

able regions bought out at fancy prices, which the veterans in the end will have to pay by their work?"

The Land For the People

MANIFESTO OF THE BRITISH SINGLE TAXERS TO THE VOTERS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

FOLLOWING is the manifesto issued by the Single Taxers of Great Britain. To it are appended the names of John Paul and Frederick Verinder, and it is issued by the United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values. We ask our readers to note the boldness of its language. Here is no camouflage, no attempt to sugar-coat the pill. It is a model document which we recommend to all bodies of Single Taxers in the United States, for it will do for them all, even to the demand for a national valuation, with but slight modification called for by differences in political institutions.—Editor SINGLE REVIEW.

"After four years of violence, bloodshed and tears, the task now faces the democracy of resuming the struggle for liberty and justice in social and industrial relations.

A hundred years ago this country met a similar crisis. But in overthrowing the despotism of Napoleon the price was paid in trampling down of popular rights and in the granting of a new lease of life to every landlord interest. Waterloo was followed by two generations of untold misery and degradation among the mass of the people.

Shall history repeat itself? It undoubtedly will, if in the reconstruction now being planned the people are placed at the mercy of those powerful interests which are controlling their destinies, using the weapon of land monopoly to drive men into competition for a bare subsistence, declaring that only the few have the right to the land—the source of all wealth and capital—and making an enormous debt the instrument for ruinous burdens on industry.

Of all the legislation that was shelved when the war broke out none was riper for enactment than those measures which, based on the land clauses of the 1909 Budget, aimed at destroying land monopoly. A valuation of the land, the essential step to the overthrow of land monopoly by taxation, was under way and nearing completion. The political truce silenced a determined agitation, and in the name of this truce land monopoly was left to flourish and has flourished. So sacred were land owners' privileges, while hundreds of thousands were killed fighting to save "our land," that the Chancellor of the Exchequer these past four years neither desired nor was permitted to look to the value of the land for the source of some of the enormous revenues he required.

Landlordism has been entrenched and is to be maintained behind ransom prices for land, guaranteed by the Corn Production Act. Land for all purposes, it is now openly declared, is only to be obtained by purchase "at the full value," out of public revenues raised as they will be by means of indirect taxation, Customs duties, State-subsidized

trusts, and other levies and penalties upon production and trade. In the midst of this welter of shameless robbery promoted by politicians and committed by speculators and monopolists the State is to be run by a horde of tax-gatherers, and dragooned by officials and controllers. Coercion grows and the hope of freedom vanishes.

It is evident, if the forces now striving for place and power are not defeated, that private property in land will still remain the Ark of the Covenant and access to land be denied save on land owners' terms.

The United Committee for the Taxation of Land Values therefore addresses an earnest appeal to all lovers of freedom and justice to rally to the principle that the land belongs to the people, that all have equal rights in its use, vested interests notwithstanding, and that the public value attaching to land provides the natural revenues of the community. The privileges which make the country-side a close preserve, carve it into great estates, huddle the working population in towns, and exact tribute for the use of all natural resources, must be destroyed. Otherwise the nation can contemplate no reconstruction, no restoration of trade on a peaceful and prosperous basis; but only industrial strife and social disaster involving perhaps a worse catastrophe than the war itself.

The British people are a landless people. The limitless opportunities which nature offers to this nation for the production of all its needs are in private hands. The war has not altered that fact. The abuses of the private ownership of land will be aggravated by the demobilization and the search of millions for employment. It will be revealed now, as it never was before, that the workers have no alternative under existing conditions but to toil for long hours at low wages. The war for freedom finds the mass of the people still in a state of virtual slavery, subject to exploitation on every hand by want and the fear of want, and deprived of all they produce save enough to maintain life. They are compelled to accept these conditions because, bereft of access to land, there is no alternative for them to-day, and there will be no alternative for them until all monopoly over natural resources is abolished.

The land must be declared and made common property by the appropriation of rent—the value of land—for public purposes, every holder of land being obliged to pay into the common fund the rent or value of the land he holds, whether it is used or kept idle.

To take the rent of land for public purposes, there is no need to create new machinery. The machinery already exists. The machinery is taxation. The method is simple and easy. The valuation of the land must be completed, brought up-to-date and published, every delay being avoided by compelling the assistance of land-holders in the assessment of the value of their land.

