

UNDER WHAT NAME?

(For the Review.)

By JAMES W. BUCKLIN.

Many, perhaps most, disputes, dissensions and even wars grow out of the erroneous use of words. Men have always been marshalled either toward good or evil under flags, banners and names, the symbols of their passions or ideals. Most people do not think or study deeply. They get a somewhat faint conception of an idea, and are moved by their needs and sentiments, rather than by their knowledge. To such people a name becomes a flag, a moving force, the symbol to follow in business, social life, religion and politics. They may have no single and harmonious philosophy, and consequently may follow many names, even inconsistent ones, still names control and master them.

Nor is the influence of names confined to weak minds. Men of the highest ideals, of the most lofty thought and the purest aspirations, give to their philosophy a name, and such names are used to conjure with. On the other hand, a name has often obscured clear understanding, covered up errors, and given to falsehood the garb of truth.

The protective tariff, so clearly shown to be a fraud and humbug, doubtless owes much of its persistence to its name, "Protection."

The Democratic party, although it became absolutely undemocratic and the servile instrument of slavery in the middle of the last century, most wonderfully survived annihilation against a successful political opponent having the tremendous prestige resulting from the abolition of slavery and the preservation of the Union. Chief perhaps among the causes of survival was the party name, "Democrat."

Socialism as a name appeals to many discontented with our present social system who aspire to something better, but who have no clear conception of what that something better should be.

We who are advocating the greatest forward movement in all human history should not longer ignore these fundamental facts. If we would succeed in the shortest possible time, we must give to our cause a name which will accurately express, not merely our political methods, but also our determination to establish industrial justice and the natural order, thereby abolishing political and social evils. That name should be a single word, short, incapable of misrepresentation, fully descriptive of the ends we seek to achieve, our methods, philosophy and ourselves.

The name "Single Tax" clearly does not suffice. The absolute defects of the name were expressly recognized by Henry George himself, and are clearly seen, I think, by all of us. It is too narrow. It gives to the unthinking an idea of a mere fiscal movement, and the masses have been taught to believe that all fiscal movements are unimportant. It gives to the unknowing the idea that our movement proposes to establish an arbitrary tax in the ordinary meaning of the word, while we are really endeavoring to abolish all taxation in the sense of burdens or arbitrary enactments, and to supply all public needs automatically with funds flowing from public reservoirs, without any burden whatever on private resources. The word tax means an arbitrary enactment. Outside of the followers of George, the best educated and fairest minds have no adequate conception of the economic power of taxation. Our name thus gives to the malicious a tremendous opportunity, never neglected, to misrepresent and minimize our movement.

The name "Single Tax" does not appeal to the full scope of our principles, but merely to a proposed method of putting some of them into operation. It gives but little hint of the full philosophy of George. There is in it no denunciation of a corrupt and rotting civilization, not even condemnation of recognized political, social and industrial evils. It has nothing to do with rights of way and franchises of public utilities, and it omits many other questions in which the public is vitally interested. There is no enthusiasm, no power, in it. It is as uninviting as any name could possibly be. It is not popular, although we have worked to that end for twenty years. How greatly it has retarded organization and growth no one can tell. It has been accepted and used as a rule all over the world, because no name more available appeared. I admit that the name has been useful in some ways. But now I think the time is ripe for advance, and that a better name is here.

That better name is not the splendid word "Democracy," because that word is already appropriated, Democracy meaning political equality only, a thing the laws now pretend to establish, while we also stand for equality of economic opportunity. Our movement includes but is broader than Democracy, proclaiming not merely inalienable and equal political rights, but also inalienable and equal rights to all the opportunities and bounties of nature, to the very earth itself and all its illimitable resources.

History, if we but observe, teaches what the name of our cause should be. When we wish to speak of the highest and best Democracy, we use the name of the greatest Democrat, and call it Jeffersonian Democracy, or Jeffersonianism. We give to Christianity the name of its founder, Christ, and his followers we call Christians. So Mohammedanism and many other great movements have been called after the names of their founders. No other word is so inclusive and exclusive, no other word is so easily and accurately seen by the multitude to express the ideas and teachings of a great philosopher, as the name of such philosopher himself.

