

The Ohio Single Tax Association Reborn

A GATHERING of Single Taxers to effect an organization in the state of Ohio met at Columbus, at the Neil House on October 13. The meeting was small but very active. For the first time in my experience there was no hair splitting. Nor was there any hair-pulling.

An election resulted in myself as president, Mr. W. A. Ruprecht, of Columbus, vice-president, and Mr. J. H. Kauffman, of Columbus, as secretary and treasurer.

Rev. Herbert S. Bigelow of Cincinnati introduced the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the Ohio Single Tax Association concentrate on home rule in taxation, including the right of cities to adopt the so-called "Pittsburgh Plan."

This was adopted without a dissenting vote.

Rev. Bigelow now introduced a resolution based on his remarks at the recent Henry George Memorial Congress at Chicago. The resolution was as follows:

"RESOLVED that it is the sense of this meeting that those who favor the taxation of land values, the public ownership of public utilities, old age pensions, and concerted action for world disarmament, should make common cause by the formation of an organization to carry on educational work for the four proposals; and also to investigate the views of all legislative candidates at primaries and general elections, and to urge voters to discriminate in favor of candidates sincerely committed to these proposals."

In the discussion, which was very short, one man asked if the author of the resolution did not think that under a Single Tax regime old age pensions would be unnecessary. They probably will be, but as the Single Tax is not just round the corner and coming like a movie villain, there will be much ameliorative work to do in mitigating the pangs of poverty. It might be emphasized that elderly victims of a bad social system should be compensated by a tax laid on land value. It is to be hoped that such a scheme will please the members of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, who are behind the old age pension proposition.

Long ago Prof. Richard T. Ely advocated the socialization of natural monopolies. Single Taxers should readily take up with the idea of public ownership of public utilities. Municipal Ownership Leagues have among them many who might be brought to see that the greatest of all the natural monopolies is land.

To urge that land grabbing and tariffs are the main causes of war is heterodoxy to the average legislator. He therefore draws on the passion and patriotism of youth. The young men of the land should be especially keen to submit a questionnaire to candidates for legislatures. We are prone to ask what the legislator is going to do or what he thinks about a certain thing *after* election; seldom do we ask *before*.

It seems to me that this programme of the Ohio Single Tax Association, namely, to cooperate with libertarian groups, will redound to the cause of freedom.

We are apt to blame the "Ruralites," or as they have been designated in Ohio, "The Cornstalk League," with much conservatism in taxation matters. But what shall we say when cities in a state bordering on Pennsylvania know little or nothing of Pittsburgh's plan?

It is one of my pet theories that a committee of Single Taxers appearing in person before legislative bodies, whether city councils, state representatives or directors of a business, can make an impression. Such crusaders will come with no personal requests. They will spend their own money in seeking an audience. Their sincerity and intellectuality should carry weight. With this idea I appointed a large group to be known as the "Legislative Committee." It may be that such a committee will cooperate with the proponents of plans mentioned in the Bigelow resolution. At any rate, such a committee will be ready to confer with legislative committees when subjects pertaining to taxation are to be discussed.

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President Ohio Single Tax Association.

The Economics of Moses

ADDRESS OF CLAYTON J. EWING,
HENRY GEORGE CONGRESS, SEPT. 11

IN the life, character and writings of Moses we perceive a God of Justice and Truth—of infinite power and wisdom—a God who desired the inhabitants of the earth to learn His ways and His laws and follow His guidance, and thus bring the Kingdom of God on earth. This condition was to be brought about by working in harmony with natural law, not by violating it, and so individually proceed in an endless evolution or development to higher faculties, enlarged powers, greater opportunities and responsibilities. When duly and truly prepared other fields and duties would open to us.

To the Jews for many centuries, and to the Christian world, whether Catholic or Protestant, Moses has been regarded as a hero. To the reasoning mind Moses makes a stirring appeal. He is known as the great Law Giver. Law is the perfection of logic. The natural universe is one of Law and Order.

Moses is the great Law Giver, not alone because he gave us the Ten Commandments. Other laws not so prominently taught, which the world does not yet understand or practise, the world must some day learn to obey. The points to which I desire to call attention are very, very old and have been long overlooked—buried in oblivion in the rubbish of the temple.

