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Ford Hall Folks

218

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WHY I WORK FOR THE SINGLE TAX*

By BISHOP CHARLES E. WILLIAMS.

I AM not sure that I or any other Single Taxer makes much distinction between preaching Single Tax and preaching the Gospel. Jacob Riis told me once of a funeral where the minister did not arrive, and while the mourners were waiting, one of them arose and said: "I will improve the opportunity by addressing you on the Single Tax." (Laughter.) Now, why is the Single Tax such an *idée fixe* when once one has "seen the cat"? I think it is because it is a great moral enthusiasm.



There are a great many sides to the Single Tax—economic, fiscal and moral. I do not propose to deal with the first two, because I am not an economist, and I have an ignorance about money matters that is very credible, considering I am a parson. But a parson is supposed—theoretically, at least,—to be a moral expert. And for that reason I confine myself to the moral side of the subject—and also because I believe that whatever is morally right will be fiscally, economically, politically, and every other way practicable, and I believe it is the only thing that will be practicable. I think God has led to trust humanity to blunder along until it finds the way of economic justice and social righteousness.

I must begin by clearing the decks, and trying to dispel some popular misunderstandings about the sources of income, but "profits" is really a complicated term, made up of wages, interest on capital invested, and rent: and so the Single Taxer says that profits consist of wages (what you get for service rendered); interest (what comes from the use of capital); and rent (understanding by that ground rent, or the money paid for the privilege of living on a certain site.) Single Taxers say that all or nearly all of this ground rent should be paid to the government.

The Single Tax is the equal right of all men to the use of the earth. That is not the equal right of all men to the ownership of the earth, or to the equal use of the earth. Every man, if he is going to produce anything or serve or make a living, must in the last analysis get access to nature's storehouse. The Single Taxer considers that there are three great axioms relating to this use by man of nature:—What the individual produces belongs to the individual. What the community produces belongs to the community. What nature or God gives belongs by right to all nature's or God's children.

Taking this last statement first, I believe that only the hand of labor can write a valid original title of property to any natural wealth. But that does not give the laborer a title to the natural resources from which he produced the wealth. Thus a man may own the crops he raises, the building he erects, but that does not give him a title to the soil or the site. He did not create that; no man created it; God gave it, and by rights that belongs to all society. Savages have an instinctive feeling of this. When the Maoris sold New Zealand to the English, a Maori woman brought her baby, born after the purchase, for his share. And she was right. We have no right to barter away the birthright of generations to come. The babe in the slums of New York has just as much right on this earth and where God has

yet how much air and sunshine is there in the slums? Doubtless if air and sunshine could be solidified and cornered by a trust the people who asked for their share would be called Socialists, Anarchists, Nihilists and anything else that came handy—they would be attacking the sacred rights of property. (Laughter.) A man in Cleveland has just won a suit against a bridge company for swinging the bridge through his air.

But let us turn to the land. In Pennsylvania is most of the coal of the United States. Nobody has impressed his labor on it yet. To whom does it belong? I say it belongs to the people of the United States. (Applause.) Mr. Baer says it belongs to him and a few other gentlemen "to whom Almighty God in His wise providence has committed the wealth of this country." I never saw the deed of gift. Well, Mr. Baer has the key to the coal-cellar, and we can say, "Johnny, bring us up some coal." And we are willing to pay him a fair profit for the work. But he and his friends say, "We have got the key to the coal-cellar in our pocket. We will keep it there until you pay us all we can get from you." Mr. Baer is thus getting wages for service rendered, but he is also extracting by the pressure of monopoly a graft from us that is really ground rent. At the time of the coal strike the President of the United States had to go down on his knees and beg Mr. Baer to sell us coal. Monopoly of natural resources is an unbreakable power so long as it is in private hands. There is not a trust in this country which could exist ten minutes if it did not rest on a monopoly of natural resources.

There is no way to deal with this but to claim natural resources as common property by taking the ground rent for the government. Over in Pittsburgh are some abandoned soft coal mines, and in the sink-holes

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I must begin by clearing the decks, and trying to dispel some popular misunderstandings about the Single Tax. I once had the Bishop of Cleveland preach in my church there against "Anarchistic and Socialist schemes for the equal division of land." There couldn't possibly be a worse definition of the Single Tax—every word is wrong. The Single Tax combines the virtues of Anarchy and Socialism, giving liberty in law, and freedom in order. The name is most unfortunate, for the single tax is simply a fiscal or economic method for the practical application of a great social philosophy.

