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Proceedings of the
First Convention of
the New York State
Single Tax League



ALBANY, JULY 4th, 1913
AT THE HOTEL TEN EYCK

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FOREWORD

THE first real move toward forming a State League of Single Taxers was made at a dinner given by William Lustgarten to about twenty-five men at the Reform Club, on June 16, 1913. From time to time there had been talk as to the practicability of organizing the Single Taxers of the State but no real attempt had been made since 1907. At this dinner—the speakers, some of them men who had gone through the campaigns of 1886-1887 and 1897, others who had known the heat of the earlier fights, but were eager for a battle at this time—it was agreed that the citizens of New York State must be taught to think right on economic lines, and that some of the old time almost religious fervor was necessary to inspire the work.

The practical work of raising funds for the preliminary work was happily disposed of by Mr. Lustgarten stating that he had at hand a fund for just that purpose; as a result of this dinner the Conference was called, and met at Albany, July 4, 1913, and The New York State Single Tax League was formed.

THE NEW YORK STATE SINGLE TAX LEAGUE

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
501 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY

HORACE SAGUE, *President*
Poughkeepsie, N. Y.

BENJAMIN DOBLIN, *Treasurer*
N. Y. City

WESLEY E. BARKER, *Secretary*
N. Y. City

WILLIAM RYAN, JOSEPH DANA MILLER, *Asst. Secs.*
N. Y. City

Vice-Presidents

MRS. KATE E. BRADLEY, Olean
HON. ROBERT BAKER, Brooklyn
PROF. WILLIAM H. DREW, Ithaca
PROF. F. W. HOWE, Syracuse
DR. FREDERICK C. HOWE, New York
MISS AMY MARI HICKS, New York
THOMAS MOTT OSBORNE, Auburn
CHARLES B. MATTHEWS, Buffalo
REV. JOHN F. SCOTT, Mt. Vernon
ROBERT SCHALKENBACH, New York
HON. HENRY GEORGE, JR., New York
BYRON W. HOLT, Brooklyn
GEORGE FOSTER PEABODY, Lake George
MRS. CHRISTINE ROSS BARKER, New York
HON. JOHN J. MURPHY, New York

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

FIRST CONVENTION OF THE NEW YORK STATE SINGLE TAX LEAGUE

ALBANY, JULY 4th, 1913
AT THE HOTEL TEN EYCK

The Conference was called to order at 10.50 A.M. by Mr. William Lustgarten, who spoke in part as follows: "It is many years since any real propaganda, or the preaching of the gospel as outlined by the great prophet of our movement, has been addressed to the people of this State, and some of us feel that the time has come when we must get together and preach the full, uncompromising doctrine, that the spark lighted by Henry George may be kept alive.

"John Stuart Mill long ago pointed out the inadequacy of minor reforms which can afford but temporary relief and are often worse than nothing. Single Taxers do not look upon their movement as a fiscal reform, but as a religion. 'Thy Kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven!' We believe that it is our duty to come together in a compact body now and here, to carry on this work. For the time is coming when those who have upheld the banner of our cause must step across the Jordan, and their places must be supplied by the younger generation. And it is for us here on Independence Day to dedicate ourselves to this great work in the Empire State."

On motion John J. Murphy was elected temporary Chairman, Wesley E. Barker Secretary, and William Lustgarten Treasurer.

The temporary Secretary read the Call for the Conference, as follows:

501 FIFTH AVENUE,
ROOM 316.

NEW YORK CITY, JUNE 14th, 1913

DEAR SIR:

We believe that the people of the State of New York are in a receptive frame of mind for education along Single Tax lines; that the philosophy taught by Henry George has had and is having great effect on public opinion and legislative action.

The people are learning by experience that nothing short of the removal of all obstacles to production and all barriers to economic freedom will permit the tide to flow toward complete social justice.

Believing all this, and knowing that the doctrine we preach shows the way to justice; knowing that concentrated work is more effective than scattered energy; knowing the inspiration that comes from united effort, we desire to form a League of Single Taxers in the State of New York with a view to further educating the people by means of the lecture platform, the press, letter writing corps and other means, in order that by this educational campaign we may the more speedily prepare the people of this State for the adoption of the Single Tax.

