

to aid in determining peace and war, on whom the brunt falls in every war-like conflict. The governments are to be controlled from now on into the smallest detail, all public powers are to render account over what they do and omit doing; this is the deep significance of the great movement which is going through the world. And this movement wishes to put an end to the powers that have come down to us historically, because their time is past; the people themselves wish to rule and they are going to rule.

The holders of power will naturally find it difficult to understand this new world. All innovations which dispossess them seem to them of necessity sinful. The locomotive probably seemed to many a postillion a vile invention, and alizarine-dye seemed to many a planter of madder like an assault on everything that was dear to him. So the pious aristocrats of France think that the dissolving of the concordate is a momentous sacrilege, and the Tories already see England going to pieces, because a few "ancestral" families must release the power from their hands, and many an orthodox Russian "patriot" thinks Russia in the greatest danger, because the autocracy is compelled to begin to make concessions. Time has passed over the postillions and the planters of madder—it will also pass over the "historical" powers, without the sun being extinguished. On the contrary, where progress can exert itself unhampered, it fertilizes everything; whoever opposes it is the grave-digger of all civilization.

THE RELATION OF MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP TO THE SINGLE TAX.

An address delivered in Yonkers, N. Y., March 11, 1906, by Bolton Hall, and written out from memory by John Spargo.

When people nowadays advocate the idea of municipal ownership they are dubbed "socialists," "anarchists," "communists," and lots of other names, by people who don't understand either municipal ownership, or socialism, or any of the other theories they confound with municipal ownership. Though I advocate the municipal ownership of public utilities, I am not a socialist by any means. I don't believe in socialism, but I do believe in municipal ownership.

If we begin with a few definitions, we shall be the better able to discuss the subject before us, and if we succeed in learning the distinction be-

tween municipal ownership, socialism, anarchism, single tax, and other movements commonly confounded, our time will not have been misspent.

I really have never known two socialists who could agree upon a definition of socialism. That is because they are thinkers, perhaps, for all thinkers are heretics. So they are prone to be like the old Scotchman who, talking of his religious orthodoxy, said that there were only two people in the place who were strictly orthodox, himself and his wife, and then added, "An' I'm nae sae sure about the wife." Socialists believe in general that the system of private ownership and competition of the means of production and distribution is wrong; they want all the great means of production and distribution to become social property.

Communists are different. They go further, and want everything to be shared equally. There have been no successful experiments in communism apart from religion. The early Christians were communists, for we read that they owned all things in common.

Finally, there are the anarchists (called "philosophic anarchists," because the name "anarchist" has been sadly misused, and applied to all kinds of freaks), whose fundamental idea is a belief in man's inherent goodness, and who believe that men naturally incline to do right and that most laws, if not all of them, do more harm than good.

To lump all these people together as many do, is absurd—as foolish as it would be to class Theists and Infidels, Unitarians and Baptists together. They are very, very different.

It is equally absurd to confound municipal ownership with any or all of these things. I may be an anarchist and believe in municipal ownership in some form; or I may be a socialist, but not of necessity. It may appeal to me simply as a matter of hard common sense and not of social theory at all. I may not be able to see why the public which has always laid down its own systems of pipes for the conduct of sewage to the sea, should not lay down its own pipes to carry water, or gas. I may not be able to see why railways should not be highways in the best and truest sense of the word, but that does not make me a socialist. Surely it is proper and right to draw a distinction between the public ownership, and possibly operation and control, of things which are in their nature monopolies, but are subject to free competition. Because I believe that the city of Yonkers should own its own

street railways and lighting plant, that does not compel me to believe the city should run the tailor shops. Then, again, municipal ownership does not of necessity mean municipal operation under a gigantic civil service scheme. That may or may not be included. It may be thought more profitable, and better in every way, to lease the city railways and lighting plant upon short lease terms to the highest bidder who will also insure the best service, as is done now in New York with the ferries. So much for the principle of municipal ownership.

Now there are certain natural monopolies, that is to say monopolies which rest upon the ownership and control of the land. The railroad monopolies, the coal monopoly, the oil monopoly, are but a few examples of this class of monopoly. The single taxer would deal with these first. The land question is the bottom question, for man is a land animal. All that we eat, wear, drink, or use in any way, comes from the application of labor to land. If land is monopolized, labor must be enslaved. If the land question could be solved, most of our other great questions, such as the labor question, would be solved.

Looking around Yonkers to-day before coming to this meeting, I saw slums, hideous and foul tenements worse than any I have seen in New York, in this suburban city of 70,000 people. No doubt people will say, "Yes, we do need a better health board," or, "We ought to have some model tenements," but the trouble lies deeper. If we had no land problem there would be no slum problem [applause]. When I first began to study the land question, it was on account of a report upon the bad tenement conditions in Yonkers, and that was more than 20 years ago. Things have necessarily gone from bad to worse since then, because of land monopoly.