The Single Taxer maintains that all material wealth consists of things produced that meet human wants and needs, and that there are always two factors in the production of wealth of any kind—natural resources of some sort, and human ingenuity, skill and labor. All that nature furnishes the Single Taxer comprehends under the broad, general term "land." This does not mean soil only. No one of us can do without land. I suppose preaching would be considered the most ethereal of occupations, yet even the preacher has to have land to preach and live on: and that is true of every other trade or profession. Profits, interest, and wages are considered by econo-

The speeches and the questions and answers prepared by Miriam Allen de Ford.

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What the community produces belongs to the community. What nature or God gives belongs by right to all nature's or God's children. Taking this last statement first, I believe that only the hand of labor can write a valid original title of property to any natural wealth. But that does not give the laborer a title to the natural resources from which he produced the wealth. Thus a man may own the crops he raises, the building he erects, but that does not give him a title to the soil or the site. He did not create that; no man created it; God gave it, and by rights that belongs to all society. Savages have an instinctive feeling of this. When the Maoris sold New Zealand to the English, a Maori woman brought her baby, born after the purchase, for his share. And she was right. We have no right to barter away the birthright of generations to come. The babe in the slums of New York has just as much right on this earth and where God has put him as the babe of the Astors; and yet under our present system the babe in the slums has to pay rent to the Astors for the right to exist. We usually recognize a common right to the air and the sunshine, and

THE PRAYER

Father Almighty, we beseech Thee to loosen the scales from our eyes that we may see the wickedness of our inhumanity to each other. Thou hast given the land filled with treasure for the blessing of all Thy children. We have so misused it that millions suffer for lack, while thousands are choked by surplus. Thou hast provided plentifully for all. Help us to renounce the system by which the strong and the favored get something for nothing and the unfortunate and the lowly fail to receive the full reward of their toil. Make us to see, we pray, that the fault lies in us every one, and that the responsibility for mending it is upon us every one. Give us the grace to do it patiently and fairly, but certainly. Amen.

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There is no way to deal with this but to claim natural resources as common property by taking the ground rent for the government. Over in Pittsburgh are some abandoned soft coal mines, and in the sink-holes there ice and snow collect, which the poor miners used to use. Then the absentee landlord heard of this and sent word that they could not use the ice without paying him for it! Under our present system of giving over God's gifts into the hands of the few by private monopoly, what can the good Lord do with our problem of poverty? He has stocked this land richly, and yet the many starve while the few are glutted. Suppose the Lord said, "I will feed these children of mine, by raining down food from the skies"—why, that would only raise the selling price and rental value of the lots whereon the showers fell thickest. (Laughter.) The street car companies would even claim what fell in the streets. And if the good Lord grew too bountiful, so that the market would be likely to be depressed, they would keep up the price if they had to burn the food in bonfires. They actually did that in London, where shiploads of grain were scuttled in the sight of the starving poor, to keep up the price of wheat. God Almighty can't solve our problem until we correct such a mistake as this.

There are certain values that are plainly and evidently communal values—they are made simply by the population as a population. They appear only in settled communi- (Continued on Page 4.)

THE QUESTIONS

Q: If you believe that all natural resources belong to the people, how do you determine the amount of taxes to establish?

A: Land values are more easily estimable than any others.

Q: If Pennsylvania taxed the coal company, as you suggest, wouldn't they just add the tax to the price of coal?

A: If they were taxed full ground rentals, they would have to throw open their collieries to competition.

Q: Do you think a section of the community should suffer for the mistake of the whole community centuries ago?

A: It is a simple question of whether, if you have allowed an injustice to run a thousand years, you must not let it run another thousand years.

Q (Miss Polsky): At what price could the Public Garden be sold? (Laughter.)

A: That could be done only by the State.

Q: How would the Single Tax operate against the extortion of professional men?

A: I said it would not cure everything; but generally competition remedies extortions of any kind.

Q: What about patent monopolies?

A: That is another thing entirely, and I would make them inure to the inventor, not the gobbler.

