

only one. Some people say: We have not created ourselves, therefore we have to make conditions equal, for we must be "egalitarian." One loaf and three loaves make four loaves—that is, two for each of us. It certainly looks like equality in conditions, but it is not equality in right. The result is not very practical. I can live with only one loaf a day and when I can have one of yours in subsidies, I say: Why trouble so much? The next day I produce nothing at all. And you say: I am working hard the whole day, but the State and the taxes take the greater part of my product. Why trouble so much? The next day you produce only two loaves. Result: Two loaves in common instead of four. The community is thus made poorer. We see it in every country to-day, in every branch of activity.

You are clever. We resolve to put you in office, so that you can rule and direct, sitting at your writing-table, writing papers, proclamations, schemes, statistics, conducting enquiries and planning 5-year plans. I have to do the productive work, seriously hampered by restrictions and rationing, reading what you are writing, writing what you are asking for.

The result is smaller loaves, less bread, worse bread.

*This is the Planned Economy, red tape, bureaucracy, State Control. "My Paper is your Bread!" Isn't it good?*

Love and justice are ethical, they are moral, and they are an important part of religion. But not that alone: they are practical, productive and common sense.

So long as people keep saying: "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" we are like heathens and shall not be able to solve the problems.

We sometimes forget that man does not live by bread alone, but by spirit, by inspiration. On the other hand, it is a fact that man cannot live without his daily bread. Therefore we pray: "Give us this day our daily bread"! But in what way can we get it? In a world so rich and so blessed that it should be possible. Let us try to begin with righteousness.

What you produce is yours. What I produce is mine. What none of us have produced, the land, the gifts of Nature with all their riches, all their values, all their forces—they must belong to all of us.

*Let us try to begin with justice.* All other methods have failed. I believe that then all the other things will be added unto us. There will be bread enough for everybody, and there will be twelve basketsful more than we can eat.

*(Address delivered at the International Conference.)*

## THE GEORGEISTS: ARE THEY HUMAN?—Address by Frank Dupuis

DURING this Conference almost every aspect of our supreme aim—justice in society—has been reviewed. There is however one aspect, often overlooked, which appears to me of sufficient importance to bring to your notice even at this concluding stage. That is the question: How we as individuals might appear to those not personally acquainted with us. Are we pictured as fanatics obsessed by a narrow idea, or as people moderately sane and possibly endowed with a sense of humour? It is obvious that the answer must affect the chances of promoting our ideas.

This subject occurred to me after the ramble which a party of us took yesterday; when I contrasted the atmosphere at The Hayes with other Conferences of "well-meaning" people which I have attended and came away resolved that wild horses would not drag me to another. How uncomfortably I recall the earnest well-meaningness of those gatherings, the strained enthusiasm, the whipped-up applause for the woolly sentences and question-begging phrases of leaders who evidently deprecated any question which pushed the enquiry home. And all the time I felt an unbearable struggle in my own mind between loyalty on one side and a sense of humour on the other, trying hard to stifle my suspicion that the rank and file never for a moment stopped to consider principle and consistency, were prepared to endorse any proposal officially advanced under the sacrosanct label, and were intellectually united on one theme only: the denunciation of rival *isms* and their partisans.

When you compare that atmosphere with your experiences during this astonishing week of intense living and supremely independent thinking you will admit I have reason for seeking some explanation. Our slight divergences here on some questions of expediency have served only to throw into relief the fact that each of us understands our principles, each knows exactly the meaning of the terms we use, and we all know exactly what reforms we want. What other movement could say this? I am

almost tempted to claim we are the only sane people in the world; especially after the ramble to which I referred. On that occasion, besides yielding ourselves to the charm of these green Derbyshire dales, we talked on almost every subject under the sun; and in that one afternoon I, at any rate, fell the helpless victim of as much laughter as during weeks of ordinary life. And the butt of our mirth was we ourselves, we Georgeists! Yet my companions happen to be among the most uncompromising Georgeists I have the pleasure of knowing. Surely this is evidence of sanity.

To my mind this reveals a quality of the greatest value to our movement, both morally and practically, and one we should never lose sight of.

One is reluctant to claim superior sanity, but I would remind you that this is not the same as claiming to be very clever. Many clever men have proved neither sane nor wise. It has been said there are two methods of attaining wisdom: one by intense study, scaling the heights of thought and knowledge; the other by exercising common sense to an uncommon degree. In this age of clashing *isms*, State propaganda and delegated thinking, I suggest that for any ordinary person engaged in working for a living the second of these methods is the more to be trusted. And anyone can apply common sense to social problems, provided he will first be a freeman in mind. If the first test of common sense is to know what you are talking about we can justly claim that, *before* going on to other considerations, we make quite certain what we mean by such words as wealth, land, labour, capital. I would feel more hopeful if the world's most boosted philosophers, economists and politicians would submit to this homely test.

