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## **Getting Others to Accept the Single Tax Doctrine**

By Edward D. Burleigh

OUR WORK.

Ever since my conversion to the Single Tax, it has seemed to me that the especial work of Single Taxers was to get the people to accept our doctrines. Others have advocated and practiced, various forms of political action, but except as a means of propoganda, it has never seemed to me wise.

Political parties grow, they are not made. When the time is ripe for them, they spring into being and do their work. The people, generally, do not, yet understand the reform we advocate, the need for it, or the effect it would have. These are the things we should make them see and feel and understand.

The power of the people when once aroused, is well illustrated by the recent overturning in Philadelphia. One short year ago the City was in the grasp of as unscrupulous a gang of thieves as ever looted a public treasury. Anyone, at that time, prophesying its overthrow would have been laughed to scorn. And yet, in a few months, almost weeks, without an election, simply by a popular uprising, caused by the exposure of a particularly audacious scheme to rob the people further, its power was broken, its scheme defeated, and the way opened for its complete overthrow at the next election. The people's cause probably, never looked darker than just before the crash came.

Before the civil war and the John Brown raid, the country seemed hopelessly in the grasp of the slave-power; church, college and countinghouse were united in excusing or justifying chattel slavery; the President, Congress, the Courts, all were controlled by its influence. He who should, at that time, have predicted that inside of 10 or 15 years the power of slavery would be broken, chattel slavery entirely abolished and the former slaves not only set free but given the legal right to vote, such a one would have been thought crazy.

And yet (the people having been prepared by years of faithful work by the despised abolitionists) that was what happened.

The chances for the adoption of the Single Tax may now look dark. Perhaps they do. We cannot hurry things by "going into politics" before the people are prepared for the acceptance of our doctrines. We must get the people to "want something" before it is worth while to attempt to organize them to get it. When they want it, when they see what causes their poverty and how the Single Tax will remove that cause; then a political party will come into existence to get it. One of the old parties may take it up, or a new party succeed one of the old, as the Republican party succeeded the whig party. But somehow, it will come when the time is ripe. Let us work to help ripen the time.

We are sometimes cautioned to be careful not to antagonize people by our advocacy of the Single Tax. We are told that if we say this or do that, somebody will, thereby, be prejudiced against our views and we shall be doing harm to our cause instead of good. It is certainly well to avoid all unnecessary irritation and antagonism in the advocacy of our views. The old proverb that "molasses will catch more flies than vinegar" doubtless contains a truth. But we must not push that idea too far or take it too literally.

We must remember that we are not engaged in catching flies, but in making converts. We are trying to get people to think as we do and to work with us. Therefore while we should avoid an irritating method of presenting our views, we should never hesitate to present them in full; we should never attempt to conceal any part of them, or to minimize the difference in conditions that the Single Tax will make. A convert made by withholding a part of the truth would not be worth the making. He would not be a good soldier in our ranks. He could not be depended upon. The chances are that when he found out the deception that had been practiced upon him (as he ultimately would) he would be repelled from both the reformer and the reform. If not it would simply show that there had been no need of concealing the truth from him. Let us, then, present our reform as enticingly as we may, avoiding, as far as possible, all exciting of prejudice; but

let us present it in full without fear or favor, and trust to the power of truth to secure its ultimate acceptance.

We need not be afraid of getting the Single Tax too soon. It cannot come too soon or too suddenly. Millions are now suffering because of the lack of it. There are plenty to do the resisting. We should push on as fast as we can.

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