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note: many of these quotes seem to be from Ernest Crosby's "Earth-for-All Calendar."

Socialism vs. Single Tax.

F. A. BURLEIGH.

WHEN Robert Browning was once asked what he meant by a certain passage in one of his poems he replied that he did not think it necessary to explain what he had in mind at the time he wrote it even if he remembered. So it is not worth while to quibble with Laborer as to what either Henry George or Herbert Spencer meant in speaking of making land common property. Mr. George's whole idea is based on the theory that property in land is wrong, whether the owner be an individual or the state; and, as I said before, Mr. George spoke loosely, contrary to his usual custom, when he wrote "We must make land common property." However, it is not a point worth quarreling about.

The point is, not what Mr. George or Mr. Spencer or any one else said, but what is true. No one man, however great he may be, is infallible; and we must ever hold truth for authority, not authority for truth. Mr. George revolutionized not only economics but social morals, if such a term may be used. It is true that great thinkers from the earliest times up to the present day have condemned private property in land, but Mr. George was the first to formulate a system by which the right of all to the use of the earth could be reconciled with the need of private possession.

It may be interesting just here to quote a few sayings written by men of all times in regard to this question.

In Isaiah we read: "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!"

Mark Twain says in "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court," "The earth belongs to the people."

Max O'Rell says: "I hold that the earth was meant for the human race and not for a few privileged ones."

In 1757 Marmontel said in an address: "The land is a solemn gift which nature has made to man; to be born then is for each of us a title of possession."

Tacitus said: "As the heavens were appropriated to the gods, so was the earth to the children of men."

Blackstone writes (1756): "The earth therefore and all things therein are the general property of all mankind, exclusive of all other beings, from the immediate gift of the Creator."

Locke wrote in 1690: "It is very clear that God, as King David says, has given the earth to the children of men; given it to mankind in common."

A clause in a deed of gift to the Abbey of Tihany, Hungary, in 1211 reads: "He to whom the land belongs is also the proprietor of him who lives upon it and cultivates it."

Pope Gregory the Great said: "Those who make private property of the gift of God pretend in vain to be innocent. For in thus retaining the subsistence of the poor they are the murderers of those who die every day for want of it."

Thomas Paine declared that: "Every proprietor, therefore, of cultivated land owes to the community a ground rent (for I know of no better term to express the idea) for the land which he holds."

William Penn said: "If all men were so far tenants to the public that the superfluities of gain and expense were applied to the exigencies thereof, it would put an end to taxes, leave never a beggar and make the greatest bank for national trade in Europe."

In "The Conservative" Emerson writes: "As I am born to the earth, so the earth is given to me, what I want of it to till and to plant; nor could I without pusillanimity omit to claim so much."

Three hundred years before the Christian era Lactantius wrote: "God has given the earth in common to all, that they might pass their life in common, not that the mad and raging avarice might claim all things for itself."

An old English rhyme runs as follows:

"It is a sin for man or woman
To *steal a* goose from off the Common:

But who shall plead that man's excuse
Who steals the Common from the goose?"

These are but a few of the numberless quotations which might be given, including every race, time and religion, showing that these thinkers had the right conception of the land question, even though it might be crude.

Laborer says: "All the brotherhood that does or can exist between men springs from common interests. This is how socialists know that when workingmen become class-conscious, i. e, conscious of their common interests as a class, they will, having the power, make the necessary changes. For this same reason we know that the Single Tax movement can never succeed, for it seeks to unite those who have opposing interests — capitalists and laborers."

Have capitalists and laborers opposing interests, and if so, ought they to have? They seem to have today, it is true; but how are their interests different? Are not the majority of both capitalists and laborers trying to get as much as they can with the least exertion — to "squeeze the other fellow all he will bear?" The only difference between them is that the former are on top and can squeeze harder. That this is not kind or loving we will agree, but we are not questioning the right or wrong of it, only the facts. This squeezing process, this murderous policy of getting all that is possible without regard to any one else, comes from necessity; it is that or starve. All men seek to satisfy their desires with the least exertion — which is perfectly proper — and laborers are no more self-sacrificing than capitalists, but are just as willing to get something for nothing. But the real interests of all men, whether capitalists or laborers, are in reality the same and one of the great beauties of the Single Tax philosophy is that it teaches the equality of rights of all men without regard to color, nationality or religion. "Class-consciousness" is born of wrong social conditions and is selfish and unloving among laborers just as much as among capitalists or any other class of men. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."