The Promised Land—the land in which to carry out the new idea of social righteousness! The Covenant, reiterated and confirmed to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob! How often the phrase occurs—"Unto the and

which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and, Unto the Seed of Abraham for an Inheritance." In the Promised Land and in this new nation these economic laws were to be given a trial.

You will recall how Jacob and his sons went down to Egypt and how Jacob was prime minister to Pharaoh and the Jews were settled in the land of Goshen—near or in the Delta of the Nile—until the Shepherd Kings were overthrown and new Pharaohs ruled who knew not Joseph and were hostile to the Jews.

And as the land of Egypt had gotten into the ownership of Pharaoh, the Jews were slaves and their burdens grievous. But they were increasing in numbers, so orders were sent out to kill the male infants in order to keep down the population—and into this situation Moses was born.

Adopted by Pharaoh's daughter, raised in luxury, taught no doubt the traditions of his people, the promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—the Promised Land. Reared as a prince, one who might some day occupy Egypt's throne—in all the world of that day no prouder eminence—he chose not to be called the son of Pharaoh, but selected rather the lineage of his own despised and down-trodden race.

He married the daughter of a Midian priest. He knows the religion of Midian and of Egypt; he knows the land laws of Egypt—the laws that made slaves of the people. He knows the democracy of the desert—the equality that grows up where all have equal access to the land. He is versed in the knowledge of the Egyptians—and is the best equipped man of his time. There is probably no man better fitted to establish a nation on lines of economic justice. He has knowledge, the ability and the vision—has he also the faith? That strange quality, Faith!

He cares nothing for power or fame or applause. He is content; he likes the life in Midian, with quiet and comfort and time for study. And then the burning bush that burns and is not consumed!

He organizes the Jewish men by fifties and hundreds so they can be handled by associate leaders. And with great difficulty he gets them to travel through the wilderness. He announces the renewal of the Covenant, they arrive at the borders of the Promised Land. But their faith fails them and they surrender to fear. How shall men so long economic slaves be made into heroes?

But forty years pass—the generation of slaves die in the wilderness and a new generation has arisen who knew not the lash of the taskmaster. And now Moses has an army of men—not cringing slaves.

Consider the great tasks of Moses:

To lead them out of the house of bondage;

To establish a military system and an army;

To establish a religious system based on the idea of one spiritual God;

To establish them as a nation dwelling in a land of fixed habitation. The nation to be not a Kingdom but a democracy;

To provide a system of laws under which the government could continue to exist and function along national lines.

The Hebrew nation was not to remain exclusively for those in whom ran the blood of Jacob, but the laws of Moses and his ideals were to reign supreme in the mind and heart of individual and the nation. But it was to be the melting pot of that age. So the Jewish race today is not a pure-blooded race if by that is meant blood descendants of Jacob without the admixture of outside races.

People say "our country" just because they were born here or happen to live here. This was not the ideal of Moses. The Jews did not say "our country" in referring to Egypt or Babylonia; they were only strangers and sojourners therein. Every Jew of the twelve tribes was to be part owner of the Promised Land of Canaan and to have his individual allotment therein. The Levites were not allotted land but they were given special tasks. They and the Priests were to be the school teachers, the instructors, the board of health, the administrative, ecclesiastical and judicial arm of government, and they were supported by taxation, by the tithe levied on the other land owning Jews.

Moses was determined that the Jewish workingman should not be landless, hence the provision that every Jew (except the Levites) should have a right to and ownership in the land. He saw the importance of this if the other Jews did not. So he provided the year of Jubilee. Every fiftieth year—or after 7 periods of 7 years each, the land reverted back to the original family as the heirs. He enjoined them: "The land shall not be sold forever; The profit of the earth is for all; Every man shall sit under his own vine and fig tree."

He put these laws into a book and he instructed that it be preserved beside the Ark. And he provided that it be trumpeted (Leviticus 25-10) "And he shall hallow the 50th year and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; it shall be a Jubilee unto you and ye shall return every man unto his family. A jubilee shall the 50th year be unto you."

The object of Pentecost was that it be a perpetual reminder of the *gift of the land*; and that every year every male Jew should have his attention called to his absolute *right of inheritance* in the land.