Q: Tell us about Pastoriza's work in Texas.

A: I simply know that he was elected tax commissioner, and gradually took the taxes off improvements. I do not know if Pastoriza has the law back of him, but he has the people.

Q: What would you do with a man whose sole income is from stocks and bonds?

A: Stock and bonds represent land values.

Q (Mr. Sachmary). Do you believe your cathedral should be taxed?

A: No, my cathedral is an improvement. I believe in taxing the land upon which it is built.

Q: What progress has the Single Tax made in Houston, Texas?

A: I am sorry I can't give the details. I know it is gradually coming in there, and

a machine by which a child could do the work of 140 people? Won't he get his money back that way?

A: I don't know anything about this interview, but God bless any man that invents a machine that saves labor. In the end they always do good.

Q (Miss Rogolsky): Under the Single Tax, won't people put up higher buildings with small rooms, and erect buildings instead of having gardens, to pay the rent?

A: Taxing land values always decreases the price and rent of land.

Q: Aren't the farmers going to be harmed by the Single Tax?

A: The farmer now pays taxes on all his improvements. The burden will fall on the big land values—all the farm land in New York State is not worth a third as much as the land in New York City.

Q (Mr. Hogan): Will you tell us some evil that has been remedied by taxation? Would not the Single Tax lay a greater burden on the small land owners and take it from the rich capitalists?

A: Our present system of taxation has not wiped out any evils, but the Single Tax would. As for the large and small land owners, each would pay in proportion to his holdings.

Q: Does the Eastman Kodak Company depend on a monopoly of land values?

A: No, but on a monopoly of patents, which is also a special privilege.

Q: What would be the best way to create a Single Tax law? How about teaching the children in the beginning?

A: Yes, you are right; everything begins with the children.

Q: Under the present system, do you vote, and if so what political party?

A: I try to vote the Democratic ticket when I can find the Democratic party democratic. Just now it is. (Applause.)

Q: Suppose the smelting company in Utah paid its full taxes, wouldn't it be able to keep Bishop Spaulding off just as it does now?

A: I think it would be impossible for it to own its holdings if it paid full value. The government would then be practically the owner, and could dictate to the company.

Q (Mr. Fraser): I know a man who greatly improved his land by building a fine house, but was taxed heavily for it. Isn't that a good illustration of the Single Tax?

A: No, it is a good illustration of the double and treble tax of today.

AN OUTSIDE VIEW OF OUR FIRST TOWN MEETING.

If any of the 125 "citizens" who attended the first town meeting of Ford Hall Folks at Kingsley Hall last night, failed to rise to at least one point of order or otherwise distinguish himself in a parliamentary manner during the evening, it certainly did not appear on the surface. For the official record showed that there were enough of the afore said "points" to go around twice, and, moreover, questions, motions, etc., were almost numerous.

All of which was intensely gratifying to those responsible for this latest addition to the regular Ford Hall course, and George W. Coleman, the "father of the Ford Hall meetings," congratulated the newly enfranchised "citizens" on the success of the opening session.

Last night's session was taken up almost entirely with straightening out little difficulties which naturally arose in the minds of those new to this form of government. Though the questioning and debating at times threatened to assume the proportions of a real "down-east" town meeting, Chairman William Horton Foster ably met every situation. There were some decidedly perplexing complications, too, for which the chairman might be pardoned for scratching his head, but when adjournment came every body appeared to be satisfied.

What the meeting really did was this: It chose committees to bring in nominations for permanent moderator, sergeant-at-arms and clerk. It resulted in the appointment of committees on rules and on by-laws. It satisfied George Coleman and Mr. Foster that the people were really interested in such a movement for civic betterment.

During the heat of battle, excitement was not lacking. At one time Mr. Coleman even forgot himself and promptly subsided when he was ruled out of order. The Rev. Grover Mills was the principal offender, embarrassing the chair, and he had his following throughout. H. S. Victorson tested against red tape, but an unna-

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Q: What progress has the Single Tax made in Houston, Texas?

A: I am sorry I can't give the details. I know it is gradually coming in there, and also in Pueblo, Colorado and in California and Washington from the Canadian Northwest.

Q: Is it possible to apply the Single Tax to one municipality by itself?

A: Yes, and it is coming in that way.

