

“IT’S THE TRUTH”

By GEORGE LEE

WHEN MY wife handed me a postcard with the query, “What is the most hopeful thing about Georgism,” I read it and then asked her—“Well, what is it?”

She answered, “That it is the truth.”

I am reminded that several years ago I stopped in Carmel, California to see Lincoln Steffens. The door was opened by the strikingly handsome, dark-haired, Ella Winters. I introduced myself as being, like Mr. Steffens, a single taxer.

“Tell me something,” Miss Winters replied, “Why are you single taxers so much alike, whether in Moscow, Berlin, Paris, New York or Carmel?”

At that moment Mr. Steffens entered, saying, “Let me answer that question. It is because the single tax is right as right can be, and nothing can be more right than that.”

The Georgist realizes however that “correct action must be preceded by correct thinking,” and the liberating philosophy of Henry George, to really exist, must exist first in the hearts and minds of human beings. So the call is for students, and more students, and yet more students to attend the classes conducted by the Henry George School of Social Science, where the fundamental laws of political economy and social justice are taught. Some day, some place, this host of Georgists will hear the call to combine for action.

This necessary action is completely simple, just and free from revolutionary violence. It involves no seizure for modification by the state or the industrial organizations. All that is necessary is a true knowledge of the real source of public revenue, and the enactment of legislation to conform therewith. Also the repeal of all laws which create and promote special privilege.

Today special privilege is deeply entrenched. Our vaunted free enterprise system is pure fabrication. Every major industrial organization in the country is founded, buttressed and tied together by privileged legislation. The “tag-along industries” are clamoring in the halls of Congress, and at the doors of every lesser law making body—state, county and city—for more and more “protective legislation.” Labor has organized and joined the parade to the legislative halls. The farmer has secured legislation which guarantees him a profit, if not from the market then from the tax funds, regardless of what price he paid for his land or what rent he has to pay.

The indigents are forming pressure groups to force representatives of the people to set them apart as a class, or group, to be supported from the public treasury. The “senior citizen” is suggested as an object for class distinction with a monthly check from Uncle Sam, and the veteran? Where is the limit (or is there a limit?) to his demands upon state and nation? Now the gambling fraternity has succeeded in several states in getting their betting business legalized and protected, with the stipulation that a percentage of the “take” be turned over to the public treasury. Then along comes the investor with the suggestion that a Federal bureau be created to protect his “venture money” in foreign markets against loss through seizure or other acts by revolutionary governments.

The evils revealed in our social maladjustments seem unsurmountable. However, in 1856, if someone had asked Abraham Lincoln, how much longer he thought the institution of slavery would endure, he might have answered, “a long time—maybe a hundred years.” The South’s political power in Washington was then formidable—yet within seven years slavery was legally abolished.

Listen to Henry George—“Today a wiser, deeper, more beneficent revolution is brooding, not over one country, but over the whole world. God’s truth impels it, and forces mightier than He has ever before given to man, urge it on. It is no more in the power of vested wrongs to stay it than it is in man’s power to stay the sun.”

Elsewhere he writes, “We have a long and a hard fight before us. Possibly, probably, for many of us, we may never see it come to success. But what of that? It is a privilege to be engaged in such a struggle . . . the ground is ploughed; the seed is set; the good tree will grow . . . So little now, only the eye of faith can see it. So little now; so tender and weak. But sometime, the birds of heaven shall sing in its branches; sometime, the weary shall find rest beneath its branches.”

