

# The Philosophy of Freedom

An Open Forum for Single Taxers

## A False Foundation

Editor Independent: The socialist philosophy is based upon a false foundation. The theory of the "iron law of wages"—that wages tend to the lowest point at which labor will consent to live and reproduce—upon which the philosophy is based, is itself based upon a false foundation—the foundation of land monopoly, which the single tax would correct.

Karl Marx, in "Capital," says: "The foundation of the capitalistic method of production is to be found in that theft which deprived the masses of their rights in the soil, in the earth, the common heritage of all."

The single tax would restore the "rights of the masses in the soil, the earth, the common heritage of all," thus destroying "the foundation of the capitalistic method of production," and making socialism unnecessary.

That the "iron law of wages" operates under our present economic system, based as it is on land monopoly, is true; but that it necessarily follows as a result of a competitive industrial system, is absolutely false. Abolish land monopoly, by the single tax, and the "iron law of wages" will cease to be a "law."

The persistence of interest under our present economic system is inevitable. That it would persist under a single tax regime is not so certain. The fact that interest, like wages, is high in new countries, where natural opportunities are comparatively free, and low in old countries, where the natural resources are monopolized, led Henry George to assume that under the single tax both interest and wages would rise, while rent would fall. Wages are high in new countries because natural opportunities for employment are comparatively free, labor thus receiving practically natural wages—its full product; they are low in old countries because the natural resources are monopolized and labor must pay a large share of its product, as rent, for the privilege of using them. Interest is high in new countries because capital is scarce, while opportunities for its use are plentiful, and because labor, receiving the bulk of its product, and possessing little or no capital, can afford to pay high interest and still receive more than in old countries where the land and capital are owned by the few. Having little or no rent to pay, practically all of labor's product is divided between labor and capital; interest is low in old countries because capital is abundant and rent absorbs the lion's share of production.

But suppose that in this new country the single tax prevented the monopolization of land. Then labor, receiving high wages, much of it employing itself, would soon accumulate its own capital, receiving its return—economic interest—merged in wages or income. Soon many might be willing to lend while few might care to borrow. Under such circumstances interest would tend to the vanishing point and all would have to render "service for service."

A. FREELAND.  
Mt. Pleasant, Tenn.

## Questions the Single Tax

Editor Independent: I sometimes get your paper and see by the communications there you allow all sides of a question to be presented from socialism to single tax. I see by the single tax advocates that principle, when adopted is to be a cure all for every one of our political ills. How the cure is to be effected I do not see, nor do the advocates so far as I have seen tell us. This is to be tax on land values, really on land. Will placing the tax there make men more honest? Will it cure grafting, bribery or any other dishonesty? Will it take the tariff tax off of the goods needed and used by the poor, where it is, and place it on goods used by the rich where it is not, but should be? Will it place the burdens of government on the rich who are able to stand it and get vastly more protection from the government than the poor, who are unable to stand it but are now compelled so to do? Will it prevent our protected manufacturers from selling in the outside world, goods at competition prices with outside goods, while they charge home consumers more than they charge foreigners as now enabled by the tariff to do? I fail to see how it is to accomplish these things, which are the things we want. Is there any good reason why the man who has earned a sum of money and bought land with it should pay taxes on his investment,

while another man who has invested in horses, muslins, woollens or other goods should pay none? This is simply robbery of the land owner, to benefit the owner of other property, and is in fact, worst in effect, and as vicious in principle, as a tariff to enrich one part of the people at the expense of the other. There must be something more intended. Some of the early single taxers proposed this plan to make the burdens on the land owner so heavy that he would not pay the taxes and thus let the lands revert to the government for non-paid taxes and then the government hold and rent the lands, make a new letting every ten to twenty years or again sell the lands to the highest bidder—in short the plan was to confiscate the lands and pauperize the land owner while the fellows too lazy to earn or profligate to keep the money earned, would be no better or worse off as to paying taxes, but every man with money or other personal property would escape taxation and thus have his property made more valuable for that reason. Will our single taxers give us a good reason why the burden of government should fall on the man whose earnings are invested in land, thereby enriching the man whose earnings are invested in personal property?

C. M. B.

## Practical Single Tax

Persons who doubt the feasibility of the single tax should communicate with Theodore J. Werner, at the town of Fairhope, Ala. Ten years ago a few ardent single taxers of Iowa struck out to make an absolute test of the system they believed in. They bought, as a starter, 140 acres of good land on the highest portion of that region between the highlands of Never-sink and the Rio Grand river. It is on the east shore of Mobile bay, and opposite the city of Mobile. The colony now owns, unencumbered, 1,600 acres of good land, a wharf, 1,800 feet long, a steamboat that makes daily trips to Mobile and return, a public school, a public library, free baths, free telephone service, and satisfactory supplies. The rentals for the use of ground will this year aggregate \$1,500 and the net revenue from the wharf will be nearly that sum.

