

Fathers, and it was sensed by the Physiocrats in France and by the Economists in England. But it remained for Henry George to show that the private ownership of land, which denied men access to the earth upon which they must live and from which they must satisfy all their needs and wants, is the primal cause, not merely of poverty and all the misery and wrong that follow in the wake of poverty, but that it is the *basic cause* of evil and injustice among civilized men; and that only by the elimination of the private ownership of land can liberty and justice be achieved and evil forever be abolished. It remained for Henry George to show that, potentially, this is a good world; that men are innately good, not innately bad; that Creation is based on justice, not on vengeance; that the earth is a banquet table, spread by the hand of a benign Creator and laden with an abundance of all things for which men have need, and at which every human being has a place.

Freedom, Equality and Security are man's estate in the intent and scheme of Nature. Freedom of access to land, equality of rights of opportunity, and security in the possession of his entire product are man's birthright, and these he will some day attain, even if through his ignorance men first must suffer, nations perish, and civilizations die for it.

But why wait? Why permit the misery and suffering of mankind to go on? If misery and suffering are due to the violation of Natural Law, why continue the violation?

"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's." Render unto the individual the things that are the individual's, and to society the things that are society's.

Give back to society the one thing that is made by society, and which therefore belongs to society, and leave the individual in possession of the things that he creates, and which therefore are his.

Take the rent of land for communal purposes, and stop the robbery of the community by the landowner. Abolish all tariffs, tolls and taxes, and stop the robbery of the individual by the government.

Observe the Law—the Natural Law—which is the Word of God, and let each take his place at the banquet table God has provided for all.

ADDRESSING the American Society of Editors on April 21 Prof. Tugwell resorted to a discreditable trick. He represented return to conditions of 1929 as the only alternative to the New Deal. If he knew no better his remark would discredit President Roosevelt who has promised to try something else should the New Deal fail, and the President did not mean conditions of 1929. But he knows better. This is obvious from the fact that he is the author of the biography of Henry George in the Encyclopedia of Social Science wherein he gives a brief account of George's views. It requires trickery however to get by with a defense of the New Deal.

The Greatest Single Tax Speech I Ever Heard

IN 1918 a wealthy man decided to form a "third party."

So he organized a Committee of Forty-Eight, and with considerable largesse assembled in Chicago a variegated group of radicals from all parts of the country. The object was to find a common denominator for the assorted "isms" represented by these malcontents, such common denominator to be codified in a platform, and to nominate candidates for the presidency and vice-presidency on this platform. That was the year of the Harding-Cox campaign.

Because it was political, this movement gained considerable publicity. The late James A. Robinson, national organizer of the Single Tax Party, conceived, with his usual audacity, the idea of absconding with this publicity. He proposed that the Single Tax Party hold its national convention in Chicago at the same time. The purpose was not only to gain publicity for the Single Tax movement by giving the newspapers two conventions to cover at once, but also, if possible, to attract many of the Forty-Eighters, known to be favorable to the Single Tax, to our movement. For we feared that our convention could attract very little attention by itself. We had our platform fight, and nobody was particularly anxious to whom the nominations went. We were out to make noise for the Single Tax, and to make the noise audible we knew we had to augment our numbers. This we proposed to do at the expense of the Committee of Forty-Eight.

We left New York in a private car, well bespattered with banners. At Philadelphia we took on the Pennsylvania contingent. My recollection is that we had less than fifty altogether. But a group of evangelists with lusty lungs can make an amount of noise out of all proportion to their numbers—and we did. We had sent ahead Jerome Reis, another valiant party worker who has since departed, ostensibly to take care of arrangements for our convention, but in reality to stir up the interest of the newspaper men in our coming. Somehow Reis succeeded not only in impressing these men with our importance, but also in conveying the idea that we might condescend to take over the Committee of Forty-Eight. This was indeed a fight, and what interests a newspaper man more?

"The Single Taxers are Coming" was the headline of one Chicago newspaper. Interviews with prominent Forty-Eighters as to the possibility of a merger or the probability of a fight disturbed the equanimity of that organization, and gave us plenty of publicity. The A. P. wires must have been busy with stories about us, for newspaper reporters besieged our car en route. I think it was in Erie, Pa., that we read a big front page story about ourselves that really scared some of us; we were

afraid of the ridicule that the smallness of our group would meet with when we reached Chicago. Judging from the Chicago newspapers it seemed as if the Forty-Eighters were really frightened by our coming. Whether it was the prospect of the impending fight that entranced them, or whether they were sympathetic to our movement, the newspaper men were quite good to us after we arrived, and the Single Tax received considerable notice in the newspaper columns. Evidently to the discomfiture of the Forty-Eighters.

