

## OPEN LETTER TO SINGLE TAXERS OF NEW YORK.

FROM A MEMBER OF THE LAND VALUE TAX PARTY.

In this city, on May 21st, 1910, came into being the first party formed solely for the advocacy of the Single Tax on land values.

Its beginning was modest, only about three score people answering the call for the convention, so that many of us were disappointed by the small attendance. But on reflection we see that it could not well be otherwise, for the teaching of Henry George seemed to prescribe the attainment of our end by the indoctrinating of one of the old parties, on the principle that it was easier to swim with the current than against it. This practice of supporting another party—particularly the democratic party—has been emphasized and steadily inculcated by those Single Taxers whose leanings and ambitions have directed them toward a political life, and for many years all of us rejoiced when a Single Taxer was elected to office. The inadequacy of our progress during the last fifteen years, however, together with the glaring fact that many of these Single Tax officials became partizan democrats, working for the success of their party and incidentally for their own political advancement, while saying nothing or but little publicly for the Single Tax, has finally caused us to doubt the soundness of this method of bringing our doctrine to the front. We, of the Land Value Tax Party, have thrown over this plan and we earnestly entreat fair minded Single Taxers everywhere to consider whether the facts do not justify our action.

Consider first that our object is to get the Single Tax on land values—while our practice has been to talk tariff reform! We wanted our birthright in the earth—yet we shouted for the inaitive, the referendum and the recall! Granting that these and other reforms are good in themselves, yet we know they are all secondary to the cause for which we stand. Is it not just as reasonable to contend that if we got the Single Tax, all these reforms would be immediately instituted by a freed and enlightened people as to say that we must just get them as a step toward the Single Tax, particularly when we say little or nothing about the Single Tax in the meantime?

Consider again, has not our movement lost all the fire and energy developed in what was slightly described as "the Howling Dervish" stage—which in truth was the stage in which our principles were a part of our being. Have we not since that time become so staidly respectable that we are now highly innocuous? Have the rank and file of our people done anything commensurable with our opportunities since that despised stage, (at which time indeed most of us were converted) toward the dissemination of our teachings, or the bringing of it into active politics? Why is the condition of our cause—after twenty years propaganda—so unsatisfactory? There can be but one answer, and that is that it has not been directly and forcibly urged. Any other answer would tend to cast doubt on the justice and worth of our principle.

We declare that since the passing of our great leader, Henry George, the movement has been emasculated, that no one has led any attack on land monopoly and that the rank and file have sunk into shameful slumber.

It is a burning, blistering shame on us all that we have lazily hoped for the millennium to come but have not had the spirit to work for its coming. Shake off this hypnotic trance; go down into our crowded east and west side districts and see the squalid poverty and misery among the teeming disinherited, note that they are all workers—no idlers; then let your indignation rise and go out and shout for tariff reform, Initiative and Referendum and Recall—the success of the democratic party and its machine! Perhaps that will hypnotize your indignation away; if not then join our party and work with us to destroy this hell of poverty in earth—in the spirit of '86.

Wait not the psychological moment for forming a party, for never in any political campaign will there be wanting those to draw herrings across the path, to keep you from entering the straight and narrow way toward economic justice on which this party has set its feet, and on which it will steadily march undeterred by sneers as to the number of its following or the humble character of its adherents, confident in the faith that armed with a just cause and headed in the right direction, its ranks will swell and when the time is ripe will merit as well as achieve reward.

We have inaugurated a committee, called the propaganda committee, which is designed to make every member of our party an integral part of it, so that every one can take an active part in the formulation of plans and the putting of them into effect. We lack leaders and workers, but out of this democratic organization, leaders and workers will arise, and being bound by our iron clad rule to be a straight, middle-of-the-road party, these leaders and workers can never accept an office or nomination from any other party, consequently never will self-interest cause them to waver in the direct public advocacy of our principle.

The provisional executive committee, composed of George Wallace, Chairman, Wm. J. Wallace, Treasurer, and B. F. Sample, Secretary, holds executive meetings every Saturday evening, and members are democratically invited to attend, so that they may keep themselves informed as to work being done and projected. It has been urged that this committee has made some mistakes. Well, we are all fallible, and as one who has had some differences of opinion with them on minor points, it gives me great pleasure to say that these gentlemen are sincere, capable and absolutely unshakable in the middle-of-the-road policy, and that they command my warm regard and esteem.

Finally, my old comrades and friends, I urge you to sign our constitution (unless you are afraid to tie yourself up to the straightout advocacy of the principle in which you believe); to join our party and as integral parts of it, help us in our councils to avoid the mistakes you apparently criticize and to earnestly aid us in forwarding the cause we have at heart.

Fraternally yours,

ANTONIO BASTIDA.