The undersigned, being a Provisional Committee formed for the purpose of calling a Conference for the organization of such League, ask, if you agree with the purposes outlined above, to reply at once, to this Call, stating, if you will attend the Conference at Albany, New York, July 4, 1913. Headquarters, Hotel Ten Eyck.

Remember the times are in our hands—the real crying need for education is heard and who but the believers in the philosophy of freedom should be the teachers?

Will you please give this important business your best and earnest attention.

Reply to the Provisional Secretary at this address, and also send the names and addresses of Single Taxers in your neighborhood.

Yours very truly,
W. E. BARKER,
Provisional Secretary.

Benjamin Doblin, N. Y.; Byron W. Holt, Bklyn.; James Macgregor, N. Y.; William Ryan, N. Y.; August Weymann, Melrose; E. J. Shriver, Tottenville; Robert Schalkenbach, N. Y.; Louis B. Parsons, Mt. Vernon; Horace Sague, Poughkeepsie;

Fred. R. Seeman, Mt. Vernon; Charles Frederick Adams, Bklyn.; C. H. Ingersoll, N. Y.; Joseph H. Fink, N. Y.; Theodore H. Miller, Poughkeepsie; Arthur C. Brady, Nyack; Alfred Bishop Mason, N. Y.; Frederick C. Leubuscher, N. Y.; Joseph Dana Miller, Bklyn.; Lawrence Dunham, Scarsdale; Thos. Mott Osborne, Auburn; William Lustgarten, N. Y.
Committee.

On motion of Mr. W. W. Munro, of Saratoga, the temporary officers were made permanent.

The Chairman stated that a motion covering the purpose of the meeting was in order, and Hon. Robert Baker of Kings County moved that the Conference provide for an organization of Single Taxers in the State of New York. Carried.

The Chair suggested that the proper Committees to facilitate work would be: A Committee on Constitution; Committee on Permanent Organization; Committee on Resolutions; and it was moved and carried that the Chair appoint three Committees of five each with titles as named.

The Secretary announced that he had the following communications to read:

LONDON, July 3, 1913.

LUSTGARTEN,
Single Tax Conference,
Hotel Ten Eyck, Albany, N. Y.

British co-workers send greetings—cause going well here.
JOHN PAUL.

BERLIN HALENSE, July 3, 1913.

Single Tax Conference,
Hotel Ten Eyck, Albany, N. Y.

German land reformers send hearty greetings—wishing success Conference.

DAMASCHKE.

SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, July 3d, 1913.

Single Tax Convention,
Ten Eyck, Albany, N. Y.

J. D. MILLER,

Hearty congratulations to Single Tax Convention. As a Single Tax propagandist of twenty-seven years experience I feel convinced the day for

National, State, County, and City Organization has arrived. The great Empire State should set the pace in this matter of organization. With best wishes for your success, yours,

F. H. MONROE.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, U. S. A.
WASHINGTON, D. C. July 2, 1913.

MR. W. E. BARKER,
Hotel Ten Eyck, Albany, N. Y.

My Dear Mr. Barker:

Please present my most hearty congratulations to the gentlemen in the Single Tax Conference in Albany. I have found so much of importance to engage me since getting back to Washington, that I find it impossible to leave. I am most anxious to have the work of Single Tax proceed in New York State and shall cordially engage in the plans agreed upon at your meeting.

I herewith enclose a check for fifty dollars towards the fund which I assume will be collected for such work.

I take this occasion to express my rejoicings over the Commission appointed by Governor Sulzer to revise the tax laws of the State of New York.

With renewed wishes for the success of the Conference, I am,

Sincerely,
HENRY GEORGE, JR.

TORONTO, CANADA, July 2, 1913.

MR. W. E. BARKER,
Provisional Secretary,
New York State Single Tax Convention,
Hotel Ten Eyck, Albany, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Barker:

We take this opportunity of conveying to the Single Taxers of New York our best wishes for the success of the Convention of the 4th, and that they may have renewed strength to throw off the tyranny imposed upon them by the plutocrats of privilege.

