

individual right to land and its production; also that private ownership of land is a root of our civilization and necessary to our modern existence. We know full well that if a man had no security or assurance of a permanent location on earth and a guarantee to all the products of his labor, there would be no incentive to use or cultivate the soil because he would not be sure of the results. My worthy opponent has tried to convince these honorable judges that if the Single Tax means the confiscation of private property in land that such insecurity would result. Do not confuse the wrong of private ownership with the right of private possession! The Single Tax does not mean the confiscation of land, because a man under that system would have secure, and if he desired it, *by using it*, permanent possession of the land with the right to buy, sell, give or bequeath as he sees fit. It *would* mean the abolition of exclusive private ownership of land, a thing as fundamentally wrong as private ownership of any natural resource, water, air, or sunlight, as wrong and as indefensible as ownership of slaves; but it would not do away with private possession of land for it would secure and guarantee to a man **all** the fruits of his labor on that land, to which and only to which he is entitled, which the present system does not do, and it would give to the community, as we have stated, what belongs to the community—the rental value and increase in site value of the land. A man is justly entitled to all the fruits of his labor and the present system deprives him by taxation of a share of his production, and a man is not entitled to exclusive ownership of land to hold it in disuse—a thing that the present system permits.

---

## A WORD ON SOCIALISM.

---

ADDRESSED TO SOCIALISTS AND TO THOSE WHO MAY BECOME SO.

---

By GUSTAV BÜSCHER, of Zurich, Switzerland.

---

(Translated expressly for *The Single Tax Review* by L. H. Berens.)

---

### Chapter VI.

#### SOCIALIST POLITICS —(Continued.)

If we turn to other countries we find much the same condition of things as in those we have already briefly reviewed.

In great Britain some six years ago a few dozen labor representatives dusted with socialism were returned to Parliament. The term "dusted" is advisedly used, since for the most part they were returned as Liberals or owed their seats to the liberal votes, and the socialism of the majority of these members is very easily brushed off. However, on their election the socialist trumpet resounded throughout the world. In all socialist and semi-socialist

papers were long leading articles on the question whether British Trade Unions would or would not now accept the socialist shibboleth of the nationalization of all the means of production and exchange. For the present, of course, little or nothing was to be expected; for, as now everybody knows, Socialists always defer their heroic deeds to the future; but of the future the oracles with their usual lavishness prophesied the greatest things. The former socialist leader, John Burns, became a Minister of the Crown, and distinguished himself by a strict impartiality towards his previous comrades, and a marked lack of enthusiasm for any really progressive measures. Over six years the Socialists have sat in Parliament without committing the unpardonable sin of bringing to light a single new and useful thought—vague talk about a right to work seems fully to satisfy their legislative ambitions. Recently a short-sighted comrade made a scene in the House of Commons on the question of the unemployed, and was thrown out with the scarcely veiled approval of his socialist comrades.

Surely it is no mere coincidence that we find among the Socialists of all countries the same idle, senseless doings, the same disproportion between outward appearance and inner reality. It almost seems as if some evil spirit had blinded these people, making them see things of no value as big and important, and really important things as little and futile. And it is further no mere coincidence that socialism pleases least the most free and most verile nations of Europe. Self-respect is incompatible with the begging tendencies of socialism. The Swiss people for the most part will have nothing to do with socialism. Even though many Swiss workmen may vote for the socialist candidate, socialist methods of thought are seldom to be found among them. If socialism were openly to call upon the Swiss to vote on the question of the nationalization of the methods of production, or any other of its avowed ideals, its supporters would desert them in shoals.

The learned men of socialism, of course, explain this somewhat differently. They declare that the aversion of the Swiss to socialism is due to the fact that the capitalistic system of production is still insufficiently developed in Switzerland; and in secret they hold the Swiss to be too stupid for socialism. The Swiss, they say, have no proletarian "class consciousness"; they are still petty and reactionary in their political sentiment.