Given the valuation of land apart from improvements, the overthrow of land monopoly will follow by imposing national and local taxation on the value of land. In that way every holder of land can be obliged to pay the rent of it to the community, and when he does so access to land

on an equal footing will be established. It would profit no one to hold land out of use, or withhold it from its best use, and continue to pay taxes on its value. It would not be possible to hold land as means of obtaining tribute from others, since its rent could be appropriated by no individual. The barriers to employment would be broken down. Countless opportunities would be made available, the exploiting power of the capitalist based on "the man at the gate" would disappear, wages would rise naturally and each citizen would secure and enjoy the full product of his labor.

This is no new or strange doctrine. The Colonies have already made a beginning with this use of taxation for the overthrow of land monopoly and land speculation. In the measure of its application in Australia, New Zealand, the Transvaal and Canada, the Taxation of Land Values has proved both practical in operation and beneficial in effect. The Taxation of Land Values has been brought to the doors of the British Parliament time and again. Parliament must listen now.

The fundamental mistake has been in treating land as private property. On this false basis modern civilization rests, and hence, as material progress goes on, is everywhere developing such monstrous inequalities as threaten its very existence. As without land man cannot exist; as his very physical substance, and all he can acquire and make, must be drawn from the land, the ownership of the land of a country is necessarily the ownership of the people of that country—involving their industrial, social and political subjection.

In these days such a condition is fraught with the gravest danger to society. The programmes of "reconstruction" set before the country by the political parties, ignoring as they do the main requirement for justice and freedom, must fail of their purpose. The numerous schemes now being advocated for speeding up production, providing State assistance for industry and improving social conditions by way of public doles must, as long as land monopoly exists, have one certain and ultimate result, viz., to increase the rent of land. They will not benefit those who live by labor. They will benefit only those who live on the labor of others."

THE *New York World*, commenting upon Secretary Lane's proposal to provide land for the returned soldiers, and his statement that there are nearly 200,000,000 acres of waste land in the United States, says:

"Land is the most plentiful resource in a country endowed so richly. Irrigation would progress more, swamp lands would be drained faster, if there were not so much land that needs neither irrigation nor drainage."

If there is so much land why waste money in irrigation and drainage? Is the people's money earned so easily, and is the supreme sacrifice offered by the soldiers of our country, of so little value that the interest of privileged land owners outweighs them?

Economics and Ethics Scripturally Commanded

VIOLATIONS PRODUCE BASIC WAR-CAUSES

THE PROBLEM

IT was due much more to intelligent design than to mere chance that after the paramount injunction providing for perpetuation of life, the scriptural account of the first duty-command ascribed to the Creator involving performance of sociological obligation, had to do purely with the economics of production: "Replenish the earth and subdue it" (Gen. 1:28). And, while third in consecutive order of the first three primary commands looking to the permanent and increasing well-being of the human race, it is also significant that the second of the duty-commands had to do purely with the ethics of distribution: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" (Gen. 3:19).

In the light of modern political economy, transposed into twentieth-century phraseology affirmatively expressed, these commands clearly mean, "Use the land; consume your own products." A true negation of these economic commands, carried to their present day dangerous but logical conclusion, would be the special-privilege power peculiarly inherent exclusively in public-produced land values, which by title originally based upon conquest or force have thus legalized their private retention, "Withhold the land from use; appropriate the product of the expended energies of others."

These earliest and infinitely important, scientific as well as scriptural, laws relating to the primary right of production and the equitable distribution of wealth, constitute essential prerequisites to the fundamentally just and righteous relations which must prevail generally between men and between nations, before domestic and international prosperity, happiness and peace can become permanently possible. These deductions accurately accord with the highest type of the most practically altruistic thought of a rapidly increasing proportion of the world's most far-seeing teachers, economists, and statesmen.

PRODUCTIVE POWER AND RETURNS TO LABOR

In all civilized countries there is glaring and increasing disproportion between the known immense increase in productive power, and of net returns to labor and productively employed capital. During the past fifty years especially, due to the enormously increased productive power of labor consequent on its much greater subdivision, and marvelous improvements in agricultural, mechanical, electrical and chemical operations and processes, productive power in general has increased ten, and in many instances to one thousand fold. And notwithstanding the enormous gross gains, there has been little, if any, appreciable increase in net returns to the active agencies engaged in the various processes of production and distribution.