Our people in Eastern Canada are closely watching the trend of events in the direction of Single Tax in New York State, and any victory you gain will inspire us to renewed efforts in the Banner Province of the Dominion.

Again wishing you success in the interests of the people,

Yours, for

THE TAX REFORM LEAGUE OF EASTERN CANADA,
AND SINGLE TAX ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO.

SYDENHAM THOMPSON, Secretary.

SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY,
SYRACUSE, N. Y., JULY 3, 1913.

MR. W. E. BARKER,
PROVISIONAL SECRETARY,
HOTEL TEN EYCK, ALBANY, N. Y.

DEAR MR. BARKER:—

I regret to say that it will not be possible for me to attend the Convention to morrow. I have delayed saying this until the last moment in hope that it might be possible for me to come. Since I last wrote you an increased local responsibility has fallen upon me in the supervision of the University Farms of two hundred acres, in consequence of the sudden resignation of the man who has been in charge. We are in the midst of alfalfa cutting and behind with our work. I must put in the Fourth of July on the farm. I am interested in the outcome of this Convention and should be glad to have whatever report may be published concerning it. I took the time this morning to call up all the other people whose names you gave me in Syracuse and find that without exception they do not expect to come to Albany tomorrow. One or two are sick; Professor Kullmer is in Europe, and two or three others are so busy with summer school or other work that they said it is "impossible" for them to come. One of the men in particular, whose health will not permit his attendance, expressed regret at the decadence of interest in the cause in Syracuse. He said that a year or two ago there was quite a flourishing local club. He is hopeful, as I am, that this Convention will outline some plans that will lead to the revival of local interest. As soon as Professor Kullmer returns from Europe, I will take the matter up with him.

Very truly yours,

F. W. HOWE.

Director, Division of Agriculture.

Upon call of the Chair, Alfred Bishop Mason of New York City, President of the Manhattan Single Tax Club, delivered an eloquent address, as follows:—

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FELLOW SINGLE TAXERS:

We are not to be deterred by the difficulties before us, but we are not to underestimate them. The lions in our path are not to be swept aside by thinking they are lambs. Privilege, monopoly, party-machines that dance to the whistled tunes of wealth, the concentrated cash of Croesus, con-

servatism, the amazing public ignorance in this so called enlightened community—these be our foes.

The Empire State is like the school-boy who was "absolutely impervious to information." The blow that shatters the citadel of its ignorance needs be shrewd and strong.

We propose to dot the map of New York with Single Tax clubs. The condition—the essential condition—of life in such organizations is a constant and healthful activity. What are these clubs to do?

When the City Club was organized in New York city in the nineties, it proceeded to form a league of good government clubs, one in each Assembly District of Manhattan. The City Club has worked hard and has honorably lived. The Good Government Clubs had nothing to do and they dishonorably died. The infant clubs died faster than infant children die in our most sinful slums.

A field lecturer can be kept in the field, passing from club to club and organizing new ones, if the necessary money can be had. The *Single Tax Review*, converted into a weekly and handled with its editor's proven devotion, energy and brain, can be sent to every club-member, if the money can be had.

But no outside impulse, not even the two valued ones I have named, can keep these clubs alive. Their life must come from within. The Manhattan Single Tax Club, starving for lack of money in a community where Single Taxers abound, stays alive by its own initiative. It works. It maintains a weekly meeting under its rented roof and six weekly meetings under God's sky. It protests in public against tax wrongs. It draws bills for taking part of the unearned increment at the request of the City Government. It has introduced its own avowed Single Tax bill at Albany. It is getting hundreds of petitions signed in favor of this bill. It keeps its room open every day and every evening of the year. It is trying to raise money for Mr. Ryan's admirable plan of prizes for school-boy essays on the Single Tax. It works, but it could do four times as much if its pitiful income was doubled. I must point out to you that if the mother-club of Manhattan is to be left to starve, the children-clubs of the State will not thrive.

Granted that funds can be raised, the question remains: "What are our clubs to do?" We can read papers to each other until doomsday without lightening the doom of our landlord-ridden folk. If that is the kind of propaganda for which the proposed league is to be formed, a short shrift awaits it.

