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THE AMERICAN ECONOMIC LEAGUE
16 East 22nd Street, Baltimore, Md.

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A CHIVALROUS SINGLE TAXER

During the campaign in California, while putting in good licks for the single tax, William C. deMille was struck by the intellectually defenseless condition of the enemy. Though well supplied with funds, the anti-Single Taxers were bankrupt in argument, and were lacking even in ability to make clear their point of view. Mr. deMille did not think it proper to fight a reasonless opponent even though furnished with unlimited money to balance this deficiency. It was too much like arguing with a baby. So he gallantly furnished the public with information concerning the way the single tax and single tax campaigns look to the opposition. At his own expense he published in a number of daily papers a series of advertisements explaining affairs from the anti-single tax viewpoint. Such chivalrous generosity sounds like a tale from the movies, but is literally true. Moreover, Mr. deMille has collected these advertisements in a pamphlet under the title, "What D'ye Mean Single Tax?" Thus he has provided a text book for the relief of tongue-tied antis, not only in California, but elsewhere. Here is one of these advertisements. It begins with greetings to the landowners of California and proceeds as follows:

I have just bought three acres of ground in Hollywood, and it is my intention to do nothing whatever to improve this property, but to wait quietly until the industry of the thousands of Hollywood rent-payers, whose growth in numbers alone makes my land valuable, has added so much value to my property that I can sell this added value for enough to support me without my having to work.

This is right.

Why should I work when I can cash in the value put into my property by those who do work?

Furthermore, if I started to be a "useful citizen" and improve my property, the taxes on the improvements would cut into my profits from the increasing land value.

No, sir—I can make more by doing no work and letting the industry of the community put thousands of dollars into my pocket.

But now comes this iniquitous Single Tax Amendment, No. 20, which would deprive me and you, brother land owners, of our God-given right to take for our own private use that value which the common people have put into our land.

Are we going to permit such an outrageous doctrine to gain strength? A doctrine which dares say openly that a man is not entitled to values which he doesn't create, and that whoever does produce wealth is entitled to ALL the wealth he produces?

Perish the thought.

The right of our Minority, who own nature, to collect the full value of this privilege from the Majority, who HAVE to use the nature which we own—is one which has resulted in us land owners being the class which really controls public thought, politics and education.

Shall we permit an unorganized mob of mere rent-payers to take this from us?

Shall we establish a system which will lower ground rents and, in effect, give the benefits of a healthy growth of population to the whole population itself instead of to us landlords alone?

Not while we have sense enough to fight for our vested rights.

Therefore I appeal to you to support the Anti-Single Tax Movement, which is wisely arranging to deprive the people of their initiative by putting forth Amendment No. 4.

Once we can pass good old Amendment No. 4, the rent-payer may howl, but he is powerless to do anything to lower rents. And his howls have never kept a single dollar of exorbitant rent out of our pockets.

And unless we can deprive the unthinking mob of their initiative rights, we may soon have to work for all the money we get, instead of holding land out of use until some one needs it so badly that he must pay us the profit which belongs to us as the trustees of whoever made nature.

We must have a large campaign fund to keep up our propaganda.

We must persuade the people to believe everything their bankers tell them, so that there may be no poverty among bankers.

Besides, why SHOULD the people have the initiative?

It is much safer for us land owners—"property owners," as we call ourselves—it is far safer for us to control the public thought—and by carefully choosing such measures as can do no harm to our vested interests let the other voters initiate all the laws they want to, EXCEPT laws on taxation.

Let them boast of "their" climate. As long as we own the land, they can own the climate. We can't prevent their breathing the air of California. But we CAN prevent their using the LAND of California unless they are willing to pay us handsomely. We could evict eighty-five per cent of the people of California—send them out of the State—only we need their presence to make our land valuable, and the rents they pay are our salvation.

So remember, brother landlords—WE own California, simply by owning its ground rents and we MUST support the organization which is fighting for our rights.

We must get together with our voices and our money and help the Anti-Single Tax League.

It takes lots of money to convince a man that when he is born he inherits the right to pay someone else before he can use any part of nature.

And without money we cannot keep convincing the public that Single Taxers are Anarchists, Bolsheviks, Communists, Horse Thieves and Grave-Robbers.

We MUST keep the rent-payer and the USER of land voting against his own interest.

We MUST prevent the farmer from discovering that he would be more benefited than almost any other class by abolishing all taxes except on ground rents.

We MUST keep the worker, the rent-payer, the merchant, the PRODUCER of wealth—voting for our special privilege so that they will continue to let us appropriate, in the form of ground rent, a large portion of all they produce.

We MUST continue to control the sources of public information and education to keep these vile opponents of our ancient vested rights from reaching the people.

God, in His infinite wisdom, has given the ownership of all the usable surface of the world to us few—and woe be unto him who would prevent our taking the fruits of this ownership.

Every child that is born must give us of his labor before we will sell him any of OUR land.

So, Mothers and Fathers—Give to the Anti-Single Tax League, or we landlords will be no better off than the common people, who are born into a world which they have no legal right to use until they have paid to us the price of their license to use nature.