

TAX FACTS

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RADICAL OR REACTIONARY

It is a question, which is the greater obstacle to progress, the unreasoning reactionary, or the indiscriminating radical. The natural tendency of men is to advance, to broaden, to develop; but they are hampered by their environment, and by a sense of caution born of experience.

The would-be leader, impressed by present evils, and inspired by a vision of a social order in which man is brought into harmonious relations with his fellows, sets out on a heroic crusade. He is impatient at the slow course of evolution. He would reach his goal by the short road of revolution.

But men doubt. Experience has taught them that some leaders are dishonest, and some do not know. The mass of men fear to venture from a certainty into the unknown; and they lend a willing ear to the reactionary who bids them keep what they have, rather than risk all on an untried theory. And so they fritter away valuable time over useless palliatives.

This is the situation as regards economic conditions. Men know that something is wrong, and they are casting about in a timid way for means of relief. But just when they are venturing to discuss ways and means, in rushes the uncompromising radical with his penance. "The evils of society," he shouts, "arise from the maladjustment of man to land, that is to say, from private property in land. Freedom is the way out. We have free men. We must have free land. Make land common property. Palliatives are useless; only a revolution can save society."

Whatever this wild enthusiast may mean by his startling terms the great mass of the American people believe he means Bolshevism, communism, anarchy; and they will have none of it. They believe in private property, private property in land, and private property in things made by labor. They may not all have property, but they

look forward to having it, and they respect the right in those who do have it. They are property-minded. Hence, they instinctively distrust the revolutionist, and turn for counsel to the reactionary, who is able, because of their fear, to confuse their minds, and keep them from taking the action they should.

And then the radical, who may be right in principle, but so wrong in method, wonders why people allow themselves to be fooled by reactionaries. The very fact that he is surprised at the result of his methods shows how defective is his judgment, and how little, how very little, he understands human nature.

Those who would effect economic changes in this country must not forget that we live under a democratic form of government. Decision is by majority, the great mass of whom do not understand the law of economic rent, and are unwilling to devote the necessary amount of time to master it. They do not realize the necessity of understanding it. They see a little way ahead; beyond, all is uncertainty. To such minds the step-by-step method is the only way. Tell such men and women that relief from present evils lies in revolution, and they will cling to present evils.

But revolution is not the only alternative. There is a middle course. Changes affecting the fundamental relations of society and business need not be brought about all at once. They may be made piece meal, as experience lends assurance, advancing when the results are good, and pausing when the way is uncertain.

A social reform, to find acceptance in this country, must embrace three things. It must protect inviolate the rights of private property; it must encourage business; and it must make easier the lot of the working farmer, and the wage earner.

TAX FACTS recognizes absolutely the rights of private property.

TAX FACTS favors only such changes in the tax laws as will promote industry, broaden markets, and stabilize business.

TAX FACTS believes that, owing to a faulty system of taxation, both capital and labor are preyed upon by legal privilege, which curtails markets, slows up business, and oppresses the farmer and the wage earner.

TAX FACTS advocates, therefore, the gradual shifting of these oppressive taxes from the privately created values of the individual, to the publically created values of the community.