

Henry George School of Social Science

CHARTERED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

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Dear Extension Director:

TRANSIT STRIKE

We were surprised to hear from so many out-of-town friends who wanted to know how the New York Henry George School managed during the 12-day bus and subway tie-up early this year. Not only Americans, but friends in other countries asked - including one in far-away Thailand, who expressed relief that our strike had finally ended. Cambodia? Viet Nam? Red China? To our Thai friend, these were not problems as serious as our strike!

The first week of the strike was not too bad for us as classes were not in session. The School staff managed to come in by one means or other. The only public event was a lecture on Friday, January 7, by Lancaster M. Greene. A surprising number of people turned up for it. The second week was more serious, as some classes were starting. They were our advanced classes (which we usually schedule a week before basic classes). Attendance was low, but the teachers for all classes were on hand, and some students did show up for each of the classes. By Thursday the strike was over, and attendance started to be more normal. The following Monday basic classes started, with a pretty good attendance. But mail registrations - which were being received while the strike was on - were a little lower than usual, and a greater proportion of prospects asked for the correspondence course. (This term a total of 427 students showed up for basic classes.)

One factor that eased our difficulties during the strike was that the School is located just north of the midtown area where the traffic crush was at its worst.

Friends have also inquired about the shorter crisis last November when there was a power failure throughout the Northeast. It was about 5:30 P.M., and students were beginning to come to the School. We managed to get enough candles to light the way to the Coffee Shop, and our chef, Dalton La Rose, turned out meals on the gas stove. Bill Camargo had a transistor radio from which we heard the news. The Coffee Shop filled up, and people ate and chatted by candlelight, lingering until they got a lift home, or tried to catch buses or taxis, or ventured to walk it. Some few stayed at the School all night, stretching out on benches and even tables.

CONFERENCE

We are not sending out a questionnaire for this year's Annual Conference, to be held in St. Louis, Mo., July 20 - 24. The host director, Loral Swofford, is hard at work on it, and has indicated his willingness to receive directly from his fellow directors and other friends suggestions and ideas for the program, and other phases of the Conference. Location of the Conference will be announced soon. (Address of the St. Louis extension is 818 Olive St.)

EXTENSION NEWS

Raymond Abrams, Miami director, was married last Thanksgiving to Grace Contrino, and the happy couple now live at 210 Palm Ave., Miami Beach, Fla., 33139, which is also extension headquarters...After having successfully managed an extension in Syracuse on a voluntary basis, Bette Breese is leaving the city to go West. California charmed her so much last summer that she could not resist the call. The Syracuse extension will be in the care of Manny Choper, 514 Walnut Ave., Syracuse, N.Y., 13214... We were glad to hear from Miss Betty Noble who wants to revive classes in New Zealand after a lapse of some years. Address is Box 951, Wellington, New Zealand... George Menninger Jr. is still bravely carrying on an extension in Ripon, Wisc., a small college town. Though he has not yet been able to stir up enough interest for a class, he has gotten a num

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ber of people interested, including college students, and is working on a new approach to get Georgist ideas over ... A new extension is being planned for Guatemala, to be conducted by Carlos Riveros, a Spanish-language graduate of the New York Henry George School.

BASIC
COURSE

From time to time the question of the textbook for our basic course in Fundamental Economics comes up. Progress and Poverty is currently used, and I have supported its continuing use.

There is general agreement that we want to teach the basic principles outlined in Progress and Poverty, and even in the same sequence. But the objections are that the book is too old, too long and too difficult to read. A more modernized and shorter adaptation is often suggested. From time to time such adaptations have already appeared - and disappeared. They do not seem to have the lasting appeal of the master model. Perhaps an ideal self-rejuvenating model will be produced some day, but meanwhile we can't work with something we haven't got; and here are some of my arguments for using Progress and Poverty:

1. It's good. Even if some students don't read it, some do, and most at least check page references. The teacher may find it surprisingly effective to read aloud selected portions in class.
2. It's not all that obsolete. George got hold of unchanging verities. Progress and Poverty in fact is a self-rejuvenating model. Dip into it every year, and you'll see how well it keeps up with the times. And it's not all that difficult to read. Anything good requires a little effort. (Why try to make it so easy, when today's intelligentsia warn against "cheap, easy solutions"?)
3. It's a good buy. Where can you get such a book as the Schalkenbach edition for \$2. It's good looking and impressive. You may whip up some mimeographed notes that look like the product of a fly-by-night outfit, but here's something with stability. Or we could try publishing a book one-third the size at three times the price - eventually to sell out for one-third the price of Progress and Poverty.
4. It's effective. Most of the dedicated people we know of got their inspiration from Progress and Poverty. It appeals to a great variety of people; other positions have more limited appeal. Cut the length, and you'll cut out something appealing to somebody.
5. It can be supplemented. Rather than look for substitutes, why not retain something that has proven its effectiveness and supplement it - as we try to do to some extent with the lesson supplements, and as can be further done by class discussion of appropriate current events and developments in economic thought.

DIRECT
MAIL

A friend sent us the following (undocumented) clipping:
"Mailing lists: People must sometimes wonder how their names manage to get on a multiplicity of mailing lists for all sorts of weird things from magazine subscriptions to life insurance. Businessmen are the principal targets, but householders are not immune. The vivid imaginations of some of the compilers of these lists seem to work overtime in concocting the mutations which can be given to a person's proper name and address. The mailing pieces vary from the simple, straight approach to the elaborately printed mailing piece offering bargains beyond belief. No one has ever worked out the proportion of them which head for the waste paper basket either in its pristine unopened state or after a quick perusal. Human curiosity being what it is, most of them must get opened. And they must do a job for the firms which send them out. Otherwise there wouldn't be so many of them." So true. And, in spite of everything, direct mail circularizing is still our best source of students, both for classes and correspondence course.

Robert Clancy