That the Rockefellers and Morgans have tremendous power is true; that was shown recently in the obsequious and perfunctory manner in which a few of the many trunks of these millionaires were opened on their arrival at New York, while ordinary people were obliged to submit to outrages which never ought to be allowed in a civilized community. But whose fault was it? Did not these same outraged citizens vote for tariff laws which were passed for the express purpose of robbing every one who comes here from another country whether he be an American or a foreigner? Do they not continue to countenance and advocate laws which give these trust magnates such power? As long as men vote for such laws just so long must they take the consequences.

It is not capital, as I define it, which is the menacing danger, but monopoly and privilege. That which I call capital — wealth used in the production of more wealth — is not only a blessing but a necessity and it seems to do harm only when its owner has power from other source. Take, for instance, the Standard Oil Company, the largest monopoly in the country. If the Single Tax were introduced so that this company would have to pay the full rental value of its oil lands, and if we had no railroad monopoly — which is largely, if not entirely, land monopoly — its power would be gone and the company would be a beneficent institution.

But Laborer evidently uses capital in an entirely different sense from that in which I use it; for, judging from what he says, although he does not define it, he would call capital that part of wealth which is used to oppress labor. The difference between us is therefore one of definition merely; for if capital must be an instrument of oppression of labor in order to be capital, then naturally every one would condemn its use. But if it is that part of wealth used to produce more wealth then it is necessary and beneficial.

If the axe which he owns is not capital, what is it? It is certainly not land or labor, and as only land, labor and capital are used in the production of wealth the axe must be one of these three. The axe which he uses to chop his own wood, he says, is not capital; it is not capital even if he is good-natured enough to lend it to his neighbor, but if this neighbor pays him even five cents a week for its use it becomes capital. Suppose he alternates letting it to his neighbor for a week and using it himself the next, is it capital half of the time and something else the other half? If so, what is it the other half? But suppose the neighbor does not pay his debts, merely owes for the use of the axe, under what category does it come in the meantime? Laborer must invent a new term for tools which he uses for himself or lends to his friends.

Under his definition of capital, if it is as I understand it, the capitalist certainly does not aid in production, neither does he give an equivalent for the wealth he receives; but under my definition the capitalist does assist in production and does give an equivalent for at least a part of the wealth he receives.

Laborer instances an oasis in a desert where there is "a well 500 feet deep with pure water at the bottom which is absolutely free" and he, "for the use of an appliance for reaching this water draws water the remainder of his life for its owners;" then asks if he receives the full return for his labor? He continues: "This water cannot be free to use on equal terms till I am free to use the tools for raising it to the surface and land cannot be made free to the working class while the capitalist class dictate the conditions under which the tools of production shall be used. This water which I would draw for this herdsman would be wealth in return for the use of capital which

F. A. B. calls economic interest, which she says is perfectly legitimate and must from the nature of the case always persist."

Is it true, in the last analysis, that "the capitalist class dictate the conditions under which the tools of production shall be used?" Suppose the capitalist class do dictate, who gives them permission to do so if not this same "working class" which constitutes the large majority of voters? Most of the oppression by the "capitalist class" is done legally and each year the voters go to the polls and vote for men who will enact or not repeal laws granting special privileges of some kind, laws making oppression and certain kinds of robbery legal.

The articles of incorporation of the Steel Trust state that the "objects of this company are to engage in mining, manufacturing, the transportation of merchandise and passengers on land and water; building vessels, boats, railroads, engines, cars, wharves and docks; operating and maintaining railroads (outside of New Jersey) steamship lines and other lines of transportation; the buying, improving and selling of lands, the manufacture, purchase, acquiring, holding, owning, mortgaging, selling, transferring, or otherwise disposing of, investing, trading or dealing in or with goods, wares, merchandise and property of every description, the acquiring and undertaking of all or any part of the business assets and liabilities of any person, firm, association or corporation, and the making and performing contracts of every kind; the holding, purchasing, mortgaging, leasing and conveying of real and personal property in any State or Territory of the United States and in any foreign country or place and in carrying on any other business in connection therewith. The board of directors is authorized to increase its number without consent of the stockholders and to make, alter, amend or rescind the by-laws, to fix the amount of the company's working capital and to execute mortgages and liens on the property of the corporation; but there shall be no sale of all the property except by a vote of two-thirds of the directors. The directors may, by majority vote, appoint three or more of their number to be an executive committee, with the full powers of the board, to manage the company's business. They shall also determine whether, and at what times and places, and under what conditions, the books of the corporation shall be open to the inspection of the stockholders; and no stockholders shall have power to inspect the books or accounts except as authorized by statute, by determination of the directors or in accordance with the terms of the resolution adopted at a meeting of the stockholders." Is it any wonder that the Steel Trust is a power? But it is not its capital which gives it this power; it is these remarkable special privileges granted by the New Jersey legislature.