But one name naturally designates the followers of Henry George, viz., "George," and its derivatives "Georgian," "Georgite," "Georgist," "Georgism," etc. The name of its advocates is Georgian, or Georgite or Georgist, the name of the philosophy and movement is the Georgian or Georgism, and the name of our political party when organized will be the George or Georgian party. To call one a Georgian is as euphonious as to call him a Democrat or Republican.

Henry George is almost universally recognized not only as one of the world's greatest philosophers and thinkers, but also as one of the greatest and most unselfish souls who ever lived, and as time passes this recognition and respect, both for his personal character and for his philosophy, must increase, and his name continue to grow in power.

We have not heretofore seen clearly the necessity for this change, because of the modesty of George, because his life and teachings were not till recently complete, and because our movement has had no political organization. The very fact of being known as Georgians instead of as Single Taxers would, I think, at once abolish the idea, now quite common among its natural friends, that the movement is merely fiscal and unimportant, and would greatly increase the public respect and appreciation of the cause.

No objection to the name of George can be made because of disagreement on minor matters. Even if admitted that George was wrong in some of the details of his philosophy, such admission does not in the least destroy the force of the fact that, as a whole, the philosophy of George is in harmony with, and an exposition of, the orderly trend of natural social adjustment. To be a Georgian, therefore, is to accept merely the general philosophy of George, and does not imply a claim that George perfectly expressed all his arguments and the complete details thereof. The wonder is that any one could do so much.

The further question arises, how can we succeed in changing the name, now world-wide, from Single Taxers and Single Tax, to Georgians and Georgism? What is to prevent our newspapers, magazines, writers and speakers from using the same methods which brought the present term into use, thus inducing the general public everywhere to gradually and often unconsciously accept the change as the proper thing? It will not be necessary to entirely drop the term Single Tax until the public become familiar with the better word, and perhaps not absolutely even then. An interchangeable use of the words for a time will be better. For illustration, the name of the SINGLE TAX REVIEW could be changed immediately by inserting the two words "or Georgian" just before the word "Review." It will thus be seen that the change can be accomplished by the most conservative methods. All that is required is the united action of Georgians themselves. Is not the time now ripe and most opportune to make this change, and is not the same advisable?

SOME VIEWS OF A RECENT PAMPHLET FROM GERMANY.

An Informal Talk with Single Taxers.

(For the Review.)

By GRACE ISABEL COLBRON.

A little German pamphlet, sent over recently for consideration in Single Tax journals here, while of itself not too important, is calculated to arouse thoughts on the Importance of Being in Earnest. Whether it is better to be in earnest about economic affairs, with a lack of complete proportional understanding of them, than not to be interested at all, is a question. I think that on the whole the world is better for any serious dealing with serious subjects, however much harm a wrong conception of them may do for the time—may appear to do, rather, for a serious belief can never do real harm. Mr. Ernest Frankfurth, who writes a pamphlet on "Unearned Incomes," sets out with the apparent intention of proving certain important and far-reaching fallacies in the teachings of Henry George, with all due respect for Mr. George's intentions and achievements. Involuntarily his little pamphlet is an excellent Single Tax sermon, for where he is most lucid and logical he is refuting his own position by the facts and examples he gives, and at other times he is too contradictory to be of influence. Mr. Frankfurth is trying to show that land monopoly alone is responsible for but a small share of social evils. And also he is trying to prove that a tax on land values only is the tax most ardently desired by the possessing classes, as touching the smallest and least vital of their sources of income. His logic in proof of this rather remarkable assertion is hardly worth considering. He is evidently led to believe this by a fact outside the pale of pure economics, and then he tries to reason it out in terms of economics. The fact that influences his opinions (he betrays it in one sentence) is the make-up of the German Land Reform League, the Single Tax party in Germany. Mr. Frankfurth is not the only Single Taxer who doubts the efficiency of the Single Tax fiscal philosophy because of the elements in the German Single Tax party. He says: "Members of the League of Landed Proprietors, for instance, men whose only aim in life