Q: Do you believe in government ownership of land?

A: I tried to make that plain when I spoke of Spencer's "state landlordism."

Q (Mr. Victorson): Would not the Single Tax confuse instead of solving social problems?

A: No, because land is a fixed quantity, and a tax on that stays there, whereas other commodities are unstable, and social values do not attach to them.

Q: What do you think of Henry Ford's profit-sharing scheme?

A: I know Mr. Ford very well personally, and I can say that there is no ulterior motive in his mind. He feels that labor should share in the profits, and that is as far as he sees.

Q: Don't we need regulation of monetary values as much as we do of land values?

A: Don't ask me any questions about money; I don't know anything about it.

Q: What can you say about the fact that Ford recently held a conference with Edison where both of them spoke of inventing

owners, each would pay in proportion to his holdings.

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A: I think it would be impossible for it to own its holdings if it paid full value. The government would then be practically the owner, and could dictate to the company.

Q: Cannot private individuals by controlling industry make men slaves to that extent?

A: There will be lots of things to be done after we get the Single Tax. But if you take away land monopoly you take away the great lever.

Q: Does not Socialism solve the problem of the Single Tax? (Laughter and applause.)

A: Give me another evening to lecture on that. I believe the Single Tax allows more for the freedom and liberty of individual expression than Socialism does.

Q: What has the Single Tax to say with regard to the private ownership of capital?

A: I must answer again that if you broke up the private ownership of natural resources competition would soon break up the private ownership of the tools of industry.

Q (Mrs. Hoffmann): Do you believe the Single Tax will destroy or change the competitive system?

A: I think it will make for freedom of competition, and I should like to see that.

Q (Mr. Cosgrove): On what basis is the Single Tax going to classify ground values, as in the case of the disused coal-shafts?

A: On the same principle as the coal companies do today. Values always go up and down.

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The meetings are being held jointly by the Ford Hall Folks, the Boston School of Social Science and the City History Club. Mr. Coleman spoke for Ford Hall, stating that the meetings meant to develop a new democracy. "The democracy of today, I mean, not the democracy of our forefathers," he added. Frederick J. Allen spoke for the City History Club and helped Mr. Foster out during the evening. Miss Louise Adams Grout appeared for the School of Social Science and acted as temporary clerk.

Last night's meeting presages a very realistic town "election" when voting is taken up next Thursday night.—Herald.

We must not only conserve in every way the health and vigor of labor, but also provide that it may work out its own happiness with wages that will enable it to live so as to maintain its self-respect and with sufficient leisure to enjoy and profit by mental and moral recreation.
WILLIAM C. REDFIELD.

Narrowness and... Quite a... who bears the epithet of bigot is h... all unwittingly the real bigot.
* * *
Our hall was filled full last Sunday ni... that we didn't turn any one aw... because people are beginning to t... the Single Tax for granted?
* * *
For the last two Sunday evenings f... half of our audiences came in long after... were opened. At last, it would... people are beginning to underst... that it is not necessary to stand in the l... that is the cold before the doors... Only on the night when... speaker is one of exceptional popularity... this not true, and there are not more t... two or three such nights during the sea...
* * *
Thanks to Mr. Gutterson and his chor... the first singing of the new hymn went v... well indeed.
* * *

The officers of the Ford Hall Town M... ing were elected by a preferential ba... It was an entirely new experience to n... of the citizens and constituted in itself... admirable lesson in civic life. There w... a hundred or more present at the sec... session, and the lively interest contin... without check. Mr. W. H. Foster is... moderator, Miss Miriam Allen de Ford... made clerk, and Mr. Jacob London beco... sergeant-at-arms. With such very effie... leaders it would seem as though the T... Meeting could hardly fail to make a suc... of its work. There will be a constant te... tion to those who are more or less... part in parliamentary practice to c... emphasize this feature of the work to... detriment of more vital matters. It w... be like a housekeeper spending too r... time fixing up her pots and pans and ke... and never putting anything in them.
* * *

Just as soon as we have demonst... our ability as a people to make a su... of this magazine and of the Town Me... we are ready to propose other enter... for the good of the folks. At present, ever, we are sliding backward fast i... mediated. The last issue, for exa...

