

I Join the *Crackpots*

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ONE evening about 12 weeks ago, I was looking through my mail which, as usual, contained quite a few ads. I was definitely not interested. I didn't need another insurance policy I couldn't possibly use a washing machine, and regardless of what the ad said—or promised—I had no intention of buying that expensive perfume. Then a small card caught my interest with this simple question, *Are you puzzled?*

Actually, at the moment I was not puzzled about anything. Everything was running smoothly enough for me personally, and though I realized that many serious problems were facing the United States and the rest of the world, I was content to go along helping in the small ways I could and leaving weighty matters to people in high places. Curious, however, to know what might be puzzling other people, I read the card.

I discovered that some school was offering a course in Fundamental Economics—free. But surely, I said to myself, this course can't be very good, only crackpots or subversives would offer a 10-weeks course for nothing; and besides, the people who would take such a course must be crackpots, too.

Nevertheless, having studied no economics and having been endowed with a fair amount of curiosity, I went to the first class. My intention was to sneak out unnoticed if it became boring, or, if I managed to stay through that first class, of course I was under no obligation to continue. But I was so wrong. Not only did I stay through that first evening, but I attended each succeeding session with mounting enthusiasm.

The Big Appeal

Why did the course appeal to me? In the first place, I liked it because it gave me in a short period of time, a complete picture of the basic economic processes, and thus it affords a solid foundation on which to base future studies. It aroused in me a keen interest in a new field.

In the second place, I liked it because, instead of merely treating of the results of the prevailing system as so many of the economics texts (which I have examined since starting this course) apparently do, it goes behind those results and gets at the cause of them, offering a solution to defects which I had supposed were inherent in the system and must be tolerated.

Moreover, contact with the mind of Henry George has been a stimulating experience. I don't pretend to understand him completely, but I hope to eventually.

So, if I was correct in thinking that only crackpots would give the course and only crackpots would take it, I must now add that I am very happy to be counted among the crackpots. My sincere thanks to the Henry George School for the opportunity it has given me, to the director of the local school, Robert Allen, and to my instructor, John Garver.