Single tax resentment is nothing new for Fairhope

By LOUIS ZADNICHEK II
Press Register Reporter

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SINGLE TAX EXPERT — Fairhope resident Converse Harwell, member of the Fairhope Single Tax Corp. education committee, rests in Thomas Hospital last Thursday while recovering from a heart attack. Harwell, who arrived on the Eastern Shore in 1938 with less than $100, originally leased Fairhope Single Tax Corp. land and harvested the timber off it to survive. He is an expert on single tax theory and practice. (Mobile Press Register Photo by Louis Zadnichek II).

FAIRHOPE, Ala. — "Dissent within the Fairhope Single Tax Corp. is nothing new," says Converse Harwell, member of the organization's education committee. "In past years, there have been differences of opinion that some thought might shatter the entire concept."

Principally at issue over the years has been whether the Single Tax Doctrine formulated by Henry George necessarily demanded that an attempt be made to collect the full annual use value, or economic rent, of the land, regardless of the desires of the lease holders. The use value funds would be used for governmental or public services.

"The Fairhope Plan," explained Harwell, "as originally announced and steadily publicized, expects that every holder of Fairhope Single Tax Corp. land shall pay its full rental value from year to year into a common fund. This fund is to be spent for everyone's benefit, instead of taxes levied in the usual way. The first purpose was to prevent land speculation and to preserve for all Fairhope residents an equal opportunity to enjoy its advantages."

The Single Tax doctrine and program is based on a moral obligation to justice since it is not exclusively a tax finance reform. Its advocates have always been a very small minority, however vocal and influential at times. The organization's first objective, the elimination of land speculation, or of private receipt of net income from land, would remove the accumulation of personal wealth in real estate transactions.

"It seems fair to conclude," notes Harwell, "that those persons who want the Fairhope Single Tax Corp. to collect something less than the full annual use value of the property in question are in serious error, both in their understanding of Henry George's tax intention and his administrative guidelines."

Another Fairhope Single Tax Corp. principle in dispute has concerned the fitness of [illegible]

ing the total economic land rent of areas within a given community," said Harwell. "However, reasonably satisfactory methods do exist for determining the relative value of the different parcels of land."

Fairhope Single Tax Corp. land is open to almost everyone under definite 99-year written leases which can be extended. However, membership in the organization is strictly limited to those who are in harmonious accord with its principles and ideals, plus are willing to cooperate with others in attaining its objectives.

[illegible] sideration, single taxers contend that the full economic land rent, if collected, could easily equal the justifiable expenditures of government."

Henry George and most of his single tax disciples sincerely believed that economic land rent would be sufficient to permit the [illegible] financing of greatly extended governmental services. They further believed that the twofold effects of a more complete utilization of land, and the lifting of taxes which tend to repress thrift, investment and labor, would tend to a great expansion of production, plus achieve many other desirable humane results.

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within a framework of state and local taxation which actually levies taxes on improvements and personal property. Since the organization could not comply literally with single tax conditions, stimulation was needed by refunding to lessees certain taxes paid by them.

Land rents in the Fairhope Single Tax Corp. were intended to absorb the total economic land rent to fulfill the primary purpose of the single tax — to destroy land speculation by simply leaving as little economic land rent as possible in the hands of property owners and occupiers. "To believers in the single tax," said Harwell, "the Henry George program is one of basic governmental reform, not just another mere tax reform program."

A third principle often in dispute has involved the degree of democracy in the management of the Fairhope Single Tax Corp. "Officers in the past have been chosen on their allegiance to an ideal," explains Harwell. "They must fully and heartily approve not only the single tax policy in general, but the Fairhope Plan of applying the single tax principle as far as possible under existing conditions, by collecting the full annual rental value of its land, and in consideration thereof, paying the city, county and state taxes on the improvements and personal property of the lessees held upon their lease holds."

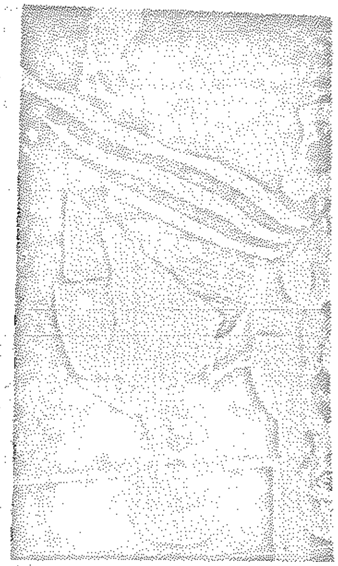
The Fairhope Single Tax Corp. method follows a system which takes land income directly, by basing taxes on a concept or measure of "value." Henry George's tax intentions do not apply to Fairhope except for the ever present problem of exercising sound judgment in the annual estimation of economic land rent.

"There is not now, and probably never will be, any completely satisfactory objective method for determin-

Corp. must of necessity limit its membership to 'believers' in the single tax," stressed Harwell. "The $100 membership fee is used for purchasing additional land for the organization. Applicants for membership, if they are already lessees, must reiterate the written promise they signed in their lease contract, the promise being that they will not accept a 'bonus' nor an excessive price for a transfer of their lease holds. The applicant must also promise not to purchase any 'deeded' land for resale at a profit in the near vicinity of Fairhope Single Tax Corp. property holdings."