AS IT LOOKS TO ME

By GEORGE W. COLEMAN, Director of the Ford Hall Meetings

Q (Mr. Fraser): I know a man who greatly improved his land by building a house, but was taxed heavily for it. Is that a good illustration of the Single Tax?
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At the Open Forum in Manchester, N. H., last Sunday night, with Miner Chipman speaking on "Efficiency," they had to turn the people away, although the theatre has a larger seating capacity than Ford Hall. We will be proud of such a thriving three months' old baby. Of all the forums which have been started under our guidance and inspiration this one in Manchester is more nearly like Ford Hall in all its ways, and has likewise now the largest success in the shortest time.

Bishop Williams last Sunday night seemed just like one of us. How many of us could go right into a church gathering and say kind and immediately take our place as one of them? It isn't every churchman who is big enough and broad enough to talk and work right along side of men who are earnest and broad enough to welcome the cooperation of church people who, like us, earnestly and honestly seeking the truth. Narrowness and bigotry are no reproaches of persons or classes. Quite often it is who huris the epithet of bigot is himself all unwittingly the real bigot.

Our hall was filled full last Sunday night, and we didn't turn any one away. Was it because people are beginning to take the Single Tax for granted?

For the last two Sunday evenings fully half of our audiences came in long after the doors were opened. At last, it would appear, people are beginning to understand that it is not necessary to stand in the cold before the doors are opened. Only on the night when the speaker is one of exceptional popularity is there a large crowd, and there are not more than three such nights during the season.

Thanks to Mr. Gutterson and his chorus; the first stanza of the new hymn went very well indeed.

The officers of the Ford Hall Town Meeting were elected by a preferential ballot.

containing Miss Slattery's brilliant address, was such a poor seller that our deficit ran up to nearly six dollars. And the week before it was over three dollars. What is the matter?

My heart goes out to those Jewish young men in the West End who have never lost an opportunity to show their kindness to me. I am as fond of them as of any friends that I have.

The most interesting plank to me in Mayor-elect Curley's political platform is his proposition to hold monthly conferences on city planning with representatives present from the clergy, press, labor, capital and the City Council. Nothing could be more far-reaching for good to the people of Boston than this if it is intelligently planned and vigorously executed. And Mr. Curley has backed up this enterprising suggestion with the very generous statement that he will himself provide the money for this new development if it cannot be had through the usual channels. I am sure that every one of us at Ford Hall will rejoice to see such a plan carried out and will support it in every way at our command. It would put into action in a very conspicuous way the very principle of mutual co-operation for which we stand, and the object aimed at is one that commends itself to every intelligent student of municipal affairs.

A group of Tufts College students were among our guests last Sunday night. Of course they thought Bishop Williams was fine, but they thought our people were an equally fine part of the equation. "I would like to get into this activity of the larger democracy," said one. "Everyone is so decidedly in earnest," said another. "Such a cosmopolitan crowd," said a third. "You feel the brotherhood in the air," was the comment of a fourth, and so on. They all admired the way Mr. Coleman handled the questions. There will be a Ford Hall in the small out at Tufts College after this, in reality, if not by formal announcement.

OTHER MEETINGS.

Wells Memorial Institute, 987 Washington Street, Tuesday, Jan. 27, at 8 P. M., Efficiency and Its Effects on the Workingman, by Miner Chipman.

School of Social Science, at Lorimer Hall, Monday, January 26, at 7.30 P. M., The Negro and the Labor Problem, by W. E. Burghardt DuBois. 10c.

Sunday Commons, at Huntington Chambers Hall, Sunday, February 1, at 3.30 P. M. Dr. Charles Fleischer, leader.

Public Library, Thursday, Jan. 29, at 8 P. M. Fertile Argentine and Its Vast Patagonian Pampas, by Charles Wellington Furlong. Sunday, Feb. 1, at 3.30 P. M., Avignon and Southern France, by Mabel Frances Knight.

Lowell Institute, at Huntington Hall, Monday, Jan. 26, at 5 P. M. America and France in Contact in the Past, by Fernand Baldensperger. Monday, Jan. 26, and Thursday, Jan. 29, at 8 P. M., The Man Behind the Vote, by Graham Wallas. Tuesday, Jan. 27, and Friday, Jan. 30, at 8 P. M., Sound Analysis, by Dayton C. Miller. Thursday, Jan. 29, at 5 P. M., Mohammedanism, by C. Snouck Hurgronje.