In a democracy, the one effective means of public education is political activity. When a question reaches the point of being voted upon, a myriad ears are pricked into interrogation points. A thousand people are taught at the polls to one that learns in the cloister. Is it not one of the most vital arguments for woman-suffrage that thereby women will be educated? The ballot is the high-priest of education, the very Pope of propagandists.

I would have, then, every one of these clubs, from the day when we wring direct primaries from our present political masters—from that day I would have every one of these clubs try at every legislative election to nominate Single Tax candidates. Let the candidate's label be Democratic or Republican or Progressive—what does that matter now that United States Senators are to come from the people, not the legislatures? But whatever the party label, let him wear over it in bigger and blacker letters the word "Single-Taxer." Let us do this openly, not cloaking the face of truth, not shrinking from frank avowal of the faith that is in us.

Fight the fight, plunge into the splendid struggle of politics, make our gospel a political issue—and the people will educate themselves. Shun the fight, read pretty papers in little club rooms, keep away from the whirl of the real world where real men fight for real things—and the people, tho' half-awakened, will sink to sleep again, soothed by the soft droning of our essayists' voices—voices that ought to ring loud and clear in the great arena of politics. That way lies our path. May we have strength to tread it.

It may give us strength if we think what the Single Tax means. It is an ideal fiscal system, yes—it is far, far more; it is an ideal philosophy and an ideal religion. Imagine, if the human mind can imagine, a world without involuntary poverty, a world free from those twin relics of barbarism. The two giant curses poverty breeds, the curses of suffering and sin. The lack of money is the root of all evil. In the pedigree of every crime there stalks gaunt Poverty. The abolition of involuntary poverty would change the gray world to a glad one. It would bring heaven about us, here and now. The Single Tax would make America infinitely more glorious, infinitely more grand, than—

"The glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome."

John Erskine Ward of Orange County spoke of conditions in the rural districts as follows:

The best political organization that I can imagine would be a State Committee consisting of one representative from each Senatorial District, elected by the voters of the district, a County Committee consisting of one representative from each Election District, elected by the voters of the district.

Owing to the conditions under which we meet, it would be impossible for us to form an organization in this manner, as we cannot build from the bottom upward—we must build from the top downward.

I would, therefore, recommend a State organization composed of a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, and an Executive Committee of fifteen or twenty members. This, I believe, is the only plan which is feasible for us to adopt at present.

Benjamin Doblin of New York City spoke on the necessity for continuous work on straight out Single Tax lines:—

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

Even though I should disagree with everything this Conference decides upon still would I support the proposed League, for with the good purpose and impulse dominating it, experience will change whatever is wrong either in its policy or in my understanding of it.

Too much emphasis has been laid upon the mere mechanics of the movement! Tax reform necessarily leads to political action and politics is the science of compromise.

We aim to do more than correct the abuses, bad as they are, of a clumsy, unjust assessment and levy of taxes. The abolition of privilege—the substitution of justice is a cause sufficiently inspiring to call out all that is best in us.

Let us be resolved to teach the truths promulgated by Henry George in Progress and Poverty. This course, I frankly admit, may not draw to us the great numbers that some consider important; but it will insure a teaching force that will finally destroy bad systems and dynasties.

Democracy—the recognition of the rights of the individual—must be our goal. Liberty will not be content with half measures, we must trust her implicitly or lose what rights we now hold.

I have no patience with the notion that we of the faith have a more robust intellect than our brothers who sit in darkness. That the propaganda of the whole truth is unpalatable to them and there-

fore they must be spoon-fed with small doses of the truth.

Our obligation is to teach the truth as it was taught to us by Henry George, to stimulate others with the zeal that animates us and though we be as small a band as 50—that small number is 50 times as numerous as Henry George started with—yet working concertedly, aiding and encouraging each other by counsel and example we can conquer the world of injustice.

