

SINGLE TAX PARTY PLATFORM

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Offered Merely to Create Discussion.

The Condition of Labor—Whereas the struggle by the masses of mankind for a decent living, and the constant tendency of wages toward a minimum which will give but a bare living, present a political problem of the first magnitude, we, the members of the Single Tax Party, place before the public a declaration of principles, the application of which will remove the prime social evil,—namely, the exploitation and enslavement of the workers through a system of Monopolism. We propose to raise ALL wages to the full earnings of the worker, whether the labor be by brain or brawn.

Opposing Political Parties—We hold that both of the great political parties of the United States,—the Republican and the Democratic,—are failures. They have both summarily failed to solve the greatest problem before the nation—why wages tend downward, and rent and the cost of living upward. They are powerless in the grip of economic forces, and their chief politicians are merely time-servers who have proved themselves friendly to the power of Mammon. The Socialist Party is merely beating the air, for, while its aim is higher than that of the two dominant parties, yet the socialist theories of socializing capital and other wealth arise from fundamental misconceptions and false reasoning.

The Fear of Poverty under our present economic regime is so overpowering that the nation is mad with the desire to make money, for failure to get money means poverty and degradation. The mad struggle for money presents an evil that threatens our commonwealth and our civilization itself, and we propose to abolish the fear of poverty by insuring to all an equal opportunity to make a good living, all special privileges to be abolished.

The Single Tax, The Remedy—There are two most important things to be considered in the solution of the problem of involuntary poverty which exists side-by-side with vast accumulations of wealth. First is LAND, (including all natural resources, mines, forests, waterways, oil deposits, etc., etc.) the storehouse, the reservoir, from which men supply ALL of their needs. Man cannot live for an instant except on this material planet, and even when he dies his body returns to the earth whence it came. The other great prime factor in the production of wealth is LABOR, and this term means ALL human exertion of brain and muscle.

Capital is all produced by labor from land, and is of secondary consideration—it is the secondary factor in the production of wealth. Most of what is ordinarily called interest is not truly interest at all, but the price of monopoly, or the proceeds of taxation given to bondholders. Interest arises through the reproductive and transforming powers of nature.

Labor has been robbed from time immemorial, and there are two methods of robbery,—one crude and the other more refined. The crude form of this robbery is Chattel Slavery. The refined form is Industrial Slavery through which "the ownership of land will always give the ownership of men, to a degree measured by the necessity (real or artificial) for the use of land. And when that necessity is absolute—when starvation is the alternative to the use of land, then does the ownership of men involved in the ownership of land become absolute." (*)

The industrial slavery under which the mass of mankind groans exists because men allow Mother Earth to be treated as the private property of certain of the people in the same manner as though it were a product of labor, or in other words, wealth.

The land belongs in usufruct to the living, and the dead have no rights over it. Land is the common property of the people and no title deeds can alter this fact. Therefore, to abolish the iniquity of land monopoly we propose a single tax upon ground rent, or land values.—all other taxes to be abolished. We do not propose to divide up the land because that is not necessary. Thus a dozen or a hundred men may own one horse. They do not have to cut the horse into twelve or a hundred pieces in order to secure their equal rights in the same. They can rent out the horse and divide the net income. So instead of dividing up the land we propose to divide, as it were, the rent of land as follows. "All the land is common, all have equal rights to it. But there is good and poor land and everybody wants the good land. Therefore those who own the good land should pay to those who own no land as much (annually) as their land is worth. But as it is impossible to say who should pay to whom, and money is needed for governmental use, those who hold good land should pay into the public treasury as much annually as their land is worth. Thus everyone would share equally." (*)

Wages, (that is, all the returns of human exertion, salaries, etc.) do not depend upon what a laborer produces, but upon what is left after rent is taken out. (2) Thus rent is relatively high where wages are relatively low and conversely, wages are relatively high where rent is relatively low. Wages are measured by purchasing power.