Could anything be more comprehensive than this and yet it is the "working class" which put into office the legislators who enacted such laws. If the Steel Trust "dictate the conditions under which the tools of production shall be used" or what wages men

shall receive or when they shall work and when be idle it is the fault of the voters who give the power.

Last fall a large majority voted in favor of a national policy which fosters trusts, favors tariffs and in general oppresses the "working class;" and this same "working class," whether from ignorance or stupidity, was a part of the majority. If, then, they find it hard to get a living it is their own fault and the innocent and wise must suffer with the guilty and ignorant.

The masses of the people could, if they were wise enough to know the real cause of their hard lot, have a different condition; for there never yet was a government, however despotic, that was not what the people made it. That many do not know why they suffer is only too true; but we must all learn by experience and not until the people learn better can they have right conditions.

To return to the well: The case as stated by our friend could not happen under free conditions. If land (which, economically speaking includes water) were free for all to use on equal terms, — all land, not merely this oasis — it would not be possible for the capitalist to dictate anything. It seems necessary to again repeat that capital, as I define it, can be produced only by the application of labor to land and that if these two are free any one can produce his own capital.

What reason is there, then, why the "working class" — under proper conditions every one would be a worker — could not produce their own capital, land and labor being both free? Would a capitalist be able to oppress under such circumstances? I insist, therefore, that my statement is irrefutable that when land is free for all to use on equal terms, when production and exchange are free, when, in short, opportunities are equal for all, wages *must* be the full return for labor.

The water Laborer would draw from the well in the oasis would be partly rent, partly wages and partly interest. I say partly rent because at least two people, he and the owner of the oasis, want to use it and land always yields rent when more than one person wants to use it, whether this rent be paid to some one else or kept by the holder of the land. That part of the water Laborer draws which is due to his labor alone is wages and the rest is economic interest in the capital used — the bucket and chain. The product would not be all economic interest as Laborer seems to think.

If Laborer "draws water the remainder of his life for the owner" it is because all other oases are monopolized and he must do this or starve. But allow him to use any land he likes upon the payment of its full rental value and compel the owner of the oasis to also pay its rental value instead of pocketing it; then if Laborer worked the rest of his life for the owner it would be from choice.

Laborer says, "I did not prove that the working class could make any other use of it (land) under the Single Tax System" than for farming purposes. Yet Laborer cannot but agree with the statement that land is a necessary factor in the production of all wealth — houses, furniture, pictures, clothing as well as vegetables. Mr. George says, Progress and Poverty, Book V, Chapter II, "For land is the habitation of man, the storehouse upon which he must draw for all his needs, the material to which his labor must be applied for the supply of all his desires; for even the products of the sea cannot be taken, the light of the sun enjoyed, or any of the forces of nature utilized without the use of land or its products. On the land we are born, from it we live, to it we return again — children of the soil as truly as is the blade of grass or the flower of the field. Take away from man all that belongs to land and he is but a disembodied spirit. Material progress cannot rid us of our dependence upon land; it can but add to the power of producing wealth from land; hence, when land is monopolized it might go on to infinity without increasing wages or improving the condition of those who have but their labor. It can but add to the value of land and the power which its possession gives."

But I take it for granted that Laborer will agree with me in a belief in the equal right of all to the use of land because of their equal right to life and the necessity of land to life. If he also agrees with me in the sacred right of ownership every man has in himself, if he believes that each man is therefore entitled to the full product of his labor after he has paid for the use of the land on which he produces, how can he believe in the common ownership of "productive wealth" any more than in any other kind of wealth? Why distinguish as to the kind of wealth? If common ownership of capital is right then common ownership of all wealth is right and common ownership of men must logically follow.

We should carefully distinguish between that which is ownable and that which is unownable; also between that which is rightfully private property and that which is not. Government exists solely to secure equal justice; and when it does more than that it commits an aggression on individual rights. Therefore government ownership of any kind of wealth is an aggression on individual rights.