The Chairman announced appointment of the following Committees:

ON CONSTITUTION:

John Erskine Ward, Orange County
Benjamin Doblin, New York "
August Weymann, Bronx "
Charles H. Fuller, Orange "
Amy Mali Hicks, New York "

ON PERMANENT ORGANIZATION:

Alfred Bishop Mason, Chairman.
Z. K. Green, Orange County.
Hyman Levine, New York County.
Frederick C. Leubuscher, New York "
Mrs. Matilda Lustgarten, New York "

ON RESOLUTIONS:

Hon. Robert Baker, Kings County
James Macgregor, New York "
Byron W. Holt, Kings "
M. W. Norwalk, New York "
Miss Evanetta Hare, Rensselaer "

Mr. William Lustgarten, Treasurer, reported as follows:

MR. PRESIDENT:—

It has been suggested that I say at this time, a few words about what may be called the beginning of this Conference. A number of men with whom I had discussed Single Tax, and who were themselves Single Taxers, had fallen in with my suggestion that a State organization of some kind could do good work in promoting the cause—the more men I talked with, the more strongly the idea

seemed to grow, that a body of earnest Single Taxers might be gotten together to work for the advancement of our ideas.

So at a little dinner at the Reform Club, in New York—we had about twenty-five men present—some of the old time gray haired hard workers in times past, spoke at that dinner with a fervor which warmed the hearts of some of the younger generation. We agreed to issue the Call which has been read—to organize this League.

It is a practical proposition—there are enough Single Taxers in this State to swing the State our way. Some of them are working, more of them are not. I believe its a plain business matter that we can so organize them that they will all work. It will take some money and every Single Taxer should consider it a duty and a privilege to help the work along by paying dues and sending in donations to make this League a living vital force in the economic changes now going on in our State.

As Treasurer, I have to report the receipt of

\$50.00	from Henry George, Jr.
10.00	" Tillie Lustgarten.
1.00	" Kate E. Bradley.

On motion the Conference adjourned until two o'clock P. M.

On assembling of the Adjourned Session, the Committee reports being in order, the Committee on Constitution reported a draft which was read in full and, under ruling from the Chair, objection to any section laid that section over for discussion.

The draft as reported by the Committee was as follows:

(1.) The Name of this organization shall be the Progress and Poverty League of New York.

(2.) PURPOSE:—To propagate the truths expounded by Henry George in "Progress and Poverty."

(3.) The League shall consist of a Central Body and of such Local Branches as may from time to time be organized.

(4.) The officers of the Central Committee

shall be:—A President, ten Vice Presidents, General Secretary, and Treasurer; An Executive Committee to be appointed by the President, which Committee shall consist of not less than fifteen members, who shall direct and advise the activities of the local branches.

(5.) The officers shall be elected by a majority vote of all Members of the League in good standing.

(6.) The Executive Committee shall have full authority and shall be charged with the duty of directing and energizing the work of the League.

(7.) The Executive Committee shall meet at the call of the President.

(8.) The Membership dues of the League shall be One Dollar a Year.

(9.) The Executive Committee shall be empowered to receive and expend donations and bequests for the benefit of the League.

Objection having been taken to every section except number eight, discussion followed, a time limit for each speaker on each section having been adopted by the Conference, after nine speakers had addressed the Conference on the first section. When discussion had ended, the Constitution as finally adopted read as follows:

(1.) The Name of this Organization shall be the NEW YORK STATE SINGLE TAX LEAGUE.

(2.) PURPOSE: To propagate the Truths Expounded by Henry George in "Progress and Poverty."

(3.) The League shall consist of Residents of the State of New York who shall Subscribe to a Declaration of Belief in the Single Tax.

(4.) The Officers shall be a President, not less than Ten nor more than Fifteen Vice Presidents; Secretary; Two Assistant Secretaries and a Treasurer. There shall also be not less than Fifteen Members appointed

annually by the President, who, together with the Officers shall constitute the Executive Committee.

(5.) The Officers shall be elected at an Annual Convention by a majority vote of all Members of the League in Good Standing.

(6.) The Executive Committee shall have Full Authority and shall be Charged with the duty of Directing and Energizing the League.

(7.) The Executive Committee shall meet on the Call of the President.

(8.) The Membership Dues of the League shall be One Dollar a Year.

(9.) The Executive Committee shall have power to receive and Expend Donations and Bequests for the Benefit of the League.

(10.) This Constitution may be Amended at any Regular Meeting of the League by a Majority Vote of all Members in Good Standing.

On motion of William Lustgarten it was voted to incorporate under the Membership Corporation Law of New York State.