But if we *are* sane I do not advise you to shout it from the housetops. In mental homes it is customary, I believe, to treat the patient's hallucinations at first with courtesy rather than contempt. And we live in a world in which the majority—including 99 per cent. of newspaper economists and 100 per cent. of radio economists—have so com-

pletely forgotten they depend upon land for every moment of their existence that they assume we have one-track minds if we mention it. And this opportunity is not neglected by the astute agents of those who well know that we, and we alone, would destroy the original basis of monopoly and bring the whole structure to the ground: agents of interests which have exploited Socialism so much to their advantage that it now consolidates their power.\* It is repeatedly suggested we are monomaniacs making such exaggerated claims for our reform that we are indifferent to every other injustice and even aspect of life itself.

You may say this is demonstrably false by reference to our philosophy itself as well as to every Georgeist you know; but a suggestion is much more difficult to refute than a specific charge. We can refute it best not so much directly as indirectly: by creating a contrary impression. And I think Doctor Viggo Starcke's address on *Our Daily Bread* points out one way in which this can be done. That speech had the true quality of oratory. It moved us in a way we cannot completely analyse. Perhaps others felt as I did afterwards; that if it could have been heard by an audience of thousands of ordinary intelligent people, not economists, but with a spark of generosity in their hearts, our cause might be half won. But, although we cannot analyse all the reasons for its effect we can distinguish some of them. In the first place the argument was put forward with a modesty and courtesy more effective than any amount of admonition could have achieved; and in the second place, the listener was impressed with the greatest economic truths without his being aware that the subject of political economy had ever been mentioned. The appeal was always to human life and human nature in their deepest and broadest aspects.

This method is not accidental; it derives inevitably from our philosophy. Despite the intellectual pleasure and stimulus we enjoy from our Henry George Schools, few of us, I imagine, love political economy for its own sake but only as a sphere of enquiry which every intellectually-honest person must explore in his search for justice. And we find that if we will first ascertain the essential conditions of man's material existence the rights and prosperity of the individual do not conflict with those of society; but harmonise exactly. Everything in our philosophy fits into its place without leaving any loose strands of thought. Our trust in Providence and human nature is restored not on the sands of emotionalism, but on the rock of common sense. We capture a vision of human life endowed with a richness we had scarcely dared to hope.

Henry George was not the first to discover the land question or its remedy; and he would have been the last to desire his name to be associated with anything in the nature of a cult. But he remains its greatest exponent and it is just because he started by considering living people rather than dead facts that he saw the facts more clearly. However logical, dispassionate and plain black-and-white were his arguments, they were always silhouetted, as it were, against the richest colours of man's yearning for higher things. And the healthy conditions of his own unsheltered life and struggles helped to keep his mind supremely sane and balanced.

I remember the first time I took up his *Science of Political Economy*. The book fell open at a page where

\* See the evidence submitted by the Land Union to the Committee on Site Value Rating, in favour of the Town and Country Planning Act.

in a few brief, terse lines I read a description of a square-rigged ship tacking against the wind. The sheer poetry of the passage recalled my first sight of such an operation as I once saw it in the clear light of a tropical dawn far out at sea: a scene, for those who can remember it, that almost reconciles one to growing old. And yet, as I read on, I found the passage fitted into his argument as exactly as the keystone into an arch.

Passages from his letters, and many incidents of his career reflect the same sympathy and broad appreciation of life. How, for example, just after he had lost all his money in a newspaper speculation he nevertheless proposed to the young lady he wished to marry—gravely showing her the single coin to which his fortune had been reduced. And we know what a loving husband and father this staunch comrade proved to be: the centre of a home, like so many millions of others, with poverty never absent from the threshold, but love and laughter always within.

Some of my friends, much cleverer than myself, tell me I must not presume to judge social questions until I have studied what is called modern philosophy as expounded by such writers as Kant, Schopenhauer, Comte or Marx. I confess I have not time to study such works exhaustively or even to become familiar with the abstruse language those writers found it necessary to invent in order to communicate their thoughts. But I have gained some knowledge of their lives and a summary of their teachings. Their lives appear to me to have been far from natural or healthy, and I wonder if their arduous labours were very well spent if they lead to no more practical conclusions than to distrust our reason, submit to mental or material despotism, or to believe that life is not worth living. One can imagine why such works might appeal to an intellectual élite, but until this élite will deign to study Henry George and show me where he was at fault—a task which they seem reluctant to undertake—I will continue to follow the conclusions of one who was a genius, no doubt, but who lived life as I know it, who wrote in clear and magnificent language that any man can understand and who strengthens my faith in Providence, self-reliance and the dignity of the common man.

We must neglect no avenue to further the great reform we advocate; we must vindicate every practical detail; we must meet ignorance and prejudice face to face in town councils, public meetings and in politics. We must never retire within ivory castles of thought. But we must strive all the time to create the impression that we are above all things lovers of life in all its aspects and that our philosophy is not less but more human than any of those which enjoy so much more publicity to-day.

[EDITOR'S NOTE.—The above is a transcription of a short speech made to the International Conference at Swanwick on Saturday evening, August 20th. No notes were kept, verbal accuracy is not claimed and the argument has been expanded at several points. Those who heard the speech, however, will probably agree that this transcription reproduces the spirit and substantially the content of the original.]

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