

## For Independent Political Action

HENCEFORTH the SINGLE TAX REVIEW will support undeviatingly the policy of independent political party action by Single Taxers wherever possible.

We are impelled to this policy by reasons which seem to us overwhelming. Not only does it accord with our personal convictions held for many years and avowed from time to time in the columns of the REVIEW, but recent developments have tended powerfully to confirm them. These developments may be briefly indicated.

First, there is the utter collapse of Single Tax organization everywhere. It is impossible to disguise the fact, for though Single Tax sentiment has grown and is to be found in unsuspected places, though revolutions are in ferment and democratic upheavals in which the land question is at the front, are occurring in Russia, and though uneasy rumblings are shaking the fixed edifices of age-long institutions in many lands where the oppressed peoples are waking to new consciousness, Single Taxers in this country are not only unorganized—they are disorganized. The great principle of industrial emancipation—the real message of Henry George—is overshadowed by Socialism, the myriad-headed, strange mingling of true and false in economic and social philosophy. But the dissatisfied have no other refuge—and this Socialism, with its really dreadful menace, grows and continues to attract the ever growing army of eager, hopeful souls who dream of a better social order.

Matched with the vast promise of Socialism, its vague yet attractive nebulae, what does the current Single Tax teaching offer? Losing sight of the fact that taxation is but the method, or the machinery, our real aim—industrial emancipation through the freeing of natural opportunities—is lost sight of, and we are treated to a purely fiscal propaganda from which the sap of the great movement is effectually squeezed out.

We have suffered from false leadership. The glamour of names has afflicted our vision. We saw our trusted leaders in the company of strange political associates and bearing wonderfully odd banners, old age pensions, direct legislation, prohibition, curious fiscal schemes, socialistic expedients of one sort or another, and we were so utterly under the spell that we did not have the courage to protest. We saw many of our leaders rushing to cover of the old parties and saw many of them honored with official positions. And we said: "How good of the old political parties—at last they have recognized the Single Tax, and now these men can work for the cause and being in positions of official or party prominence they will be a power in spreading the light." All this we said in our perfectly delightful guilelessness.

There was Herbert Bigelow. But he said, "I would as soon think of advocating polygamy for the State of Ohio as the Single Tax at this time." And Newton D. Baker, admirable Secretary of War. And he said: "The Single

Tax is all right, and I have not abandoned my views, but it is a matter for the future." And Frederick C. Howe, Commissioner of Immigration at this port. And he said: "The cause of poverty is the sending of wealth abroad"—a curious atavistic survival, though a reversal, of the protectionist notion (for Mr. Howe was long a member of the protectionist party), that the cause of poverty is bringing goods *into* the country. (Note the new "unfavorable balance"—quite a discovery in economics, that!). And then there is Franklin K. Lane. But what he says is that the land within the Indian reservations of Arizona, Montana and Wyoming, only about 112,000 acres, should be brought under cultivation and that the government should aid in clearing, cropping and irrigating these tracts. And then comes Lawson Purdy, late admirable Tax Commissioner of this city. He shall not fail us, for lo! these many years he has been with us, and we knew him as a tax expert, one of the Sanhedrim of the cult indeed. But he signs a report favoring the taxation of *heavy* or *fixed* machinery—though why a typewriter, not being *heavy* or *fixed*, should be exempt probably conceals some great principle of taxation with which we are unfortunately not familiar.

And so it goes. If there were not sufficiently cogent reasons for a political stand by Single Taxers that shall make our position unmistakable, there are many others. We have all the faith in the world in education. As it is the habit nowadays to adopt illustrations drawn from the business of war, may we not say that education is the training camp, but politics the battlefield? If by education we make a Single Tax soldier, arm and equip him, and send him forth to meet the forces of privilege, how shall he fight without the consciousness of comradeship? Alone and seeing nothing being done he will soon forget his training, and perhaps learn to hold the lesson he has gained in abeyance, for one cannot maintain, in full virility, intellectual convictions in solitude when these relate to social policies which call for concert of action.

The conclusion is inevitable. The principle of association, human nature as we know it to be, the very life of an enthusiastic social conviction—all call for that kind of organization which keeps us in compact marching order, which visits infraction of principle or radical deviation from the genuine message with exclusion from its councils.

A political organization has, to begin with, a platform to which some degree of loyal assent is demanded. One may call himself a Single Taxer, and in its name preach strange doctrines, as many are doing. *But if he does not talk to the platform the platform will talk back at him.* His own mental eccentricities will be kept in control—or at all events he will not be able to exploit these mental eccentricities as part of the Single Tax propaganda. Today the result of this confusion of tongues must have given a great many people a somewhat hazy notion of what the Single Tax really is.