The title for all the land of the colony is vested for those who reside there. The unjust taxes levied on the colonists by county and state, because of their owning personal property, are met by money derived from ground rent, and this year it will amount to about 700 dollars, leaving about \$2,000 to be expended in improvements.

Fairhope has the distinction of being the only place in the country, and perhaps in the world, where the people reap all the benefits of good government and yet pay no taxes. What they do pay, and all they are asked to pay, is the ground rent for the land they use and that is not a tax but a payment for special privilege, or a franchise. Fairhope is an object lesson for everybody who desires to see the time when there shall be equal rights for all and special privileges for none.

RALPH HOYT.  
Los Angeles, Calif.

## Want a Conference

Nebraska Independent: We, the undersigned populists of Loudoun county, Virginia, wish to suggest the advisability of a national conference of our party leaders—editors, committeemen and others—and respectfully urge the importance of such a meeting in the early part of 1905—that a more definite policy may be outlined:

- J. L. KIBLER, Hillsboro, Va.
- P. W. CARPER, Daysville, Va.
- B. B. KEANE, Sterling, Va.
- B. S. JOHNSON, Sterling, Va.
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## DIRECT LEGISLATION

### The San Diego Charter

On Nov. 23, 1904, the common council of the city of San Diego, Calif., passed twenty-seven amendments to their city charter, practically reconstructing it. Two days later the mayor signed the ordinance and on Jan. 7, 1905, the people of the city voted on these amendments, carrying them all by votes ranging from 3 to 1 to votes of 5 to 1. There are 4,934 registered voters in San Diego but the vote on these amendments ranged around 2,500 so about half of the registered voters voted.

Of the twenty-seven amendments, two concern us. The first which makes the common council a single chamber of nine members each having some special department of work. This body has large legislative powers, can pass an ordinance over the mayor's veto by a two-thirds vote but is itself held in check by the initiative, referendum and recall which constitute amendment No. 26.

These sections are modeled very closely on the Los Angeles provisions. It was carried by a vote of 1,534 for to 748 against, which was a larger affirmative than most of the other amendments. It is:

### San Diego Direct Legislation Provision

That article 1 of the charter of the city of San Diego, Calif., be amended by adding thereto a new chapter to be known as chapter 4, which shall read as follows:

#### CHAPTER IV.

Section 1. The common council shall have power to submit to the electors of said city at any election any question required to be so submitted by the constitution, the law, this charter, or by ordinance; provided, that in case such question is required by said constitution, law, charter, or ordinance to be submitted at a special or other particular kind of election, it shall be so submitted, and not otherwise.

Sec. 2. Any proposed ordinance may be submitted to the common council by a petition signed by registered electors of the city equal in number to the percentages hereinafter required. The signatures to the petition need not all be appended to one paper, but each signer shall add to his signature his place of residence, giving his street and number. One of the signers of each such paper shall make oath before an officer competent to administer oaths, that the statements therein made are true, and that each signature to the paper appended is the genuine signature of the person whose name purports to be thereunto subscribed, within ten days from the date of filing such petition the city clerk shall examine and from the great register ascertain whether or not said petition is signed by the requisite number of qualified electors, and if necessary the common council shall allow him extra help for that purpose, and he shall attach to said petition his certificate showing the result of said examination. If, by the clerk's certificate, the petition is shown to be insufficient, it may be amended within ten days from the date of said certificate. The clerk shall, within ten days after such amendment, make like examination of the amended petition, and if his certificate shall show the same to be insufficient, it shall be returned to the person filing the same without prejudice, however, to the filing of a new petition to the same effect. If the petition shall be found to be sufficient the clerk shall submit the same to the common council without delay.

If the petition accompanying the proposed ordinance be signed by electors equal in number to fifteen per cent of the entire vote cast for all candidates for mayor at the last preceding general election at which a mayor was elected, and contains a request that said ordinance be submitted forthwith to a vote of the people at a special election, then the common council shall either:

- (a) Pass said ordinance without al-

## Attractive Cash Prizes

We advise our readers to look over very carefully the liberal offer made by the Homemaker Publishing Co., on page 12 of this paper. The Homemaker is a bright, up-to-date and newsy story paper, which is read with interest by every member of the family and alone is worth more than the subscription price, besides giving such valuable prizes.

This is not a guessing contest—it is a test of ability and brains; the prizes go to the ones sending the nearest correct count, and in case of a tie, to the one sending the best plan. The prizes will be awarded by an impartial committee and you have as good a chance as any one to win. The surest way to take advantage of this opportunity is to get your answers in at once and we hope to see a number of these prizes come to readers of our paper.

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