

they rapidly degenerated, and existed as practical paupers surrounded by social conditions of the most debasing and demoralizing kind. The most frightful immorality was rampant. The inhuman butcheries of the arena marked the depths of their moral degradation. Infanticide was fearfully common. The population dwindled in numbers, and degenerated physically and morally. Rome went down because of the failure of her crop of men.

"Even when later free labor did obtain opportunities for employment in place of slaves, a rigid caste system confined and crippled it. Pestilence devastated the land, civil war raged and decimated the population. The country was ground down by taxation, especially on land, becoming more severe as time went on."

Here we pause for a moment to summarize the facts. Great estates swallowed up the small holdings; grazing took the place of agriculture; slaves displaced free men. The small farmers therefore were driven into the cities, and as slave labor did all the work, the dispossessed small holders became pauperized, degenerate, brutalized. Slavery and land monopoly accomplished this between them.

SLAVERY AND LAND MONOPOLY

Slavery and land monopoly! And out of these two come frightful immorality, infanticide, inhuman butcheries to make a Roman holiday, degeneration and decay. A fine brood worthy of her dam and sire—transforming the descendants of the industrious yeomen who had fought for Rome into a race of pitiful and degenerate parasites unable either to do honest work or defend their own country. Not the lusty and virile barbarians that swept over Italy and brought the mighty Roman Empire to the dust, but slavery and land monopoly!

Does this strike home to us? Are we standing on firm ground or living like fools in a palace built on quicksand? Slavery, it is true, no longer exists; but land monopoly throws out her evil spawn as of yore. If there is a declining birth rate, if infanticide is too common, if the towns are overcrowded and the country deserted, if agriculture is neglected because grazing pays the great landowners best in these days, as in the evil days of Rome, if the people are unwilling or unfit to defend their country and leave this, the first and last duty of free men, to hirelings, what other cause than land monopoly is primarily to blame?

LAND TAXATION IN ROME

The attempt of the *Spectator* to attribute some of the responsibility to heavy land taxation is ludicrously futile. In the first place the so-called Land Tax was not upon unimproved land values, nor indeed upon the land at all, but upon the value of the annual product of the land! That is to say it was a tax upon production. The man who produced the most wealth paid the most tax, the man who produced least wealth paid least taxation, although he might own half the countryside! The modern system of Land Value Taxation upon which the Federal Land Tax is based is the complete opposite of such a system. Not the value of the wealth produced, but the value of the land

owned is the basis of taxation. The so-called Roman Land Tax was really a tax upon incomes derived from land.

The *Spectator*, in its desire to attribute the downfall of Rome to Land Value Taxation in order to help its Tory friends—who viewed the Lloyd-George Tax as the work of Satan—has over-reached itself. To prove this it is only necessary to point to a fact quoted in the article: That in the days of Valentinian III there remained only the great landowners and their slaves! The yeoman and middle classes had completely disappeared. It appears, then, that the so-called land tax had, so far from crushing the great landed proprietors, destroyed all except them and their slaves. The extent to which this had been done may be inferred from the fact that, while all beneath them were reduced to beggary, the incomes of the great landed nobles averaged £60,000, and were not seldom as high as £300,000 a year! As the *Spectator* admits, it is obvious that these great landed nobles evaded their obligations as much as possible. And to the very rich many things have in all ages, as in our own, been possible.

A WARNING TO OUR MODERN CIVILIZATION

Such was the condition of the Roman Empire in the days when wealth accumulated and men decayed. Great estates and slavery killed Rome. And these great estates dug their vampire bill deeper into the vitals of the nation. Slavery decayed, but land monopoly flourished to the end; flourished at the expense of the strength, virtue, courage, and character of the Roman people. Rome went down owing to the failure of her crop of men. Great estates were responsible for the failure of the crop.

How far is this a picture of our own times and our own country? A mighty outcry has been raised against the Federal Land Tax, because it is aimed at discouraging great estates. Yet by this means alone can national dishonor be avoided and our existence as a nation secured.

The exact figures have not yet been compiled, but it is, I think, within the mark to say that less than 3,000 people own one-half of the entire alienated land of Australia; that is, one-half of the most valuable portion of our heritage! If we are not to follow hot-foot in the steps of Rome and fall an easy prey to the virile nations that hunger for our magnificent inheritance, we must get the people on the land, and we must train all citizens to defend their country. In that way and that way alone, lies industrial, social, physical, moral and national safety. And the Federal Land Tax is making it possible for us to do these very things.

The Single Tax Pacifists Have Their Say

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

The article headed "Single Tax Pacifists" in the January-February SINGLE TAX REVIEW ought not to pass unnoticed by the non-resistant Single Taxers whose existence it denies. We presumed that the grounds of our opposition to war were known to our friends, since we have stated them as clearly as our command of language permitted.