The land system of Moses was suited to the pastoral conditions. It was sufficient that the people's rights in the land could never be alienated and that the expenses of government were provided by the tithe or tax upon the landowners practically. Such a system of land allotments provided more freedom, more justice and more democracy and more opportunity for the common man than any other system in use in the world at that time. If the Hebrew nation had been consistently true to the economic laws of Moses it is likely that it would have become the great nation of antiquity. For his economic laws, providing

justice and freedom and opportunity, would have drawn men and territory into the domain of that system. His law of naturalization for outsiders would have enabled his nation to absorb and assimilate countless millions and the whole course of the world's history would have been changed.

The nation which fifty years hence most nearly approximates to the economic ideals of Moses will be the leading nation of the earth. I am devoutly hopeful that that nation will be the United States where in the city of Philadelphia in 1839 was born the man, Henry George, who later was to announce to the world the economic ideals of Moses adapted to changed conditions but carrying with them the same message of freedom, justice and opportunity to all!

Moses himself had declared, realizing that other leaders and other prophets would be needed, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, like unto me; unto him shall thou hearken."

Thus did the prophet of the Hebrews foretell the coming of the Prophet of San Francisco!

Fighting For Fundamentals

ADDRESS OF J. C. LINCOLN, HENRY GEORGE
CONGRESS, SEPT. 12.

HENRY GEORGE in "Progress and Poverty" after a few hundred pages of the highest kind of research arrived at a momentous conclusion. This conclusion is expressed in the words: "We must make land common property." The rest of the book is an examination of what this change in our economic system would result in; an examination of the improved conditions of labor and capital which would result from this change; and the picture of what society would be like after this change had been introduced.

All of us who are here assembled are here because we believe that Henry George's conclusion was one of the greatest discoveries that was ever made, and that when adopted a new and higher civilization will arise of which we can have no comprehension at the present time.

It is quite clear from many other passages in "Progress and Poverty" that the method which Henry George proposed to use in making land common property for the community was to take ground rent. In one place he says: "that it is not necessary to confiscate land; it is only necessary to confiscate rent" to accomplish our purpose.

We are assembled here because we believe most heartily in the assertion of Henry George that all of us have an equal right to the land, and that land is actually common property, but we must realize that in order to use land properly the continuous, exclusive and private possession of land must exist. Private property in land gives this continuous, exclusive and private possession that is necessary to the proper use of land, but does not assert the com-

mon ownership of land which is so necessary, and for which Henry George fought and died.

Our problem is to educate the public in the philosophy of Henry George. It seems to me somewhat unfortunate that the name "Single Tax" should have been adopted so generally as the name of the movement, as this name emphasizes the fiscal side of the proposition rather than the moral side. Most of us are quite sure that slavery was a bad thing for both North and South from the fiscal standpoint. In other words, in a large way slavery did not pay, but I do not think that slavery would ever have been abolished unless the moral side of the slavery question had been brought to the front. In the same way I believe that until we emphasize the moral side of the philosophy of Henry George that we will be unable to invoke the enthusiasm that will be necessary to put our proposition across. It is now forty-nine years since "Progress and Poverty" was printed, and I think that we will all admit that the public's idea of what we have in mind is quite hazy and indefinite and I believe that if the emphasis from the beginning had been placed on collection of ground rent instead of upon taxation of land values that the public's idea of what we have in mind would be clearer than what it is at the present time.

The term "taxation of land values" has been adopted by some of the followers of Henry George in England, and what they really mean is to eventually tax land until there are no values left in it. What they propose at the present time is to take part of the ground rent as we are doing in this country; but, they propose to take only a small part to begin with and an increasing part as the public is educated.

It seems to me that the movement would have progressed further in public understanding if the proposition that we proposed to take ground rent for public purposes and eliminate taxation had been our slogan instead of taking "land values taxation" for our slogan. We all know that both slogans mean the same thing, but I am sure that the public understanding of what we are after would have progressed much further if we had made it clear that what we intended to do was to abolish taxations and take ground rent for public purposes instead of talking about the taxation of land values.

I have a friend who is a real estate salesman and a very fine fellow, who wanted to know what the Single Taxers had in mind, and said he understood that what they proposed to do was to place all taxes on real estate. In his mind there was no distinction between land and buildings. In his mind the whole emphasis of the matter was the manner of taxation and had nothing to do with making land common property. I told him that what the Single Taxers wanted to do was to abolish all taxation, taking ground rent for public purposes.

These few words gave him a clear idea about what we want to accomplish. He was naturally not in favor of