

has been a miserable failure. And the most deplorable feature of this failure is that the leaders wore themselves out in this impossible venture, so that most of those who are living are so spent in spirit as to be useless to the movement.

They gave to the Single Tax the best that was in them. They wrote, they spoke, they preached the gospel in season and out. They were good teachers. For their good work we praise them; for their errors in judgment we forgive them. To the memory of those who have departed we pledge our earnest efforts to continue the propaganda they so ably conducted; to those who are still living we, who have profited by the experience of their failure, hope that they will be spared long enough to see some fruition from the seed they sowed, through the better methods of the new leaders.

Who are the new leaders? Who is the new hero? He is in the making. The movement is only now emerging from the slough of despond into which it was cast after the failure of one after another of the methods that were employed. So hopeless was the despair that it will take several years of demonstration on the part of those few who have chosen the new course before confidence will be restored and the resulting enthusiasm will sweep the movement to success. To those who have chosen the new course must, regardless of their qualifications, be given the laurel of leadership—for they are showing the way to a movement that had almost lost hope.

There is James A. Robinson, the organizer for the National Single Tax Party. It is to his almost unbelievable self-sacrifice that the party movement progressed so well during the last election, eleven States having Single Tax Party candidates on the ballot. His single-handed fight is almost over, for there is enough party organization now thriving to insure the perpetuation of the movement. But it is to Robinson alone—the man who, as one man puts it, would not stop at anything save the law to advance the Single Tax—that credit must be given for revivifying the cause. An orator than whom there is none greater in the movement, a resourceful thinker, an indefatigable worker—he has given his all to the Single Tax.

William J. Wallace, the staid, earnest, severe and upright chairman of the National Committee; Antonio Bastida, now of Cuba, who had enemies in spite of his extreme amiability simply because he objected to the Single Tax being emasculated; Robert C. Macauley, our recent candidate for President, an evangelist who carries away audiences as only the sainted Father McGlynn could; E. Yancey Cohen, the punctilious National Treasurer; Jerome C. Reis, the apostle of organization; Joseph Dana Miller, one of the most effective writers the movement has had, and surely the foremost of our living scribes; Oscar H. Geiger, the gentle and efficient pedagogue of the street corner; James H. Dix, Herman G. Loew, and a host of others.

The recent election has brought forward a number of new leaders. Leary, of Illinois; John F. White, of Indiana;

M. C. O'Neill, of Massachusetts; John Cairns, of Connecticut; Dr. Plummer, of Maine; Giddings, of Rhode Island; R. C. Barnum and George Edwards, of Ohio; Ray Robson, of Michigan, to mention only a few.

But the new hero—he has not arrived. Nor is it to be expected that the dynamic personality which is to lead this movement to ultimate victory should spring up before the environment necessary for his efforts is barely formed. The Single Tax movement of the past, with its indirection, its hair-splitting propensities, its lack of organization, its discouragement of action—is gone. With it went the leaders who embodied these characteristics. The new movement, demanding first that there shall be no deviation from or compromising of the fundamental principle that all the rent of land belongs to the people, and secondly that the propagation of this principle must come through independent political action, is still in the formative stage, although gaining momentum rapidly. It will not be long before some Thomas Jefferson, William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips or Anna Howard Shaw, attracted by the appeal which a great cause makes to a great heart, will take up the work we have undertaken and lead the Single Tax to victory.

It may be that the new hero will be some convert at tomorrow night's street corner meeting. Perhaps he is a boy in his teens. Or, quite likely there is in some inland town a lone Single Taxer, endowed with all the qualifications of leadership, craving to enlist in the cause which he has heretofore mourned as moribund, who will come forward to head the new militant movement. There is even the possibility that some one from the past, revived by the new hope, will cast aside the heritage of doubt, throw discretion to the winds and mount the steed of party action.

In the meantime we who have undertaken this work must carry on. That is our duty. When the new hero arrives the environment, the organization will be ready for him. Indeed, he may be one of us. Who knows?

MORRIS VAN VEEN.

The Lesson of The Harding Vote

HARDING won because the Wilson Administration was unpopular. So say all the political scribes—even those who in pre-election days sang loud the praise of Harding. Now their lyres lie mute in the garret; the truth is out. The vox populi was raised for Harding because that was the only way of raising it against the administration. The vote was not complimentary to the victor; it was condemnatory of the Democratic Party.

To an Englishman who has studied American politics from books and magazine articles it might be difficult to understand that the tremendous vote for Harding was no indication of his popularity. It merely registered the unpopularity of, not his opponent, but his opponent's heritage. But to an American—one who has played baseball, for instance, and has relished the desire to "kill the

umpire"—that generosity and spontaneity of hatred which is so big in our psychology is quite familiar. True, we do not sing songs of hate. Having given vent to our dislike by knocking our opponent "through the ropes," we magnanimously drag him to his feet again, pat him on the back and say "you're a game sport." We hate him no more.

