

and while they need not cease to advocate their great reform they should remember that the key to all reform is direct legislation by the people.

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As a Single Taxer from the inauguration of the movement I should like to have the privilege of your columns to express some of my views relative to the present status and future prospects of the Single Tax especially with a view to independent political action.

I desire to say in the first place that I am opposed to a Single Tax political party not because I am opposed to all so-called third or independent parties, but because such a course at present could in no wise benefit the Single Tax, but on the contrary probably very much impede its chances of ultimate success. Theoretically, political parties are assemblages of citizens holding certain views in common which they hope by associating themselves together to further, by a formal appeal to their fellow-citizens at the ballot box. Practically the parties are nothing of the kind. All political parties that have ever existed since the beginning of the republic have had for their real purpose the seizure of the power to make laws. In other words they are law-making firms. They carry on this business solely for the purpose of making money, just like any other private enterprise is carried on. The party in power gains a temporary monopoly of the law making power with which its leaders or owners proceed to "make hay while the sun shines" by collecting as large a boodle fund as the circumstances of the time warrant.

Now the Single Tax will benefit no one special interest. It is for the benefit of the whole people, and will in my opinion do the whole people more good than any agency that has ever been devised by man. In order to start a Single Tax party you have to look to the masses of the people for financial support as they are the only beneficiaries except you run the new party as a side-show to one of the great political parties. Now the people do not possess means enough to pay the cost of running a new party which under no conceivable circumstances from the very nature of its being could ever have any legislation to sell and thus provide itself with the sinews of war. It will thus be seen that a Single Tax party is impracticable, viewed from the standpoint of practical politics which defines the sole function of a political party to be the accumulation and distribution of a campaign fund.

Principles are used in politics like Christianity is used in the so-called Christian churches simply as pretenses, and something to talk about and to pretend to believe in order to catch the unwary "suckers" who constitute the multitude.

The primary question of a political nature

to be solved in this country is not the question of taxation. It is—Shall the people rule this country, or shall the special privileged classes continue to control public affairs? Many Single Taxers have failed to grasp the meaning of this question. As a rule Single Taxers think they may succeed under the existing form of government which practically precludes the masses from any share in the law-making. I assert that the success of the Single Tax under our present form of government is to all intents and purposes absolutely hopeless.

This is true also of all the other economic reforms closely allied to the Single Tax.

As things stand nothing at all in the interest of the whole people is going to happen. Upon the contrary, plutocracy is bound to become more arrogant and triumphant than ever before. It is quite within range of possibility that the Single Tax idea will disappear entirely from the minds of the masses of men quite as completely as the "l'impot unique" of the French physiocrats disappeared from the popular mind until interest in it was revived by the late Henry George.

I beg of our friends that if any independent political action is contemplated that they eliminate the Single Tax from the declaration of the new party. Let the party be formed solely upon the idea of putting the masses of the people in control of the law-making by means of direct legislation.

The Single Tax means direct taxation, the first of all the functions of government. Give the people power to make the laws and among the first things they will do will be to demand that the control of the taxing power be vested in themselves. The only way that the taxing power can be kept within the control of the people is by direct legislation. With a full initiative and referendum both the incidence and amount of taxes would be within the control of the people. Now they have control of neither. The fundamental political superstition in the United States upon which is grounded all our other political superstitions is the idea that we live in a "government of the people by the people and for the people." The truth is we live in a government of plutocrats, by the plutocrats, and run entirely in their interests. This remark applies equally to the executive legislative and judicial function of the national, state, or municipal division of our government. Money and special privileges bought with money rule them all. I have for years taken an active interest in all kind of practical politics and know the foregoing to be gospel truth. In the light of these premises where is the hope for the Single Tax unless the people get the power to make the laws for their own benefit? A fair answer to this query will be much appreciated and may help to make the new year of happier augury to the Single Tax cause.

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