Non-believers in the single tax can lease Fairhope Single Tax Corp. land and have all the privileges and advantages of a "believer" or member of the organization, excepting the right to vote and hold office in the corporation. "The integrity of our organization could not be maintained," said Harwell, "if non-member lessees were permitted a vote on corporation policies and decisions. For the most part, the general public neither understands or will agree with single tax reform. Thus, the great majority of the Fairhope lessees would vote lower economic land rents for themselves than would be necessitated by the Single Tax Doctrine."

Harwell claims that ethical and economic reasoning is employed by single tax believers to support their proposal to abolish all taxes other than a tax on land value. "Public morality cannot justify the forcing of individuals to contribute to supporting government out of income or wealth which they as individuals earn for themselves," says Harwell. "Aside from this ethical con-



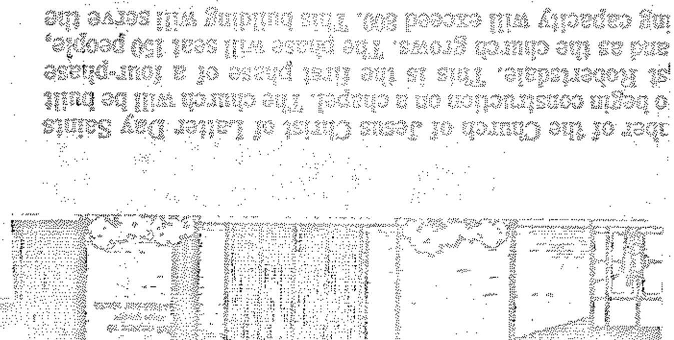
...sonnel meet ...ulf Lodge

GULF SHORES, Ala. — A number of well known speakers are scheduled to address sessions of the International Association of Personnel Employment Security when it meets late this week at the Gulf State Resort.

Delegates began arriving late Wednesday and enjoyed a shrimp feast and dance.

The 27th annual convention and educational workshop opened Thursday with a welcome by C. C. Horton, mayor emeritus of Gulf Shores.

Speakers for the morning session included Leland Dean, Commissioner, Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, and Jay Rowland



...ber of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints ...o begin construction on a chapel. The church will be built ...at Robertsdale. This is the first phase of a four-phase ...and as the church grows. The phase will seat 150 people, ...ing capacity will exceed 800. The building will serve the

Our Readers Write

Fairhope does not have two
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lony. There is no such thing
a single tax colony. Maybe,
one time, it could have been
ought of as a "colony."
Today the Fairhope Single
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the City of Fairhope. It is
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Single tax, colony, benevo-
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rs and lessees, non-profit
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myths of Fairhope.

Double talk, constitutional mandates, socialist theories, denial of senior citizens' property tax refunds, interference with sale of lessees' property, interference with beneficial enjoyment of leasehold, warning others of what to expect; these should be the Myths of Fairhope, but unfortunately these things exist today!

In America, a corporation that has to impose these tactics on its consumers (the lessees) to demonstrate the efficiency and supremacy of its economic principles, needs to re-evaluate its need for existence.

The corporate authorities and inactive members must start acting in a responsible manner beneficial to the many families of this community that have their homes and life's work at stake and are tired of being at the mercy of untouchable, arrogant, so called intellectuals.

The vast majority of people living on "colony" land are not members and are not considered to be "single-taxers." They may apply for membership into the corporation, but the corporation states they must always be on guard to not let people who might oppose their version of economic principales, infiltrate their membership and influence the executive council.

As we near our nation's 200th year, it seems fitting that our community should allow the "colony" to participate in the celebration of freedom from unjust rule, freedom from taxation without representation, that they be allowed to expound on the glory of democracy.

It's time for the corporation to come face to face with the stars and stripes, and if the community business leaders that are members of this corporation won't do it, and the inactive members continue to do nothing, then the lessees must demand and receive recognition in the affairs of this corporation that professes to be their benevolent landlord. The lessees must make the corporation something this community can live with (or without), rather than the lingering fossil of some bygone social reform, that continues to cause grief to many good people in this community.

R.J. Rezner, Jr.
Rt. 1
Fairhope, Ala.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

The Eastern Shore Jaycees believing "That Economic justice can be won by free men through free enterprize; That Government should be of laws rather than of men;" as stated in the Jaycee Creed, call for the discontinuance of all action by the Faihope Single Tax Corporation pertaining to the interference with the use, control and disposal of the Lessees improvement property, and ask that some method of fair rent be adopted that will insure the protection of the Lessees right to quiet beneficial use and enjoyment of the land leased to them by the Corporation for the duration of the lease agreements.

This resolution was adopted at the regular business meeting of the Eastern Shore Jaycees, April 15th 1975.

Pd. Adv. by the Eastern Shore Jaycees

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