

The Night Is Long and I...

Sometimes the struggle with economic illiteracy seems so futile, so hopeless.

We all have moments of despair. Each of us has felt at times not only that the black ignorance of the masses presents an impenetrable obstacle, but that even the little light our efforts shed upon it are more than counter-balanced by the volumes of murk spewed by the pundits and the politicians on behalf of the plunder-gang that owns their souls.

The defeatist in our ranks is a deplorable wretch. Yet his attitude is explainable. Lacking what the pugilist calls the "fighting heart," he quickly retreats from the odds-on struggle to a what's-the-use-refuge. Sometimes, to rationalize his cowardice, he begins to question the truth which he once championed. The quibbler, the refiner of argument, the improver of the perfect—he is but a defeatist who covers his lack of courage with a profusion of verbiage. He is the grumbler on the bench who could not make the team.

Nor is it difficult to understand our political careerists who have bartered their souls for pieces of gold. It is so much more comfortable to sit in fine places, to partake of the flesh-pots served by the House of Have than to make sacrifices for an ideal. Judas we have with us always.

But Georgism cannot be hurt by the defeatist or the careerist. Unlike any other movement for social betterment, its force does not depend upon mass action or political mechanisms. It is a moral philosophy based upon the science of economics. Therefore it commands intellectual conviction with purposive impulse. Which is to say that the Georgist is moved by knowledge and knowledge must be individually acquired. The strength of Georgism is in the number of individuals who have learned how an economy of freedom can be achieved. It is not a mass movement; it is a surge of individuals.

And each Georgist is a law unto himself. Fortified with a knowledge of basic principles he needs no leader to guide him, he depends on no bureaucracy to direct his activities. His mission is to spread knowledge, to dispel ignorance. That is a personal mission, requiring neither ritual nor hierarchy. If he works through the Henry George School of Social Science, he works as an individual using that instrument because it is an effective one.

We teach because we cannot do otherwise. The pressure is from within us. It is for this reason that visible success—which in most movements is an evidence of deterioration—does not concern us. Knowing truth, we feel impelled by that knowledge to bring it to others. We falter, we grow weary—but we carry on.

Read the letters reprinted in these columns. They were received by the School in response to its semi-annual appeal for funds. Comment on them

were sacrilege. But from such evidences of devotion comes the strength to fight on when the battle is darkest, when arraigned against us is not only mass ignorance, but also the lowering clouds of despotism.

We who have strength and years dare not break faith with those who have given of themselves and of their goods, even from an Old Folks' Home, to the crusade against economic ignorance. Much less can one break

faith with those oblationaries who have passed on.

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The Freeman is now four months old. Six thousand one-year mail subscriptions are necessary to make it financially self-supporting at its low subscription price. At this writing the journal's list of mail subscribers is slightly under the half-way mark.