In that kind of hating we excel. In fact, we hate far better than we love. It is a certainty that the stupendous majority for Mr. Harding is by no means commensurate with the esteem in which he is held. Not even his warmest advocates claim that. He is generally conceded to be a man of commonplace abilities (his campaign demonstrated that), a tool of the Republican politicians who nominated him, with no record of achievement that would warrant the hope of a brilliant or even effective administration. Yet, as one vaudevillian puts it, everybody voted for him. Why? Simply because we hated the Democratic Administration so heartily. Harding is merely the beneficiary of our hate.

It is that trait in American psychology that we Single Taxers have not fully appreciated, and for that reason we have not made better progress with our philosophy. In our heretofore silly political methods, in our propaganda literature, in our various proselyting endeavors we have depended entirely upon sentiments of justice, humanitarianism and self-interest. It is true that Americans can be interested by appeals of this kind. But it takes a fight to move them to action. They will shed tears over the screen picture of a little girl dying from tuberculosis; outside of the theatre we gather our skirts as we pass the real girl. If a ruffian knock over an old woman's pushcart will the crowd stop to pick up her wares? Hardly. They will run after the ruffian, give him a well-enjoyed beating, turn him over to a cop, and forget all about the old woman. They love a fight.

We Single Taxers have directed the attention of the American people to the iniquity of a tax system. Bah! We tickle their intellects, appease their hunger for theoretical justice and get them to say that this Single Tax stuff sounds good. But will they do anything to change the system? Not until we give them something tangible to hate; not until we start a fight.

A political organization is by its very nature a *casus belli*. Each year it goes before the public with a programme that is diametrically opposed to the programmes of other political parties; it bombards with literature and with speeches the platforms and the personalities of its opponents; it employs every instrument within its power to destroy the efforts of the other parties to gain votes. That is indeed a fight. Between elections the party in power conducts a carefully considered programme of propaganda (and incidentally strengthens its organization with patronage) preparatory to the next political battle; the opposition parties carry on a continuous guerilla warfare intended to weaken the party now in control of the government. Politics is fight enough. It's so much of a fight that it has become the most absorbing affair in American life. It is evident

that the Single Tax Party is the most effective of all possible forms of propaganda, since it enters the arena as a participant in a fight in which a large part of the people are actively engaged and at which all the rest are deeply interested spectators. Although its effect on the final result cannot for a long time be more than casual, nevertheless it is present in the *melee* which one hundred million Americans watch keenly for four months in the year. During that time at least, they know there is such a thing as the Single Tax.

But, that is only a tactical fight. It is an almost hopeless struggle between a small group of protagonists and the giants of politics. The strategic fight which we Single Taxers must engage in order that we may interest Americans, is an assault not upon so intangible a thing as a system of land tenure or of taxation, but upon the beneficiaries of this system. Horrors! I can see the purists of the movement raise their hands in despair, and can hear the cry of "heresy." What, shall we attack the innocent landlords? How are they to blame? Under the present laws somebody must own the land (although I do not find in the code any statute making landowning compulsory), and we must not attach to the individual blame for an institutional wrong. And so on, *ad infinitum ad nauseam*. Nevertheless, I am convinced that we shall make slow progress indeed if we do not direct a vigorous fight against the very small group of people who own the land of the country and charge the rest of us for the privilege of living on it. The American soldiers did not fight against Kaiserism; they fought against the Kaiser and his cohorts. The American people may appreciate the injustice of and the evils resulting from landlordism; they will not, however, change the system unless they are aroused against the "Kaisers" who exact tribute from them. It is a fight, not a discussion, that moves Americans to action.

While I advocate this as a *modus operandi* only, yet a very good argument can be made for the justice of attacking the individual rather than the system. There is no justification for speculating in land. One must live on the land; but one must not be a robber of other men's opportunities. That there will be such robbers under the present system I have no doubt; but it is our business to point out that what they are doing is robbery, legalized robbery. The legality of the crime does not make it moral.

However, this theoretical question as to whether the land speculator is to be condoned while land speculation is to be denounced is one that requires more space than has been allotted to me. I am interested in advancing the Single Tax, and quickly. And I am satisfied that as a matter of method the attack upon land speculators will get us adherents much more rapidly than the hair-splitting tactics we have heretofore pursued. The American people are good haters; let us give them somebody to hate. And why should they not, in justice, hate the small group of landlords who keep them in a continuing condition of economic slavery? Are not these few the real enemies of the American people? Would it not be a comparatively simpler matter to arouse

antipathy to these landlords than to develop a desire to change a tax system? Could we not more quickly arouse interest in the Single Tax by pointing the finger of scorn at the toll gatherers?

