

The Henry George News

VOL. 16—No. 9

JULY, 1953

10¢ A COPY—\$1.00 A YEAR

"We Must Speak Now" Says Agnes de Mille

"I MET some people from Hollywood," Agnes de Mille told the New York audience assembled at the June rally. "They were writers, they were intelligent, they were informed. I happened to mention that I was coming up to the school to hear Ashley Mitchell speak, and they said, 'what school?'"

"I said, 'the Henry George School.'"

"They said, 'does that exist anymore?'"

"And I said, 'Yes, it does.'"

"Now folks, this won't do! This just won't do. We are all convinced, I believe, but we must not go on just reaffirming our own convictions. It's not a family job here. We must get out, we must speak, we must get on the air, we must get in the magazines, we must get in the papers. There isn't time to waste!"

Miss de Mille said some people seem to think "Georgists multiply by fission, and that the people who marry convert their spouses and have Georgist children."

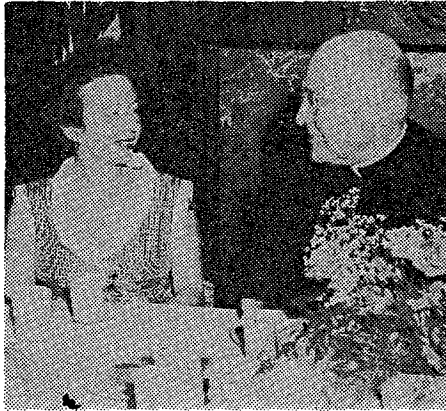
Amidst considerable laughter, the dancer confirmed that it didn't work that way. "But even so," she added, "there isn't enough time. We can't marry enough people."

"Recently we were shocked and frightened by the revelations of how many people turned towards communism in the '30's and early '40's," said this brilliant grand-daughter of Henry George. "Why they did is a grave reason. There is nothing trivial behind that. How they did I can tell you because I was exposed to a great many of their influences. I was exposed harmlessly, because I had been indoctrinated early with the antidote and was inoculated against contagion. But I know that wherever in the '30's there was a humanitarian cause or a place where people with passion and social feeling met, there were the people who talked to them and reached their minds."

Expert Technicians Needed

"I know that wherever artists tried to find a place to express themselves, there was a missionary for communism. We don't approve of what they advocate, but we can learn a great deal from them. They were expert technicians in propaganda and I don't think we are yet. I realize that no cause can be moved forward by large masses, but at the same time no cause can be moved forward just by convinced educators because we can't reach enough people to implement our convictions."

Miss de Mille told of a movement called World Government. "My friend Oscar Hammerstein is very active in it," she recounted. "I have been to several of their meetings. They are brilliant people—they are the people who are writing our plays and our books. I have heard them discuss all kinds of things. I have never yet heard free trade brought up, for instance, as a means of bettering understanding between peoples. How is this possible? I think it's because we are a generation that take high protective tariff for granted. I don't believe I have



Agnes de Mille and Monsignor L. G. Ligutti

met an unregenerate free trader outside the Georgist movement in decades.

"I think the dispute about the tidal lands was interesting," the speaker continued. "It brought to people's attention for the first time the question as to who had rights to natural resources. The people, of course, came to the wrong conclusions, but they did think about the problem involved. If the waters of New York harbors were to open up and a whole island of land were to rise, I wonder whether the right to that land would be questioned, or whether the first man who got there and sat down would be given title as a matter of course. I don't think people talk about these things generally."

Miss de Mille referred to J. Rupert Mason's remarks that people are thinking as they never thought before. She felt that was true and spoke of the young men and women who turned to communism out of desperate need. "It was not a profound remedy and it wasn't a true one," she said, "but it satisfied something. Now they are shocked and frightened, and still in need."

This vivid speaker who held the audience in a spell despite the late hour, closed with a ringing challenge. "Gather up your courage. Go out and talk. These same people need to be told. They hunger and thirst for righteousness. It is true that we are being swept with hysterical fears today. It is very dangerous to take a stand but it is more dangerous not to."

"This hysteria is like sheet lighting," said the petite author, who in so many ways resembles her much beloved mother, the late Anna George de Mille. "We are not cowards. We have never been cowards. No great people are cowards. And the very people that fall away will come back later in droves to follow the men who know. And we do know, not through hysteria, not through emotion, not through the dictates of a party line (which is a policy action), but from reason and from justice—from reason as enduring as the theories of Pythagoras, from conviction based on what our Constitution implies, or what government by discussion, not government by force promises. We must speak out without fear, with high courage—and we must organize to be heard."