The Committee on Permanent Organization reported as follows:

The Committee on Permanent Organization recommends the election of the following persons:

President: Horace Sague of Poughkeepsie.

Vice Presidents: Mrs. Kate E. Bradley, Olean; Hon. Robert Baker, Brooklyn; Hon. Henry George, Jr., New York; Prof. William H. Drew, Ithaca; Prof. F. W. Howe, Syracuse; Byron W. Holt, Brooklyn; Miss Amy Mali Hicks, New York; Thomas Mott Osborne, Auburn; C. B. Matthews, Buffalo; Robert Schalkenbach, New York; Rev. John F. Scott, Mt. Vernon.

Secretary: Wesley E. Barker, New York.

Treasurer: Benjamin Doblin, New York.

The business before the Conference being the adoption of the Report, Mr. Geiger, of New York, offered in nomination for Presi-

dent, Henry George, Jr., whose name after discussion was withdrawn by Mr. Geiger and Horace Sague of Poughkeepsie was elected President of the League and escorted to the Chair and presided over the rest of the deliberations of the Conference.

It being noted that the original Report of the Committee on Constitution provided for ten Vice Presidents, whereas the Committee on Permanent Organization had recommended eleven names, it became the business of the League to make the two reports agree, whereupon the Conference agreed to the final form of Section No. 4 and William Lustgarten nominated the following:

For Vice Presidents: Mrs. Kate E. Bradley, Olean; Hon. Robert Baker, Brooklyn; Prof. William H. Drew, Ithaca; Prof. F. W. Howe, Syracuse; Dr. Frederick C. Howe, New York; Miss Amy Mali Hicks, New York; Thomas Mott Osborne, of Auburn; Charles B. Matthews, Buffalo; Rev. John F. Scott, Mt. Vernon; Robert Schalkenbach, New York; Henry George, Jr., New York; Byron W. Holt of Brooklyn; George Foster Peabody, Lake George; Christine Ross Barker, New York; Hon. John J. Murphy, New York.

A vote of the League showed all of the above named to be elected.

For General Secretary, Wesley E. Barker of New York, was nominated; For Secretaries, William Ryan of New York, and Joseph Dana Miller. A vote showed the above named gentlemen to be elected to the offices named.

For Treasurer, Benjamin Doblin was nominated and elected.

The Report of the Committee on Resolutions being in order, the Committee reported Resolutions as follows:

Resolved, that the League direct its efforts to the wide diffusion of knowledge of the true principles of taxation with a view to bringing about the abolition of all taxation upon in-

dustry and thrift, substituting for the present unequal, unjust and onerous taxes, a tax upon the rental value of land.

Resolved, that the members of the League be urged to aid in every way possible in circulating a petition to the Legislature to amend the tax laws of the State of New York that all products of labor and industry be excluded from taxation, and that the annual rental value of land, irrespective of the improvements therein and thereon, and of other natural monopolies or public franchises shall be collected in lieu of all other taxes to defray the expenses of the State, County and local governments.

Resolved, that no political candidacy and no political issue other than such as are formally adopted by the League be supported except upon the affirmative vote of not less than three-fourths of the Executive Committee and other officers of the League.

ROBERT BAKER, Chairman,
Committee on Resolutions.

After prolonged discussion on the Resolutions as presented, during which it developed that the Conference was about equally divided on what may be called the ethical and practical side of the Single Tax and during which the discussion became very much involved, the Resolutions on a close vote were finally defeated. On motion of William Lustgarten the New York State Single Tax League adjourned until the next annual convention.

The New York State Single Tax League

SECRETARY'S OFFICE
ROOM 316, 501 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK CITY, N. Y.

To the Executive Committee of
The New York State Single Tax League:

I enclose herewith One Dollar Dues for Membership in The New York State Single Tax League and Donation of.....and subscribe to my belief in The Single Tax as follows:

First, to advocate the abolition of all taxes upon industry and the products of industry, and the taking by taxation upon land values, exclusive of improvements, of the annual rentable value of those various forms of natural opportunities embraced under the general term, LAND; and, Secondly, to promote social intercourse among Single Tax people

Name.....

Residence.....

Business Address.....