Still, the dim confused feeling that they are wronged and disinherited by the existing order of things accounts for the fact that socialism has gained an entrance even among the Swiss. From Germany Switzerland has been flooded with political refugees and industrial workers who with real zeal have been its apostles. In spite of this, however, the success of socialism in Switzerland has been markedly less than in other German speaking countries.

The aspiration for personal freedom and independence, the political discipline and intelligence of the Swiss, have ever hindered its progress. Too generous promises only make the Swiss people suspicious. Things forced upon them they are apt to resist. According to the progress hitherto made,

socialism seems little likely to conquer Switzerland within the next four or five hundred years.

In the meanwhile we shall continue to work practically for the welfare of the Swiss people, the Socialists assure us. Let us place the practical work they have hitherto accomplished under a microscope—it is of a kind that unless largely magnified can hardly be looked at at all.

In Switzerland Socialists have succeeded in establishing a Secretary for labor, who is assumed to promote the well being of the working classes. To this end he has been given an office in just that part of Zurich which is least frequented by the workers. Six other Socialists have been attached to this office, who are well paid by the State, and who work at the solution of the social problem by preparing for publication the most important documents which never see the light. In Zurich four Town Councillors have been elected who have thus secured a good living wage, but only for themselves. Furthermore, the town of Zurich is building houses and letting them almost as cheaply as private owners, which does not bring any very great advantage to the working classes. As, despite this forward movement, the poor still lack bread, the town is to organize a municipal milk-supply for babies. Babies nourished on anti-capitalist milk will surely more easily swallow any and all socialist theories. As, according to the testimony of the socialist papers, the needs of the people are growing daily, the party is strenuously working for proportional representation.

In Basle the Socialists are advocating the imposition of a tax on any further increase of the "unearned increment" to the extent of 30 to 40 per cent., but think secretly that 5 per cent. would be a result with which they would be well satisfied. In Genoa a University Professor has written a book full of praise of Social Democracy, and is consequently acclaimed as one of the leading and most enlightened spirits of humanity. From Shaffhausen, St. Gallen, Biel and other places where Socialists have been elected Town Councillors, we hear that the socialist cause continues its victorious careers, but that the working classes are very badly off. In Berne the bourgeois law-makers passed a strict law for the protection of working women, which the socialist Town Councillors of Biel have at once set at naught. Thereupon a occurred a little domestic quarrel among the local Socialists, which was ended only with great difficulty. Scarcely has the war hatchet been buried in Berne when a socialist member of the Government in Zurich brands one of the most talented and self-sacrificing associates of the party as "a cowardly liar." The comrades on the opposition side are indignant with the vulgar State Councillor, whom they denounce as a traitor; the comrades who support the State Councillor wax indignant over the "perfidious attack" made upon him—until at last both sides agree to suppress their mutual indignation, and save it all for their bourgeois opponents.

Some Swiss persons decide energetically to take part in the Social Struggle, to make speeches and to write books on things on which innumerable speeches

have already been made and innumerable books have already been written. To demonstrate to the rich that some people are still poor, and that consequently socialism is not yet quite unnecessary, a Swiss Home Work Exhibition is arranged. Bourgeois journalists feel themselves compelled to write most sympathetic articles, socialist journalists the most scoffing and poisonous articles—and so those responsible for the Exhibition received from both sides their “deserved recognition.” But the working men and women, whose needs were used to advertise the exhibition, remain just where they were.

And this is what the Socialists are pleased to call their class-conscious and end-conscious social politics. Words, words, nothing but words and empty nothings, by indulging in which one need take no risk—such is the practical politics followed by the much vaunted Socialist Party in Switzerland, as elsewhere. It is simply untrue to contend that such politics have been or can be of any real use to the people. The people are right not to trouble themselves much about it. But the Socialists say they are the only ones who really want to serve the people; the other parties would serve only the classes.

A policy such as the Socialists follow is not a policy of men who are dead in earnest. They would help the poor! Yes; but only in some dim remote future, after the capitalistic system has passed away, when it may no longer be difficult or dangerous. They would secure us a thousand fine things long after we are dead and gone.

