

# Single taxers protest excessive rental rates

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By RHEER ODOM

Press Register Reporter

FAIRHOPE, Ala.—Petitions advocating reduced rental rates and more stringent control of them from the Fairhope Single Tax Corp. have been circulated here by a disgruntled group of the corporation's leasees.

The three-page petition asks for relief from "excessive" rentals, relief from the

"arbitrary, capricious and undisclosed method" of determining rent plus relief from "attempted control" over purchase price of improvements on land owned by the tax corporation.

The petition also seeks assistance from any state, county or municipal officials to amend existing laws and statutes of the tax colony.

The issue has gathered momentum since tax increases were levied earlier this year on residents who rent land from the corporation.

In a letter to area newspapers, one property leasee pointed out that since 1969 her rent had increased from \$859.53 to \$2,909.64 in 1974.

Mrs. Marjorie Hoffman, who maintains 53.6 acres as a dairy farm, went further and listed the increase in 1975 to \$4,980.84 which, she said, was beyond the corporation's five-year plan of only 10 per cent increases per year.

The tax corporation, a rather complex organization formed at the turn of the century, maintains ownership of almost 4,000 acres of property in the Fairhope area but rents it out through 99-year leases. The leasees maintain ownership of any improvements on the land but cannot sell them without consent and approval of the corporation which is governed by a five-member council.

The concept behind the corporation is that "the single tax consummates the abolition of all taxes upon labor or the products of labor—that is to say, the abolition of all taxes save one tax levied on the value of land, irrespective of improvements."

Mrs. Ruth Rockwell, secretary for the corporation, told the Baldwin County Edition earlier this week that opposition to increases "has been going on since the corporation was formed." She emphasized that the demand for land plus its value have been determining factors in levying tax increases.

Any revenues remaining after payment of state, county and local taxes plus expenses of the corporation are used for such community improvements as the library, public parks, street paving, construction of sidewalks and drainage projects, she stated.

A group of about 30 property leasees has been meeting as of last week-end to try and formulate plans for some type of action against the increases possibly with a public hearing on the issue scheduled in the near future.

## I BELIEVE

I believe that ultimately God's love will prevail.

I believe that nation will learn to live and work with nation.

I believe that justice for all its citizens will continue to be the goal of the constitutional government of the United States of America.

I believe that eventually the earth and its resources will belong to ALL men with each person allowed to keep the profit from his labor.

I believe that the Fairhope Single Tax Corporation will continue to demonstrate a just method by which this goal can be attained.

I BELIEVE — DON'T YOU?

Bertha L. Battey

Born and reared on Colony land and a non-member leasee for 21 years.

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