

Address of E. Yancey Cohen At Fairhope

[Following is the address of E. Yancey Cohen, National Treasurer of the Single Tax Party, at the Anniversary Dinner of the founding of Fairhope, the Single Tax colony near Mobile, Ala. Mr. Cohen is a veteran Single Taxer known wherever the cause is known. He was a frequent contributor to Henry George's *Standard*.]

MR. COHEN in acknowledging the chairman's complimentary words remarked that he had rather expected to be presented as a more or less objectionable character, inasmuch as he appears as Treasurer of the Single Tax Party—and treasurers are proverbially objectionable; while as for being a member of the Single Tax Party that alone, in the eyes of some Single Taxers, was a very objectionable, almost criminal stigma.

But in spite of these handicaps he was glad to feel that in Fairhope at least he and his family were receiving a friendly reception, which was grateful indeed and heartily appreciated and reciprocated. In speaking of the Single Tax Party he was reminded of the famous description of the newly awakened Third Estate in France given by the Abbé Sieyès at the beginning of the French Revolution. Paraphrasing these words one might ask concerning the Single Tax Party: "What was the Single Tax Party? Nothing. What is the Single Tax Party? Something. What does the Single Tax Party wish to become? Everything."

And first, why was the Single Tax Party nothing? Truly a strange admission to make, after thirty-five years of Single Tax agitation. But it must be remembered, said the speaker, that although the Single Tax movement started as a political movement, with the New York labor unions united in the endeavor to elect Henry George mayor of that great city and with the demand for the Single Tax on land values the first and only plank in the United Labor Party's platform, yet by a strange perversity in human nature, an unheard of lack of tenacity in keeping to the main point and febleness in the difficult art of political organization, this movement which for a season or two attracted almost world-wide attention and struck terror into the hearts of the privileged classes, began almost immediately to disintegrate. Its leaders were not politicians. In vain did a minority element headed by Father McGlynn point out the necessity of building up an organization by gradual accretions of members and hard, hard work. Father McGlynn's ideas were side-tracked and Single Taxers rushed headlong into the Cleveland campaign for tariff reform; enthusiastically maintaining that this was a step in the right direction." And for thirty years they have been "kidding themselves" with the belief that the Democratic party is the party for them. What a delusion! They achieved no power within the Democratic party and they lost all semblance of an organized Single Tax minority. Tammany Hall was an organization without principle, while the Single Tax was a principle without organization. In vain did the Single Taxers maneuver for

the election of Single Taxers to office within the Democratic party. In vain, because when elected even though the Single Tax office-holder filled his position with the greatest intelligence and zeal for the public service he yet was invariably met with a solid refusal on the part of the Democratic party to listen to his Single-Tax proposals. His bills were invariably pigeon-holed in committee; or if, as in the case of the Johnson-Maguire bill, a vote was reached, a half dozen votes was the number cast in a House of over four hundred. The reason was clear. The Democratic party's platform contained no mandate for the Single Tax and the members of the party were in no way bound to vote for it. So it was an instance of love's labor lost.

Now such being the case, after a generation of such disappointments, some of our more militant and dissatisfied Single Taxers began to cast about for a way to revive the moribund movement. And their choice fell upon the original idea of an organized political party movement. A bunch of obscure persons in Pennsylvania set the ball rolling. A local party was organized in Philadelphia. New York was the next adherent to the new thought. Then New Jersey followed, organized by counties. Meanwhile the inspiring influence of Luke North had begun to rouse Single Taxers generally from the lethargy into which they had fallen, following the diminishing activities of the Fels Fund. Why not at least take advantage of favorable election laws, wherever found and seize upon the free advertising offered by the State's Board of Electors? The circulation of millions of ballots, sample and official, the natural cooperation of the press in presenting the political news of the day, these and the publicity afforded by candidates' speeches and many other ingenious methods of propaganda were opportunities too good to be missed. And so the Single Tax Party was born, and in 1920 it held in Chicago its first national convention and in the late election it appeared on the ballot in eleven states. At least, according to the Abbé Sieyès, the Single Tax Party is proving to be something.

But by the same token it aims to be "everything." Why this supererogation? Because a life-time of study in the science of political economy has convinced Single Taxers that they have a remedy and a way out from the distressing results of fatuous ignorance on the part of millions of their fellow men. They have a means of putting an end to the cataclysm which privilege has at length brought upon mankind, and of bringing order out of chaos. The tragedy of the Single Tax movement lies in the fact that at this time of world crisis its lack of strength is so palpable. Where is the voice of Henry George? Why is it not resounding now like the horn that rang through Roncesvalles? The reason lies with Single Taxers themselves. They appear to be individuals first, last and all the time. They refuse to combine, refuse to cooperate. The discipline of a political party will teach them to cooperate and will prove to them the virtues of organization. This is perhaps the chief present merit of the Single Tax Party. Let us take a leaf

from the book of the socialists and communists. Even as they call to the workingmen of the world to unite, let us cry, "Single Taxers of the World, unite."

