion which indicated that the conference was wholeheartedly behind the school movement. Another indication of support was that the conference unanimously adopted the following recommendation presented by Mr. Popplewell, chairman of the committee:

"The Committee on Education recommends to this conference that every member take an active part in extending the work of the Henry George School in his country, by aiding in the organizing, teaching and financing of study groups. The Henry George Schools already established in the United States, Great Britain and Denmark agree to offer practical assistance to all those engaged in this great work."

The current interest in the Henry George School was given momentum in 1936, when Lancaster M. Greene of New York presented the case for education via the school method to the Fifth International Conference in London. The idea was enthusiastically received and applied in Great Britain, Denmark and Australia — countries where there had already been a background of Georgist education. (Unfortunately, there was no delegate from Australia at the present conference.) The school method has proved itself, and at this Seventh International Conference the prevailing attitude was that the work must move forward on all fronts.

Also stimulating to the school work were the visits of Arthur Lea, young Georgist enthusiast, to a number of European Georgist leaders, while he was serving with the United States Army. Mr. Lea was able to visit leaders in England, Denmark, Belgium and Germany, and to encourage the school idea in the latter two countries.

In addition to attending this enormously successful conference in the picturesque English Midlands, I was happily able to visit Glasgow and London, and to confer with leaders there. Glasgow was once the center of the British Georgist movement in the days of John Paul, but has since suffered a decline. Georgist leaders there see the school as the way to revive their movement. In London, the work has moved forward at an accelerated pace with the acquisition of Mr. Blundell as Director of Studies in 1946. An alumni association has recently been formed — the "London Georgists" — similar in aim and scope to S. A. G. E., the graduate organization in New York.

Besides the Henry George School, there also exists in London the School of Economic Science which, under Leon MacLaren's direction, teaches a modified version of the Georgist philosophy, with Mr. MacLaren's *Nature of Society* as the basic text. This school is also moving forward at a great rate. Unlike the Henry George School, the School of Economic Science charges a fee for its courses.

The Seventh International Conference was, I venture to say, a landmark in the history of our movement. The harmony and determination displayed were inspiring. The consensus of opinion in the movement throughout the world is that the Henry George School, by educating young people to the Georgist philosophy, is the great hope of the Henry George movement. There is deep and genuine meaning in the motto: "The world is our campus."