

themselves Single Taxers have any conception of the fundamental nature of the principle in which they believe. For the Single Tax is *more than a single idea*—it is a great social philosophy, and questions of grave moment receive their solution in the application of that philosophy. But, as a matter of fact, every election from the days of Republicans and Federalists down to the present has been decided on a single issue. For years it was the slavery question, then tariff, once the free coinage of silver, but never more than one issue. It is true that the attitude of the parties on other questions was assumed to favor one policy or the other. And it would be the same with a Single Tax party, though this aspect of the question would not assume any importance at all within State lines.

Another good friend of the REVIEW, who contributes five dollars toward its maintainance, takes the view that in the present state of affairs a Single Tax party might be looked upon as "unpatriotic." But in view of the fact that our government and country need all the light they can obtain on fiscal and economic principles, and that any Single Tax party worthy of the name would stand solidly behind the nation battling to establish a world made safe for democratic experiments, we can afford to disregard our friend's objection, sincerely and not captiously presented, and unaccompanied by a withdrawal of his subscription.

In conclusion, there is no objection to a Single Tax party that does not immediately dissolve when submitted to the "acid test."

International Free Trade

A REFERENDUM TO SINGLE TAXERS

IN these days of testing, would it not be well for free traders to define their position with unmistakable clearness? Particularly is clear definition of purpose needed with regard to two points:

1. Is our national industry to be exposed to foreign competition in our own markets, before it has been freed from the fiscal handicaps imposed upon it, in the form of direct and indirect taxation, by our own governments?
2. In arranging for international free trade, are we to ignore national preferences and moral and fiscal issues, as presented in foreign markets?

To Single Taxers, who understand the cruel discrimination exerted by our whole taxation system against legitimate industry and trade in our own country, it will scarcely be necessary to elaborate upon point No. 1. Free trade cannot evade the test of sincerity universally applied to charity: If genuine, it will begin at home.

The issue raised for free traders in our point No. 2, is essentially a moral issue, a question of national character, of national integrity and identity.

Free trade, if it is to mean promiscuous, indiscriminate trading, is an immoral, obnoxious thing. In our personal buying and selling, we have our preferences, in which,

naturally and rightly, personal and moral values enter. Nations, too, have a right to moral discrimination in trade relations. They are in an unhealthy moral condition, if they do not have and exercise these preferences. No trade is finally worth having at the sacrifice of this moral discrimination. Though a nation thereby gain a whole world of trade, it would be a moral bankrupt. To lose its soul can no more profit a nation than it can an individual.

The recent message of the German Kaiser to the Chambers of Commerce of Germany, declaring for "a strong peace, which will open new roads to German commerce and give us complete freedom for the development of our industries," is a challenge to the moral sense and moral fibre of the civilized world. After an orgie of treacherous diplomacy and barbarous methods of warfare, which have befouled the record and lowered the moral status of Germany, the Kaiser hopes by force or guile to gain admittance again to the community of nations. For this, he will rely upon those who in the past have served him so pliantly. A meretricious free trade sentiment will be promoted, difficult, perhaps, for many to distinguish from legitimate free trade principles. The advocates of the former will complacently waive the necessity of repentance and atonement on the part of morally unregenerate Germany, and will pander to the Kaiser's wish for an early renewal of trade relations. The real free traders, however, aware of the gravity of Germany's sin against civilization, and conscious of the superior obligations of the moral law and also of moral decorum, will strenuously repudiate the prostitution of these in exchange for trade advantages.

That those nations which have risked so much in the cause of true democracy should, after putting their own house into economic order, then seek to establish closer relations of commercial exchange with one another, is, it seems to us, from every point of view natural and right; and it will be the policy favored by real free traders, by whom a repugnant promiscuity of commercial relationship will never be mistaken for a clearly sanctioned moral order.

Single Taxers have long been identified with this progressive advance toward international free trade through the upbuilding of economic order upon its fundamental bases of free production and free exchange within the national sphere at first and its subsequent extension to international relations, subject always to the moral law and with due respect to political and ethical affinities. This well-known stand of Single Taxers makes it necessary now to reassert and redefine their position, in the face of the insolent aspirations of our country's foe and the sinister co-operation he is sure to find in the aliens, renegades and loose thinkers here, capable, as they have shown themselves, of perverse presentations of American peace standards and consequently, with equal ease, of American economic ideals.

We invite Single Taxers to declare themselves clearly and briefly upon the issue of international free trade after the war. As far as our space will permit, we shall make the replies public.