MR. COOLIDGE VISITS US.

Mr. Louis A. Coolidge, treasurer of the United Shoe Machinery Company, was our guest a Sunday or so ago.

Mr. Coolidge was very much impressed with the absolute democracy, the friendliness, interest and attention of the audience.

The question period was most interesting to him. The intelligence displayed by the questioners, their seriousness, earnestness, and courage were evident in each question asked.

Mr. Coolidge was most enthusiastic over the manner in which our chairman interpreted each question as it was asked. This feature, to him, was the most forceful of the question period. He says, "Mr. Coleman understood exactly what each questioner had in mind; sometimes better than the questioner himself; and each was confident of a sympathetic interpretation of the question asked."

Situation Wanted, by a first-class job printer, familiar with make up and general composition on ads and mercantile printing. A. J. W., 71 Chadwick street, Roxbury, Mass.

We Will Write It For You

...ordinator, sergeant-at-
...ulted in the appoint-
...rules and on by-law
...man and Mr. Foster
...really interested in
...civic betterment.
...attle, excitement was
...ne Mr. Coleman even
...mptly subsided when
...order. The Rev. G.
...principal offender in
...and he had his fol-
...t. S. Victorson pro-
...e, but an unnamed
...caused Mr. Victorson
...Roberts, urged to
...when nominated for
...oters" to defeat him.
...town" with a gavel.
...ents of the night
...ig held jointly by the
...Boston School of So-
...y History Club. Mr.
...d Hall, stating that
...velop a new democ-
...of today, I mean, not
...refathers," he added.
...ke for the City His-
...r. Foster out during
...ise Adams Grout ap-
...f Social Science and
...k.
...presages a very real
...when voting is taken
...—Herald.

...conserve in every
...vigor of labor, but
...may work out its
...wages that will
...as to maintain its
...sufficient leisure
...by mental and
...C. REDFIELD.

...the Single Tax for granted?
...For the last two Sunday evenings fully
...half of our audiences came in long after the
...doors were opened. At last, it would ap-
...pear, people are beginning to understand
...that it is not necessary to stand in the line
...out in the cold before the doors are
...opened. Only on the night when the
...speaker is one of exceptional popularity is
...this not true, and there are not more than
...two or three such nights during the season.

...Thanks to Mr. Gutterson and his chorus;
...the first singing of the new hymn went very
...well indeed.

...The officers of the Ford Hall Town Meet-
...ing were elected by a preferential ballot.
...It was an entirely new experience to most
...of the citizens and constituted in itself an
...admirable lesson in civic life. There were
...a hundred or more present at the second
...session, and the lively interest continued
...without check. Mr. W. H. Foster is the
...moderator, Miss Miriam Allen de Ford was
...made clerk, and Mr. Jacob London becomes
...sergeant-at-arms. With such very efficient
...leaders it would seem as though the Town
...Meeting could hardly fail to make a success
...of its work. There will be a constant tempta-
...tion to those who are more or less ex-
...pert in parliamentary practice to over-
...emphasize this feature of the work to the
...detriment of more vital matters. It would
...be like a housekeeper spending too much
...time fixing up her pots and pans and kettles
...and never putting anything in them.

...Just as soon as we have demonstrated
...our ability as a people to make a success
...of this magazine and of the Town Meeting
...we are ready to propose other enterprises
...for the good of the folks. At present, how-
...ever, we are sliding backward fast in the
...magazine. The last issue, for example,

...affairs.
...A group of Tufts College students were
...among our guests last Sunday night. Of
...course they thought Bishop Williams was
...fine, but they thought our people were an
...equally fine part of the equation. "I would
...like to get into this activity of the larger
...democracy," said one. "Everyone is so de-
...cidedly in earnest," said another. "Such a
...cosmopolitan crowd," said a third. "You
...feel the brotherhood in the air," was the
...comment of a fourth, and so on. They all
...admired the way Mr. Coleman handled the
...questions. There will be a Ford Hall in
...the small out at Tufts College after this,
...in reality, if not by formal announcement.

Ford Hall Folks
Edited by Thomas Dreier.