What is the main political argument of the Republicans in any election anywhere? That the Democrats are no good. How do Socialists make converts? By depicting the "capitalistic vultures." What was the main method of the Prohibitionist? To make the saloon keeper a social outcast. How does any political movement, in this country, make progress? By starting a fight against its opponents.

The opponents of the Single Tax are the Lords of the Land. See, in California, these "beneficiaries of a system" are not satisfied to merely discuss with the Single Taxers the merits of the question; they are attempting to destroy the hard-won right of the people to vote on it. They are trying to use the machinery of democracy to destroy democracy. As the Single Tax gains in popularity and threatens to become a reality, none of the refinements of thought that now retard our movement will interfere with their opposition. At first they will utilize the power which their ill-gotten money gives them to legally stop us. They will have ordinances enacted to curtail our right to freedom of speech. They will make laws that will increase our difficulties in securing a place on the ballot; that has already been done in New York and New Jersey. And if we reach that stage where we really menace their privileges, they will resort to personal villification, and to thuggery. They will try to make the people hate *us*—not the Single Tax, for they will understand American psychology.

Let us be practical. Let us realize that we Americans are against something more strongly than we are for its opposite. Let us, as a matter of politics only, if you will, start a fight against landlords, who are none too popular now, anyhow. That kind of tactics will win out.

FRANK CHODOROV

MAY we urge upon Single Taxers in all the States to have bills introduced in the legislature providing for the application of the Single Tax. In States where the constitution prohibits the adoption of the full Single Tax, bills for such modified approaches to it as may be permitted should be introduced. In short, let it be any sort of a bill which provides an opportunity for a hearing, thus giving Single Taxers a chance to appear before legislative committees. If this is done simultaneously, or as nearly so as may be, in the legislatures of 48 States, its effect is likely to be nation-wide and result in enormous publicity.

IN the *Arbitrator* for November, Hon. Lawson Purdy and James F. Morton, Jr., argue the question of the exemption of church property, Mr. Purdy defending exemption, Mr. Morton opposing. Neither Mr. Purdy nor Mr. Morton consider the question as applying to any other system of taxation than the prevailing one.

"Taxes As Is."*

A PLEA FOR DISCRIMINATION

SOMETIMES I think it would pay Single Taxers to read treatises dealing with taxation as it really is. Many Single Taxers used to nourish the delusion that legislative bodies did not enact Single Tax legislation because they were bribed or terrorized into not doing so. Others believed that defective legislative machinery blocked the expression of the people's will, and so they wasted a lot of time trying to perfect the machinery which would permit the free expression of that will. Others again believed that the corruption of municipal politics by public service corporations was a potent factor in preventing Single Tax believers from securing control of municipal governments. It is not unfair to say that these delusions can no longer be entertained by sensible people. The Single Tax has not been defeated anywhere by the strength of its enemies but by the weakness of its friends.

Wherever there is a real sentiment among the people in favor of Single Tax or anything else, the present machinery of government will record that sentiment. Municipal ownership is now of dubious popularity. Electoral reforms are at a discount. The people as a whole seem capable of voting only against what they resent, but not of formulating a policy which they favor. They have lost the faculty, if they ever had it, of affirmative voting, except on rare occasions.

All of which leads back to the suggestion, with which this article begins—that Single Taxers should study the details of taxation as it is, and discriminate between taxes which seem to point in the right direction and those which point backwards. Such an opportunity is afforded by a small pamphlet which the New York *Evening Post* has recently published, containing Professor Adams' articles on our present Federal tax system, and how it might be improved—not perfected—just improved. One reason why Single Taxers should study it, is that if they do not nobody else will.

To the multitude there has always been something uncanny about the way Single Taxers have been able to interest themselves in taxation. To the ordinary mind there is no more repellent subject, and doubtless it would be so to us, were it not that at some period of our lives we sat upon a magic carpet called "Progress and Poverty," and were lifted up so that we got a bird's-eye view of the City of the Civilization-that-might-be and the ground plan became so photographed on our minds, that in all our wanderings we felt we never could get lost again. Had we never seen that vision we would be as others, straying through the purlieus and environs of the City, convinced that it had no plan at all.

But because we have had a view of a possibility, as glorious as a vision, we have some standards by which to judge

* "Needed Tax Reform in the United States", by T. S. Adams. Reprinted from the New York *Evening Post*, 1920.