Well, we organized our convention and immediately adjourned to the other convention. What an imposing spectacle this gathering seemed in comparison with our handful. There were over four hundred of them, divided into state contingents with banners, the leaders majestically seated on the platform and flanked with stenographers and reporters. This was a real convention. They had style, real get-up, and might have amounted to something if they had had a reason for existence, a definite political platform.

We made a very definite impression as we walked into that hall. Those on the platform looked us over. It was not only that we wore Single Tax buttons and carried Single Tax pennants, but I think the Forty-Eighters realized that we were the only group of that size in the hall that had a definite platform, we knew what we wanted, and a well-organized and determined minority can always swing a heterogeneous crowd.

Our plan was to forget our own convention until we did what we could toward swinging this crowd, or a large part of it, our way. We entered into the mechanics of the thing by taking our places with our respective state groups. Our aim was to get as many places on the platform committee as possible, so that, if we accomplished nothing else we would write a straight Single Tax plank in their platform. After all, our main aim was not political; we wanted publicity for Single Tax. My recollection is that we had four members of that committee, and that there were a number of non-party Single Taxers to help these four. At any rate there were enough Single Taxers on this committee to assure our plank of a place in the platform.

But the platform committee could not agree on anything. It was humanly impossible to find the common denominator for all these malcontents. There were greenbackers, and silverites and gold manipulators—every known, and some novel, form of inflation was proposed, and always with a long speech. Then there were government ownership plans of various degrees, and some out-and-out Marxists. For two days the committee wrangled, but not even the preamble to the platform was born.

There was a third political convention being held in the city—the Labor Party. With its shrewd labor union politicians the Forty-Eighters had been flirting for two days. During the night of the second day some agree-

ment—which later on proved to be a few vague laborite promises which were never kept—had been entered into between the leaders of the two movements. On the morning of the third day, while we were waiting for the platform committee to report, somebody on the rostrum moved that at one o'clock this convention should move over to Carmen's Hall where a joint convention with the laborites would be held. The motion carried. Then someone moved that a platform be adopted on the floor, so that some definite programme of their own should be presented at the joint convention. When this motion passed and delegates asked for the floor to present their pet panaceas, Jim Robinson, who acted by tacit consent as our floor leader, told me to notify our members of the platform committee to get up to the floor at once. My announcement that a platform was being written in the convention hall broke up the committee meeting.

When we got upstairs the convention was in a pandemonium. Everybody seemed to be calling for the floor. The chairman, Paul Christiansen, who later became the Farmer-Labor Party's candidate for president (and that was all the Forty-Eighters got for their expense) was trying to save the convention from disintegration, and therefore trying not to offend anyone. Under such circumstances the loudest and most insistent voice usually gets the floor. So Herman Loew, who led our forces in the committee (and who, by the way, is ordinarily one of the most dignified and soft-spoken of men) kept pressing down the center aisle through the mob, with the loudest "Mister Chairman" I have ever heard. We helped him out not only with our shouting, but also with the waving of our pennants; we seemed to be a solid phalanx that could not be overlooked with impunity. Loew got the floor and read his Single Tax plank. It seemed that everybody on the floor seconded the motion for adoption. A common denominator for this rabble had been found.

Apparently the leadership did not want a common denominator. If this convention were committed to anything so definite as a straight demand for the collection of the full annual rental value of land in lieu of all taxes—and this was the only thing that seemed to unite them—the leaders might not be in a trading position with the laborites. Christiansen turned to his advisors on the platform, and then he recognized one of them to be the first speaker for the motion. This speaker (who has since turned out to be a good Single Taxer, and therefore I shall omit his name) began by declaring himself to be a true follower of Henry George, "but this is not the time, etc."