In Switzerland it would have been comparatively an easy matter for the Socialists to help the poor, if only it were possible by their methods. For in Switzerland all those hindrances have already been removed which are supposed to obstruct their progress in other countries. Even against the will of the Parliament and the Government the Swiss people have a constitutional power to adopt any legislative measure demanded by 30,000 citizens. Moreover, in almost every Canton the people can remit and can make any law without troubling themselves about the Government. Therefore the Socialists need not even have concerned themselves in conquering the whole country; they need only have selected the District which seemed to them the most promising. But what have they accomplished? As good as nothing. They have not even dared anywhere to ask the judgment of the people on their platform, which is supposed to offer the one road to social salvation.

An end followed in dead earnest is seldom missed. History teaches us that every party has attained that which it most earnestly desired. The Liberal Party of the Canton of Zurich, though temporarily overthrown by a Conservative revolution, secured the people freedom of religious belief and freedom of industry. The Democrats of the Canton of Zurich have overthrown an apparently all-powerful government, and converted a Canton hitherto ruled despotically into the most democratic republic in the world. And the Socialists? Well, though everywhere in a minority, they have managed to place nearly all their leaders in well-paid offices in both States and Municipalities! The legislative records of the Canton of Zurich may be sought in vain

to find a single important measure bearing the impress of the spirit of Socialism.

Instead of walking uprightly and openly the straight path leading to the realization of their avowed ideals, the Swiss Social Democracy follows a shifty and evasive policy, which only fills the majority of the Swiss people who are attentive to politics with anger and indignation. In their attitude toward public affairs they unite everything most contradictory and offensive. They have no guidance to give the workers, and vainly attempt to make good its absence by flattery and deceptive promises. They cry aloud about the wickedness of the bourgeois, but welcome to their camp those discarded by every self-respecting citizen. They sneer and scoff at the two great Parties for their competition to occupy the Government benches; but for themselves they cannot get enough of the well-paid offices of the Class State of today. They pillory "the capitalistic idler;" but they do not remind their own leaders that they are treating as sinecures offices avowedly created for the benefit of the working classes. They indulge in the most threatening words about the growing anger and indignation of the proletariat, but desert any and every movement, like anti-militarism, which requires courage and strength of character. They pompously brag about the freedom of criticism in their own camp, but when an unpleasant truth has to be told their supporters, they indulge in a dance on eggs which would do credit to the most accomplished performer.

By means of the General Strike they are preparing for the Great Revolt; but in the meantime they remain the best of friends with those in power, so as not to lose their well-paid posts or to be refused some trifling favor. No wonder that Social Democracy arouses no respect; that the passionate hysterics of their press is answered only with contemptuous silence by the press of the rich.

"Where would the workers begin if we did not hold before them the ideal of the Society of the Future?" emphatically shouted the leader of the Swiss Social Democracy. Socialism alone, we are further told, makes it possible for the workers to preserve a belief in the future. Always ideals, always future, always hope and faith! This has ever been the inheritance of the disinherited and dispossessed. What scoffs and sneers have not Socialists poured out upon those who so generously promise the poor their inheritance in Heaven, but who so carefully keep to themselves their inheritance of the earth and all that it contains. But pray tell us, you Socialists who occupy such well-paid offices in the Bourgeois Class State of today, is not your party doing exactly the same thing? Are you not attempting to put off the claim of the industrial classes to immediate relief by promising them all sorts of fine and alluring things in the Socialist heaven of the remote future? Your practical policy has long since converted your party into a Society of Place Hunters, to which every scoundrel is welcomed provided only he possesses some political influence. If there be a party ready and willing to play the part of Tammany in Switzerland, no gift of prophesy is needed to say which party that will be.



If the issue involved were not so serious, it would be humorous to find a party avowing such fine sentiments falling so low. It is almost inconceivable how a party containing so many good and well-intentioned men should continue to follow such a petty, paltry, degrading and disgraceful policy. It would be impossible were not the spiritual kernel of Socialist theories and teachings utterly lacking.