PUBLISHED weekly by the Ford Hall Associates, whose work is to create, assemble, and distribute ideas that will help men and institutions grow more helpful in serving society, and which will promote "peace on earth, good will toward men." It is the official publication of the Ford Hall Meetings, which are held, under the direction of George W. Coleman, every Sunday evening during the months of October to May, in Ford Hall, Ashburton Place, Boston, Massachusetts.

All business communications should be sent to Miss Mary C. Crawford, Treasurer Ford Building, Boston, and all communications intended for the editor to The Thomas Dreier Service, University Press, Cambridge, Mass. Subscription Price: \$1.50 for 26 numbers.

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53 State Street Boston, Mass.

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THE STORY OF JOSEPH BERAK.

By Mary C. Crawford.

The astounding thing about the young Jew as I see him is the way he fixes his mind upon the thing he desires to do or be, and then, through every obstacle, pushes ahead and attains his goal. Take Joseph Berak. As a boy he never lacked for anything because his father was a prosperous clothing manufacturer in New York, with a well-equipped shop of his own, the profits of which gave every promise of enabling little Joseph to stay on at school and college as long as he desired, and mayhap sustain the tradition of his mother's family by becoming a rabbi. Then, by one of those quick turns of fortune very common in the clothing trade (read "Comrate Yetta," if you would understand that in the case of the "bosses" as well as the workers this business is full of hazards), Berak senior lost everything, and the little Joseph was confronted at thirteen with the necessity of going out into the world to help support the family.

At school he had always led his class, and the teacher, full of sorrow that he could not go on, helped him to get a place at \$4.50 a week with Saks & Co., who were relatives of hers. Here, however, the chances of advancement seemed too slight to satisfy the already ambitious Joseph, and he transferred himself, at 15, to Wanamaker's, where, being a large lad for his age, he was put in the packing and shipping department. There, during one Christmas season, he worked a number of days, from eight in the morning until two of the following morning packing gifts which were to bring to some people a "very merry Christmas." This experience fitted him to be quite responsive when he heard his first Socialist speaker, Algernon Lee, and it was then that he set his eager mind to the absorption of Socialist literature.

Periods of service at several of the Boston department stores followed, but during the panic of 1907 even the young, sturdy and quick-witted Berak could find no work to do. This was his opportunity to fit himself to be a traveling salesman. He thereupon learned all that there was to know about men's shirts, got a chance to show that he could sell them in large quantities—and found himself at eighteen traveling from Boston to Chicago, and making a very good income.

WHY I WORK FOR THE SINGLE TAX.*

(Continued from Page 1.)

ties. Theatres, churches, parks, stores, street railway lines, are the things that make the city more attractive than the country. These social advantages register themselves invariably and with mathematical exactness in land values—in the selling price or rental value of land. The pioneer can have land for squatting upon it, but when others come the land around them begins to acquire value. No matter what you do to make your city a better place to live in, you raise land values and ground rentals. Every baby born in New York City adds \$85 to the rent values of the city. It seems as if when new people and institutions come into being Providence had created a fund to support them, but almost all this fund goes instead to the idle and parasitic landlord. A man gets a barren strip of land on Manhattan Island, does nothing but hold it, and meanwhile his income rises by everything other people do to increase and improve the city. We call these men tax-payers—they are tax collectors, and they get a big bonus besides for letting people live on their land.

A man has a right to himself and to what he can do with his God-given powers. The private ownership of the earth denies that right, because it removes the natural resources to which alone a man can apply his powers and abilities. Suppose a number of Robinson Crusoes to be wrecked on the desert island with a number of Man Fridays. They divide their labors into superintendence and manual work, and so long as the land is held in common all goes well, for in case of either a strike or a lock-out the other parties could manage to live. But then come some Spanish grandees with a paper giving them a title to the land. They establish themselves in idleness, and make the Crusoes and the Fridays alike slave for them, taking the whole of production except just enough to keep production going. And if there is any complaint they say, "If you don't like my terms, get off my land"—which is all the land there is. That is modern society. In California, in the days following '49, wages were high, interest was high, and rent was low, for every man could stake off a claim and mine where he wished. Today where all the land is monopolized wages are at a starvation level, interest is low, and rents soar. And whenever the bats of these

ism" proposed by Herbert Spencer in an interval, by which the state holds the land to the land and acts as landlord—so cumbersome it would break down its own weight. Or it can be done by a system of remitting all taxes except the land values, as proposed by Henry George. At present our tax system produces poverty and perjury as its chief fruits. Let us abolish all other taxes, and have only a tax on rents. Suppose a rich family divides its various industries among its members, each runs them individually, but pays the ground rent into the family treasury. That is the way the Single Tax would work. The land is God's estate, and it ought to be an undivided estate among the children of men. Let each man do what work suits him, but let him pay into the common treasury ground rents.