At that point Jim Robinson shouted "point of order." Several others of our crowd picked up the cue, and though none of us knew what parliamentary point Robinson had in mind, we all shouted "point of order" because we did not want that particular speaker to talk for our plank. Christiansen tried hard to maintain order and let his

hand-picked orator continue. No use. Finally he turned to me and asked me what my point of order was. I am about twice as big, physically, as Jim Robinson was, and therefore the chairman saw me first. I was about to say something, I don't know and never knew what, when Robinson shouted: "Mr. Chairman, my point of order is that no man who is against a motion be allowed to speak for it." Robinson told me later that up to the time Christiansen recognized me he had no idea what his point of order would be; that's how resourceful he was. Christiansen, still anxious to save the convention, did not trouble himself about the accuracy of the parliamentary question, yelled back: "Whom do you want to speak?" Now, there were fifty good Single Taxers at that convention, almost everyone qualified to speak on the motion. There was Loew and Miller and Macaulay and Robinson—a host of orators. But everyone of us, as if by prearrangement, turned to the tall figure near the center aisle and called for:

"Oscar Geiger."

I don't think he spoke for more than twenty minutes. But of the thousands of Single Tax speeches I have ever heard I never heard anything like that one. Maybe Henry George, maybe Father McGlynn delivered better orations; I never heard them. But there stood that tall, slender, Christ-like figure on the platform, pouring out his very soul in a plea for economic freedom and human justice until a halo seemed to form itself above him. The audience that but a few minutes before was one of the maddest and noisiest, now was as quiet as a church meeting. They hung on every word. Not a whisper. After three days of pandemonium and wrangling they had found an oracle who spoke to their hearts and quieted their souls. The message he brought them was the one they wanted to hear—the one common denominator that brought them together.

What did he say? What you or I or any good Single Taxer might say. His speech was entirely impromptu. Some time later I asked him if he remembered his speech. He did not. But how he said it! It was like some thrilling scene, some piece of inspiring music, the details or notes of which you do not remember, but which leave an indelible impression on your mind. The setting was perfect, the crowd large and really anxious to do something for humanity, the occasion momentous, and Oscar Geiger poured forth his heart in an impassioned plea such as only he could do.

The electrified crowd paused for a second, as if stunned, when he completed his address. Then from all parts of the hall: "I move the question"—"question"—"question." No opponent to the motion could have gotten a hearing. So Christiansen moved the question and it was carried unanimously. I think it was the one and only plank in their proposed platform that was ever adopted.

It was now past the time for adjournment to Carmen's Hall, as agreed upon by the earlier resolution, and the

Forty-Eighters went over there to be swallowed by the laborite whale, and were never heard of after. We left them to their fate and went on with our own convention. Had their leaders been less anxious to join the organized labor group, had they not forced through the joint-convention resolution of the morning, we would have turned the Forty-Eighters into a real Single Tax movement.

That is the story of Oscar Geiger's speech before the Committee of Forty-Eight—the greatest Single Tax speech I have ever heard.—FRANK CHODOROV.

What Is the Matter With Hell's Kitchen

FAILURE BY CITY TO COLLECT ADEQUATE TAXES PRODUCES SLUMS. EXCISE TAX ON INADEQUATELY IMPROVED PROPERTY RECOMMENDED FOR SLUM CLEARANCE AND UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

THE American Association for Scientific Taxation, among others, was invited to present to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the City of New York proposals for a tax plan that would take care of unemployment relief in substitution for the proposal by Mayor LaGuardia to impose a tax on business.

Following is the substance of the communications addressed to the City authorities on the subject:

The study made by the Association on this subject indicates that the failure of the City to collect the value of City services from favored sites, particularly in Manhattan is a major cause of the conditions making relief necessary.

We recommend that the City, through its Tax Department, immediately proceed to collect from inadequately improved sites, particularly those known as the slum areas, the full amount of the annual value of the sites, which is the product of public services rendered by the City.

Tenement House Commissioner Post has stated that the City renders \$3 of service for every \$1 collected in taxes from these slum areas.

Two issues are paramount in this administration:

1. The City requires additional revenue.
2. The slums must be cleared.

The City has the means to accomplish both of these objectives in its Tax Department.

It is not sufficient to say that "real estate is overburdened."

Most improved properties, and particularly homes, are *overtaxed*. Vacant land and sites encumbered with worn-out, useless buildings are *undertaxed*.

QUEENS HOMES AND OTHER RESIDENCE SECTIONS ARE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST

In Queens County, the assessment for home building and improvements is, on the average, about five times