A Fading Theory*

Only those who still distrust representative government and insist that everything should be determined by a vote of the people, regardless of the ignorance of the people of the merits of the propositions upon which they vote, still consider the initiative and referendum bulwarks of democracy.

We have had nearly a score of years of practical experience with them in this country and the net result has been the defeat or long delay in putting into effect of some excellent measures that were unpleasant to private, special or political interests, through the referendum route, all at much expense to the state.

The theory that corrupt legislatures need to have the referendum check kept upon them has been exploded by the practical working of the law. The referendum in its practical operation seems merely to offer an opportunity for interests adversely affected by a new act to delay many months its going into operation, possibly to cause its defeat.

The initiative, on the other hand, has proved to be chiefly a means for a minority of theorists to thrust their theories upon the people for an expression of opinion at the ballot box year after year, each time at an expense to the state. Oregon was the pioneer state to adopt the initiative, the first election under it being held in 1904. At that time and at every general election since a small group of Single Taxers have compelled the people to vote on some phase of that question. It has always been defeated by a large majority, at the election last November, larger than ever before, but it has always come up again.

Even now the proponents of the Single Tax announce that they will have it on the ballot again at the next election by initiative petition and will keep it up until they succeed, which means until the millennium unless there is a great change of opinion on the subject.

To prevent this constant bringing up of isms and minority-held theories, annoying to the people and wasting the public revenues, it was proposed to amend the constitutional provision establishing the initiative by providing that any defeated measure could not be brought up again

*We call the special attention of our readers to this editorial. It bears the ear-marks of imported matter, and is obviously not of local origin. For we have not the Initiative and Referendum in this state, nor have the citizens of Ithaca ever been called upon to register their views on the Single Tax question. Now what is the organization that is preparing such editorial matter for papers that will use it, and what political and "business" interests are behind it? If there is such an organization sending out this kind of editorial matter, the source should be indicated by self-respecting papers using it. And it might be well for papers possessing ordinary newspaper intelligence to make such changes as will prevent the intrusion of local anachronisms which to the discerning disclose the alien sources of supply.—

—EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW

for 10 years, but this was defeated because it was realized that the prohibition might be evaded by a slight change and that some good measure might be defeated once and thus blocked.

The common sense of the people is asserting itself with regard to both the initiative and referendum, and doubtless both will be rendered more difficult to set in motion when the new constitution is framed.

Ithaca, N. Y. *Journal News*, Jan. 31.

The Golden Rule

ACCORDING TO THE "*Bulletin*" of the American Building Contractors of recent date the members have been considering ways and means of bringing about harmony between the contractors and their employees. As a final summing up they came to the conclusion that the Divine rule "Do unto others as ye would have others do unto you," was the only solution of the problem. This is true. No other solution is possible. How to attain it, is the next procedure. That also is so simple that it is wonderful no one ever found it out before.

A minister once preached a sermon in which he stated that if any broker tried the Golden Rule in Wall street, he would be bankrupt in an hour. It would take, perhaps, weeks in Mr. Rockefeller's case. These men are on the horns of a dilemma. If they combine to keep up the price of building they become criminals. If they don't combine they must compete and the lowest bidder gets the job. How can you exercise the Golden Rule in the latter case? For you must avoid self-seeking among yourselves before you can extend fellowship to your men.

Now the men must be Golden Rulers, too, otherwise the contractors will share the fate of Mark Twain's "Good Little Boy." This boy on Sunday walked out on a plank to remonstrate with a number of his little friends who were going off in a boat to fish. The plank was loose and tipped him into the water, whence he was barely rescued from drowning, and he got whipped when he arrived home, for spoiling his Sunday clothes.

You cannot exercise Love unless Justice is first established. Eliminate unjust laws before you try to exercise charity. All attempts must fail woefully unless this is done. Idle men outside the union will make every union man a loyal supporter of his union and the interests of union men who try to monopolize their trades for the benefit of their members will always be antagonistic to the interests of employers who are forbidden to form contractors unions, but are forced to struggle among themselves for business.

Open up the land to labor and capital alike and the Golden Rule will come into automatic existence. At heart the average man feels that way.

EARNEST I. SOPEN.

GRANGERS demand all money be taxed; then howl at high interests rates—H. M. H. in *Cleveland Citizen*.