

In Memoriam: Anna George de Mille, 1878-1947

FOR MANY YEARS Mrs. Anna George de Mille, daughter of Henry George, served with devotion and distinction as a leader in the international movement her father had founded to promote land value taxation and free trade as basic steps in the achievement of a free society founded on ethical democratic principles.

She helped to propagate her father's economic theories by lecturing in this country and abroad, by writing and by organizing. She was a vice president of the International Union for Land Value Taxation and Free Trade in London and was a frequent speaker at the conventions of the organization in England, Denmark and elsewhere. She was a director of the Robert Schalkenbach Foundation, publisher of books by and about George's theories, and took an active part in its work. When the Foundation helped the late Oscar H. Geiger to establish the Henry George School of Social Science in New York in 1932, she accepted the presidency of the board of trustees of the new institution. She was no figurehead; she took an active part in organizing the expansion of the school in New York, in directing its work, and in organizing the establishment of branch schools in Chicago and other cities about the country. She was also an officer of the Henry George Foundation of Pittsburgh and took part in the annual conventions organized by that foundation in the years before the war.

Mrs. de Mille had spoken throughout the United States on her father's theories and her last active work, in December, 1946, was a lecture tour of southern Negro universities. She also maintained a large correspondence with land reformers all over the world and kept abreast of developments in the land reform movements in various parts of the globe. She maintained especially close ties with the land reform movement in England, and frequently entertained visiting members of Parliament associated with that movement in the Labor and Liberal parties. She was occasionally called upon as a leading publicist by the land reform bloc in Parliament to release in the United States and explain its memoranda and statements on questions of international and domestic politics.

Her literary activities were equally outstanding. Like all of us, she was an admirer of Henry George Jr.'s "Life of Henry George," the definitive biography of a man who did not suffer for lack of admiring biographers. Its thorough scholarship was obvious. But she recognized, as

many of us have, that precisely because Henry George Jr. set out to write an official biography and a thorough one, his assignment left him no opportunity to develop a human portrait. This she set out to supply. Over fifteen years she gathered new materials and reworked old ones. She was a principal contributor of manuscript and other materials to the Henry George Collection of the New York Public Library and when her studies demanded it, before the war, she catalogued the collection. Then she wrote her biography, "Citizen of the World," which has been appearing serially in this JOURNAL. She worked on this up to the eve of her death and completed her task. The remaining instalments will be published in forthcoming issues of this review.

Of the quality of this work I need say little, as it has won wide appreciation from its readers. It made available to other scholars important new materials, which should make possible a critical objective biography of George which is badly needed. Albert Jay Nock's "Henry George: An Essay," was a valuable effort in that direction but the late Mr. Nock considered that Henry George Jr. had covered the field adequately for his purposes and hence left original scholarship to a later writer. His work, moreover, was frankly not intended to be objective; the criticism of it to the effect that it is highly colored by Mr. Nock's unique viewpoint was irrelevant. Dr. George Raymond Geiger, in his "Philosophy of Henry George" and his "Theory of the Land Question," has shown what might be expected from a critically objective study of the life and times of George. Mrs. de Mille did what she could to foster such a work. If it comes, it will owe a debt to her for her personal and scholarly contribution. Until it comes, we shall have in her own writings what she intended to depict there, a human portrait of Henry George.

She was also the author of pamphlets and articles on land reform, tax reform and free trade and she was the editor of a standard abridgment of "Progress and Poverty" and of other condensations of her father's writings.

Her personality endeared her to thousands who knew her over the world. She was gay and spirited and given to banter, a heritage, perhaps, of the Irish in her ancestry. She had a ripened social conscience, deep sympathy for the poor and oppressed and a deep sense of personal responsibility which impelled her to spare no efforts to advance the cause of social reform. Her conversation and discourse were enlivened by humor and were vibrant with sincerity and conviction. Above all, her thinking and her activity were marked, even in the blackest days, by the faith that truth

eventually would triumph and that man, in spite of the institutions that shackle him in this inequitable social order, would ultimately achieve his divine heritage, democratic freedom. Her life was a testimony to that faith; the truth to which she gave unflinching witness will be a monument to her achievements.

WILL LISSNER

New York