A confused theory will confuse even the most highly principled minds. Even the strongest character cannot withstand the evil influence of the teachings of Socialism. What guidance to moral or political action can a Socialist obtain from the vague theory of surplus value, or from any other of the innumerable theories Socialism brings forth on every opportunity? Can any of these theories tell him what is right and what is wrong, what he should do and what he should avoid doing? Theories Socialists have for everything, but they never seem to know what they ought to do.

It is no mere accident that almost every Socialist who attains office treads his principles ruthlessly under foot. It is no mere accident that every socialist movement of which we have any record has only resulted in evil to its followers. It is no mere accident that concurrent with the growth of Socialism the forces of Reaction have been strengthened, and so-called Protective Tariffs have increased, tariffs which by means of taxes upon the necessities and conveniences of life rob the masses of far more than is likely to be returned to them by all the many different so-called social reforms. Protective Tariffs and Socialism are, in truth, carved out of the same wood. Both are based on the assumption that the State must interfere with the economic life of its citizens; that it must take something from one class to give to another.

Through its avowal to help the poor, Socialism has known how to attract to its standard many fine and humane characters. But its policy, teachings and attitude toward public questions have not thereby been made any better. For Socialism is the offspring of confused thinking, not of coherent, logical thought, of truth and clearness. Hence everything relating to it is sham; its avowed confidence in ultimate victory is but bragging, self-glorifying verbosity; its brave defiance is but the mock-heroics of the ranting tragedian.

The results of Socialism in Zurich are symbolical and significant. This Canton is the chief centre and fortress of Swiss Socialism. Here its most talented leaders have almost incessantly agitated for over forty years. And what have they accomplished? Have they secured for the people a single right or even privilege of any real value to them? Only the privilege without punishment to kill the child in the mother's womb! Such is, indeed, the one privilege the heated efforts of the Socialists have succeeded in securing to the people of the Canton of Zurich! To conquer for the children of the proletariat the right to life, those men, who are so lavish with their bravery over small, pettifogging, useless things, have never yet had the courage.

In all times and in all countries has Socialism been tried and found wanting. When prayerfully and earnestly tried during the era of primitive Chris-

tianity, it proved itself abortive; again during the era of the Anabaptists; by the Jesuits in Paraguay, as in the quite recent New Australian settlement in the same country, it once more proved its uselessness; again during the Digger Movement in England in the 17th Century, by the conspiracy of Baboeuf in France in the 18th Century, once again at the time of the much feared International, at the time of the Paris Commune in 1871, and the most disgraceful fiasco of all during the so-called Russian Revolution. Every attempt at the realization of Socialism has failed miserably, disgracefully; even temporary success has only been possible where religious influence managed to keep the masses disciplined into a machine-like order. But modern Socialists still boast of their historic mind, of their assumed infallible interpretation of history, of what had to happen in the past, and of what must inevitably happen in the future, irrespective of the doings and desires of mankind.

(To be continued.)

---

## SOME INTERESTING EVENTS IN THE HISTORY OF THE MANHATTAN SINGLE TAX CLUB. 1886-1900.

(Continued.)

---

(For the Review.)

---

By BENJAMIN DOBLIN.

---

This series of memoranda, as we explained in our last issue, is designed merely to furnish the ground work for a history of the Manhattan Single Tax Club. Those who can contribute anything to the data here collected should communicate with Mr. Doblin, or the SINGLE TAX REVIEW.—THE EDITOR.

---

1899.

Samuel Seabury, President.

January—Dinner to Edward McHugh on his return home. It was on this occasion that Tom L. Johnson, accompanied by August Lewis, unexpectedly marched in during the dinner and in response to the urging by the chairman that he address the diners, declared that he was settling his business affairs so that he might be able to devote all his time and energy to the furthering of the Single Tax cause and he exclaimed, "You watch my promise."

February 28th—George P. Hampton elected to membership.

April—Copies of the May issue of the *Single Taxer* sent to all the assessors throughout the State. Still pushing for Home Rule in Taxation.

May 4th—A committee of 3 appointed to call a State Conference of Single Taxers to meet on Labor Day, September 4th, for the purpose of effecting a State Single Tax organization and to observe appropriately the birthday of Henry George. (Upon motion, it was decided that a committee be appointed