Believing, as we do, that wrong cannot be overcome by wrong, or injustice cured by injustice, or violence subdued by violence, we do not hesitate to affirm that all wars are without historical justification. However deeply we may sympathize with the wrongs of the negro under slavery, the tortured natives of the Congo, or the Philippines, the invaded Boer or Belgian, we perceive the futility of the appeal to arms.

Instead of winning acceptance for the truths proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence, the American Revolution enshrined the institution of slavery and turned the worship of military prowess into a national religion. The Civil War was the direct heir to the Revolution. As the one had secured the desired end of political independence, so the other achieved the abolition of slavery, but the violence through which these aims were realized was ready to lead to the conquest of the Philippines and to the present universal catastrophe. And each war was followed by the inevitable moral relaxation and political corruption which succeeded in reducing our boasted democracy to a sham.

War, whether offensive or defensive, is carried on by acts which are in themselves base, cruel and ignoble; acts which can be condoned only upon the theory that the end justifies the means. If social justice may be furthered by such methods, reformers have been wasting their time in appealing to reason, and attempting to unlock the hearts of men, and Single Taxers were mistaken in assuming that there are natural rights which cannot be repealed by human laws though they may be violated.

We see in the present cataclysm the result of such violations in the past and we deem it our duty to continue to stand for the truth that peace and international good will can be had only at the price of universal economic freedom. The spirit of coercion and intolerance which the word Prussianism has come to denote is abhorrent to us whether it be given expression in the German or any other tongue, and only by keeping free from the partisan passions of warfare can we hope to remain loyal to the ideal of human rights upon which Henry George founded the fair structure of his philosophy. He deduced the right of a laborer to the wealth he produces from the inherent right of every man to the ownership of himself, and he denied any rights to the State which were in conflict with this vital principle. He did not dream that omnipotence might fail without the devil's aid, nor did he give his followers a sword with which to bring about "the culmination of Christianity—the city of God on earth....the reign of the Prince of Peace."

We welcome this opportunity to be counted among those who take truth for authority and not authority for truth. As non-resistants we shall continue to assail evil and exalt justice in the firm belief that only thus can we serve the true interests of our country and the world. The blood and tears of enemies are not needed to cement the stones of the commonwealth planned by Henry George and advocated by Tolstoi. Our democracy can be made safe only by willing co-operation. The truth we have received we

shall endeavor to keep unsoiled as a sacred trust for our successors in the perennial struggle for liberty.

FRANK W. GARRISON	DANIEL KIEFER
FRANK STEPHENS	DONALD STEPHENS
MARSHALL E. SMITH	HENRY J. GIBBONS
W. E. JACKSON	H. W. NOREN
AMY MALI HICKS	MRS. C. R. BARKER

REPLY

We have received several other letters from some of the gentlemen signing this protest. Some withdraw their subscriptions from the REVIEW. We have also received many letters in support of the war and our editorial stand from such men as E. M. Scofield, Laurie Quinby, James K. Hackett and a score of others, which we do not print. We print this letter, signed by Messrs. Keifer, Stephens, *et al*, so that they may be heard in their own defence. We stand by the sentiments expressed editorially in our last issue, and shall make no further comment. The controversy must now be considered as closed. The REVIEW stands for the Single Tax and the successful prosecution of the war.—EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW.

CORRESPONDENCE

FOR PARTY ACTION

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I believe in your efforts to enlist all believers in land value taxation into an army for political action.

Pittsburg College for Women.

JANET L. BROWNLEE.

NOT YET CONVINCED

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I am not convinced of the usefulness of a Single Tax Party, but time will tell who is right.

Columbus, Ohio.

S. TIDEMAN.

FOR EFFECTIVE ACTION

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

I was surprised and pleased at the new dress of the REVIEW, and additionally so because of your determined stand for some real effective action.

Washington, D. C.

B. F. LINDAS.

FROM A MISSOURI COMRADE

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

The first number of the REVIEW, in its new form, received today. It is a splendid specimen of the printer's art and the contents speak glowingly of its worth as a real journal of the Single Tax movement throughout the world. Its form and general characteristics are a great improvement over the old style.

The nearer you cling to the doctrine laid down in "Progress and Poverty," in your publication, the greater your success with it will be, I firmly believe. The people, as a whole, are not greatly interested in a tax question, *per se*, for the most of them believe they have no taxes to pay. You want to appeal to them on their emotional side—to their sense of reason and justice and they will look, listen and heed.

St. Louis, Mo.

L. P. CUSTER.

TIRED OF TALK—WANTS ACTION

EDITOR SINGLE TAX REVIEW:

Am suggesting that the leading Single Taxers of the United States should get together at an early date, first burying their hatchets out in the back lot and leaving their razors in their bureau drawers, and when assembled deliberately decide upon what policy is best calculated to reduce all unnecessary expense and materially increase our effect-