We are well acquainted with all the arguments that can be urged against independent political party action. We know that Henry George said: "I do not care how you vote but I do care how you think," at a time when he was

engaged in a political struggle and was actually appealing for votes, though he desired that these votes be based upon right thinking; and certainly right thinking is preparatory to only one thing, right voting. We know the argument from the smallness of our numbers, but this objection will be outgrown in time; we know, too, that reforms come by piecemeal, but the piece will be larger if we ask for the whole, and if the asking is a demand backed by the only argument which politicians understand, namely votes. We know that not many Single Taxers who remain outside the party, and none in it, will get into office, but this consequence does not carry with it a very grievous affliction. We shall alienate men of other political parties, we are told. If they are Single Taxers by conviction and remain outside of the party they will not abandon their convictions; and in the silence of the polling booth they will find it difficult to refuse to give the principle in which they believe, their silent assent.

In conclusion, and because we have not at this time the space to say more, the principle in which we believe is great enough for its followers to greatly dare—and the advantages, educational as well as political, of independent party action, whatever arguments, sound or specious, may be urged in opposition, compared with the methods under which all Single Tax organization has now broken down, are demonstrably overwhelming.

## Post-Bellum Economics

**A**N increasing concern regarding economic conditions after the war is being shown by governments and individual corporations, both at home and abroad.

An instructive instance of this growing apprehension on this side of the water we have in an appeal recently issued by Walter W. Vick, general manager of the Factory Products Export Corporation and Manufacturers' Agents' Company, and former General Receiver of Dominican Customs. After emphasizing the need of a large Commercial Intelligence Department organized by government, he insists that all Americans should keep the following essential points in mind:

1. The present prosperity of the United States is not due to domestic, but foreign consumption. The production is not economic but extravagant. This is possible because sales prices permit it.
2. Production in European countries at war has been forced to the most economic basis obtainable.
3. After the war, extravagant American production must compete with economic European production.
4. The United States is producing, above domestic production, from 35 to 40 per cent. output. That over-production is going abroad. When the war ceases, we will be fortunate if we retain 10 per cent. of it. Thus from 25 to 35 per cent. over-production must cease, with the resultant industrial readjustment.
5. Therefore, if we do not now use every possible foresight and energy to retain and expand foreign trade the United States' economic position must recede.

6. England, Germany, France, Italy and Russia have already established commissions to be in a state of "preparedness" for the commercial competition.

7. We must do likewise and "Do It Now."

Then follows a long list of recommendations regarding the formation of Committees of Trade Commissioners, the mobilization of expert economists, engineers and other technical men, Chambers of Commerce and other local industrial organizations. But nowhere do we find a single word that indicates appreciation of our fundamental fiscal and economic maladjustments.

And yet no fact in our economic structure and equipment is more conspicuous: The whole weight and force of our national taxes and dues is thrown against national production and exchange; our States exercise the same discrimination against economical production and the efficient use of our national resources. The bulk of our municipal taxation operates to deter enterprise and favor inertia.

Until we free American industry and commerce from this grossly unfair handicap, all the devices above recommended, such as Trade Commissions, Councils of Experts, etc., are futile subterfuges, evasions of the main and manifest issue. To pretend to organize and increase our industrial and commercial efficiency, while consenting to our government's fiscal war against it, is a transparently irrational procedure, and foreordained to failure.

Our commercial and industrial organizations can do no better work for the present and the future than apply their trained common sense to an investigation of the fiscal arrangements of the nation. It is the open secret of our notorious inefficiency, in spite of our unrivalled natural resources.

Let our fiscal system cease its discrimination against American enterprise and we shall easily hold our own against the world. Our deadliest trade opponent is at home, not abroad.

## Single Tax Pacificists

**WE** DEEM it a matter of grave injury to the movement that a few Single Taxers—for they are but few, though including some occupying positions of leadership—should be found, from whatever motives or convictions, in opposition to the government in its prosecution of the war for democracy in which the country is engaged. That the misguided activities of these individuals have not brought upon Single Taxers generally the imputation of disloyalty is a tribute to the forbearance of our opponents.

We do not understand these isolated Single Tax anti-war and anti-government propagandists to be non-resistants, and they indignantly resent the charge of pro-Germanism. They do not base their opposition to our co-operation with the nations that are trying to subdue the war-mad rulers of Germany on the contention that all wars are wrong—wars for defence along with wars of offense. This attitude would be, if not philosophically unassailable, at least intelligible. They do not argue that all wars are historically without justification, or that the conqueror may