Since high rent causes low wages, the obvious and only way to raise wages is to lower rent. This we propose to do by taxing rent. A tax on ground rent cannot be shifted by the landowner onto the tenant.

(Over)

There is no way whereby the landlord can pass up the tax. For the Single Tax is not a tax on land but upon the income-producing power or rental value of land. It would not fall upon all land. Cheap land would pay an insignificant tax, while land on Manhattan Island worth as high as 25 million dollars per acre would pay an enormous tax. (Five per cent on 25 million dollars is a tidy sum.) Since the whole of ground rent would be taken annually by the government (less a fee to the landholder for collecting it), land would have no selling price under the single tax. A tax on unused land at its full market value or asking price would force idle land into use, or such land would be simply left alone for someone to occupy who would or could use it to advantage and pay its annual value to the government.

Income Tax—There should be only one form of income tax and that should fall exclusively upon **EARNED** incomes. The Single Tax would be such a tax, and all **EARNED** incomes would be exempted.

Unemployment—Under the Single Tax system of "a fair field and no favor"—"equal rights for all and special privileges for none," there would be no unemployment. Our aim is to open up opportunity and give everyone a square deal. Also, there would be no need of strikes as wages would be at the highest possible point,—the full earnings of the laborer.

Public Ownership—With respect to monopolies other than monopoly of land, we hold that where free competition becomes impossible, as in telegraphs, telephones, railroads, water and gas supplies, etc., such business becomes a proper social function, which should be controlled and managed by and for the whole people concerned, through their proper government, local, state, or national, as the case may be. (*)

Pensions—Where the government orders its men to fight its battles, that government is in duty bound to take care of all of its soldiers, sailors, etc. Further, it is a humane duty to take care of all unfortunates who cannot take care of themselves. This applies to hospitals, asylums, etc., and requires that old age pensions be given to the needy, though the need will be vastly less under the system that gives the worker all that is his. The necessary funds would come from the taxation of rent.

Minimum Wage—Under the single tax the minimum wage would also be the maximum wage—just what each man earned. The workers would no longer be compelled to support any millionaires and this would mean a tremendous saving. No special wages legislation would be needed.

Child Labor—Since child labor is but a result of involuntary poverty little legislation would be required where wages were many times as high as at present. Rich people do not allow their children to labor in sweatshops or factories. The children of the poor are sent to work because of the poverty of the parents and not because of the parents' depravity.

Free Trade—Since we propose to abolish all taxation save that on land values, the Single Tax Party stands pledged to abolish the iniquitous tariff taxes along with the others. There should be no economic barriers of any kind between nations. Free Trade alone would advance world peace more than all of the peace conferences, and armies and navies of all history. The Protective Tariff is merely a war measure and makes for war.

Initiative and Referendum—We demand the initiative and referendum as necessary means to secure true democracy.

Recall—We insist upon the Recall of all public servants when such servants cease to serve the people. The people have as much right to un-elect or eject men from office as to elect them in the first place. Without the Recall popular government is a farce.

Proportional Representation—Under our present laws a minority of voters gets no real representation. To remedy this we endorse Proportional Representation to secure proper representation for all whether of the majority or the minority.

Notes—* Henry George, "Progress and Poverty," Bk. 7, Chap. 2. * Toistoy, "Resurrection," Bk. 2, Chap. 9. * Henry George, "Progress and Poverty," Bk. 3, Chap. 5. * Single Tax Platform, Cooper Union, N. Y., Sept. 3, 1890.

(The above platform is meant to clearly state the principles of Single Taxism FOR THOSE WHO KNOW NOTHING ABOUT THE IDEA. It is designed to attract new voters to our movement, to encourage discussion and examination of our remedy, and is not an academic statement for men who are already single taxers.—C. LeB. G.)

February, 1922.

● We are NOT advocating Party Organization but offer this for comparison with the Party Platforms which may be found in the World Almanac. It is hoped this will start discussion of our principles.—C. LeB. G. (Tract No. 24) (Over)