

The Single Tax platform 1890

PLATFORM ADOPTED AT THE CONFERENCE OF THE SINGLE TAX NATIONAL LEAGUE OF THE UNITED STATES, AT COOPER UNION, NEW-YORK, SEPTEMBER 3, 1890.

At the meeting of the Single Tax National League of the United States, held at Cooper Union, New-York, September 3, 1890, Henry George, as Chairman of the Committee on platform and Address, reported the following, which was adopted:

We assert as our fundamental principle the self-evident truth enunciated in the Declaration of American Independence, that all men are created equal and are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights.

We hold that all men are equally entitled to the use and enjoyment of what God has created and of what is gained by the general growth and improvement of the community of which they are a part. Therefore, no one should be permitted to hold natural opportunities without a fair return to all for any special privilege thus accorded to him, and that that value which the growth and improvement of the community attaches to land should be taken for the use of the community; that each is entitled to all that his labor produces; therefore, no tax should be levied on the products of labor.

To carry out these principles, we are in favor of raising all public revenues for national, State, county and municipal purposes by a single tax upon land values, irrespective of improvements, and all the obligations of all forms of direct and indirect taxation.

Since in all our States we now levy some tax on the value of land, the single tax can be instituted by the simple and easy way of abolishing, one after another, all other taxes now levied and commensurately increasing the tax on land values until we draw upon that one source for all expenses of government, the revenue being divided between local governments, State government, and the general government, as the revenue from direct tax is now divided between the local and State governments, or by a direct assessment being made by the general government upon the States and paid by them from revenues collected in this manner.

The single tax would:

1st. Take the weight of taxation off the agricultural districts when land has little or no value Irrespective of Improvements and put it on towns and cities where bare land rises to a value of millions of dollars per acre.

2d. Dispense with a multiplicity of taxes and a horde of tax-gatherers, simplify government and greatly reduce its cost.

3d. Do away with the fraud, corruption and gross inequality inseparable from our present methods of taxation, which allow the rich to escape while they grind the poor.

4th. Give us with all the world as perfect freedom of trade as now exist^B between the State^B of our Union, thus enabling our people to share through free exchanges in all the advantages which nature has given to other countries, or which the peculiar skill of other peoples has enabled them to attain. It would destroy the trusts, monopolies and corruptions, which are the outgrowths of the tariff.

5th. It would, on the other hand, by taking for public use that value which attaches to land by reason of the growth and improvement of the community, make the holding of land unprofitable to the mere owner and profitable only to the user. It would thus make it impossible for speculators and monopolists to hold natural opportunities unused or only half used, and would throw open to labor the illimitable field of employment which the earth offers to man. It would thus solve the labor problem, do away with involuntary poverty, raise wages in all occupations to the full earnings of labor, make overproduction impossible until all human wants are satisfied, render labor-saving inventions a blessing to all, and cause such an enormous production and such an equitable distribution of wealth as would give to all comfort, leisure and participation in the advantages of an advancing civilization.

With respect to monopolies other than monopoly of land, we hold that when free competition becomes impossible, as in telegraphs, railroads, water and gas supplies, etc., such business become a proper social function which should be controlled and managed by and for the whole people concerned through their proper government, local, State or national, as may be.

The following are the officers of the Single Tax League of the United States:
Chairman, Louis F. Post; Treasurer, August Lewis; Secretary, George St. John Leavens,
42 University Place, New York.