This will enormously increase income for taxing industry, like taxing any other industry, discourages it and causes it to tend to disappear. Today the man who holds his land idle we reward with low taxes; the man who uses and improves his land is "socially" punished. The Single Tax will change all this, by making both lands alike. It says to one, "Get busy or lose your land;" to the other, "We will not punish you for being a member of society." Then, too, it will open up many new opportunities to idle laborers, thus raising wages to a high level. Labor laws and unions never can do this, the philosophy of the Single Tax. It is a panacea, but the great sub-foundation of economic justice, whereby alone the God can stand sure and safe.

Friends Who Are Coming

Jan. 18—Bishop Charles Williams of Michigan, "Why I Work for the Single Tax."

Jan. 25—Dr. Albion Woodbury Small, Chicago University, "The Strength and Weakness of Socialism."

Feb. 1—Alexander Irvine of New York.

Feb. 8—Prof. Edward A. Steiner, "The Inter-National Mind and the International Heart."

Feb. 15—Symposium, "Breast Cancer," Dr. De Will G. Wilson, "The Venereal Disease," Dr. J. H. Pugh, "Problems of Social Hygiene."

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Periods of service at several of the Boston department stores followed, but during the panic of 1907 even the young, sturdy and quick-witted Berak could find no work to do. This was his opportunity to fit himself to be a traveling salesman. He thereupon learned all that there was to know about men's shirts, got a chance to show that he could sell them in large quantities—and found himself at eighteen traveling from Boston to Chicago, and making a very good income. For some time he stuck to this because the long, journeys and the lonely evenings in strange towns gave him the leisure he wanted for the study of Socialism. But presently he decided that there is something disintegrating mentally, as well as morally and physically, about life "on the road," and settled down in Boston with his sister. Berak started to sell Life Insurance by day and to study at the Y. M. C. A. in the evenings. Socialism he had by this time made a part of himself, and he had for some time been a party member. He now wanted to become a lawyer, "because," he says, "I saw that when Socialism gets strong, men who know the law will be especially needed."

Ford Hall first came to Berak's attention on the night, some three years ago, when John Spargo was speaking here on Karl Marx. Our eager young Socialist has scarcely missed a meeting since. He always takes notes at the lectures and studies afterwards the contents of his note-book. The value of Ford Hall to him lies, he says, in the fact that it shows him where the other fellow stands. That so many excellent fellows stand in such widely separated spots has undoubtedly had a very broadening and hence highly valued influence upon Berak. For to be as thoroughly educated as possible is still his shining goal.

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Our present system makes every one of these three axioms impossible of application. Somehow or other we must make land common property. This can be done by holding all land in common, as the Indians do, which is impossible in an advanced civilization; by equal division of the land (and if you do that I will have my ten acres on Wall Street, and you can have yours in Labrador: which shows the absurdity of trying such a scheme); by a method of "state landlord-

the philosophy of the Single Tax. It is a panacea, but the great sub-foundation economic justice, whereby alone the God can stand sure and safe.

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Feb. 22—Charles Brandon Booth, "The Case for the Prisoner."

March 1—Leslie Willis Sprague of Chicago.

March 8—Symposium, on "Journalism," A. J. Philpott of the *Boston Globe* and others to be announced.

March 15—Rev. Harry Ward, "The Challenge of Socialism to Christianity."

March 22—Rev. Frank O. Hall of New York, "The Moral Law."

March 29—John Cowper Powys of England, "The Economic Aspects of Woman Suffrage."

April 5—Mary Church Terrell, "Uncle Sam and the Sons of Ham."

April 12—Dr. Thomas C. Hall of New York.

April 19—Prof. Walter Rauschenbusch.

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