The land question is fundamental to life. All wealth and all capital are drawn from the land. The single tax proposes to restore the land to the people by methods now in use every day in New York city and elsewhere, in the theaters and hotels. If you go to a theater and pay for a seat you pay for its value, according to its position. No matter if you stay away from the show; whether you sleep or stay awake, you pay the same price, and you pay nothing else. In a hotel, if you engage a room you pay according to its situation, and no matter what business you do there, you pay the same amount. Now "seat," "situation,"

and "site" are really the same word. The single tax is nothing more than a tax or price, to be paid for the social advantages of a certain site, no matter what a man does with it. In other words, the tax is to be placed upon the value of the land and not upon the business carried on by its owner, or the property he erects upon it, and the proceeds would go to the people for their communal expenses. Thus we should restore to the people their rightful inheritance. To-day we really tax industry and thrift and place a premium upon idleness.

I do not claim that land monopoly is the only monopoly, or that the single tax would solve all problems. When land monopoly has been dealt with, there will still be such monopolies as rest upon patents, to be dealt with, or such as rest upon licenses, like the liquor monopoly. But the land monopoly is the bottom of so many other monopolies which oppress us that once it is settled the rest will be easy.

A LESSON IN TRADES-UNIONISM. For The Public.

Having followed our youngsters to the Pacific coast and located myself on a suburban chicken ranch, I was surprised and pleased to find that one of our nearest neighbors was Billy Gorman. His father, a well-to-do farmer, had been my neighbor years ago in western New York. Billy had at first made but poor use of his abilities and opportunities, and after a brief career as a country lawyer and small politician, had left his country for his country's good. But, soon taking a sudden turn for the better, he had learned the trade of a sawyer in a planing mill in Barberton, O., and had permanently adopted the life and habits of an industrious and thrifty mechanic. With a view to more rapid accumulation of worldly goods he had followed the star of empire and of high wages to San Francisco, coming by way of Texas, where he worked two years in the Murray cotton gin factories in Dallas.

I greatly enjoyed renewing my acquaintance with Billy, who was at his worst a very interesting and likable boy. We had many good visits over our garden fence, in the course of which I learned much of his interesting history since leaving his early home. I even advised him to shed his corduroys, now that his steady habits must be fully confirmed, and take up again the practice of the law, for which he had shown a great liking and aptitude even as a youth. But he claimed

to be contented with his condition, and wished to take no further chances with the excitements and temptations of the forum and its environments.

"Anything fresh, Billy?" I asked him this morning.

"Why, yes," he replied, "I have had a letter from my old foreman with Clark Bros. in Barberton. They are setting up a new plant in Fort Wayne, and directed him to offer me a good place there, if my services are not too high priced."

I had previously known that the Murray company held out tempting inducements to dissuade Billy from leaving Dallas, which he did mainly on account of the suffering of his family in the torrid summer climate of Texas.

"Billy," said I, "you have been marked for promotion in every place where you have worked till you got to San Francisco. Here you have stood four years at the same set of saws, with no prospect in sight of ever being offered a better position."

"But," Billy rejoined, "if Clark Bros. gave me a department in Fort Wayne, I should have to work at least an hour longer and for probably half a dollar less a day than I get here at my saws."

"That may be, but your position here is not so good but it might be better. What strikes me is that you have either lost your superior qualities as a man and a cutter and handler of fine lumber, or else they are not appreciated here as they have been elsewhere. Do you know the reason?"

"Yes, I do," replied Billy. "It is the labor unions here, the same that secure me better pay for hand work than Clark Bros. would have to pay for my alleged superior capabilities in Indiana."

"As to your high wages, I understand that they are at the mercy of those same unions, which may at any time, without your consent or approval, call you off from your work altogether."

"Yes, that is true, and you can see," indicating his pretty home and its ample surroundings, "what provision I am trying to make against such an emergency. Three-fourths of our neighbors, too, are workmen like me, and are throwing the same kind of an anchor to windward."

"Well, whether or no," I pursued, "is not half a dollar a day poor compensation for keeping at manual work which any man could do, and leaving your higher and more valuable capacities unused and undeveloped?"

"O, I give my higher capacities their innings out of work hours. I have found more than a plenty to do and to think of which has been profitable to me in one way or another."

"Yes, Billy; but now let me ask: Do you try as hard to do your best for your employer, now that you are a union man working in a completely unionized industry? And does your employer know or care if you do? In short, does not your union connection tend to make you no better than any one of a dozen sawyers in your shops?"

"Perhaps; but at the same time it tends to make each of the dozen sawyers as good as I am, which on the whole is a great gain, eh? Of course the unions, like many modern improvements, work some disadvantage to individuals, but we claim to show a large balance of public benefit to their credit."

"But you wouldn't claim that they have been a benefit in destroying all friendly personal feeling between employers and employees?"

"Granting that they are to blame for this, which I don't admit," said Billy, "why should there be that friendly personal interest between those who sell labor and those who buy it, any more than between those who produce and sell eggs and those who buy them? Except as a matter of policy I should no more give my employer more than the ordinary amount of effort in a day's work than you should count out 13 eggs for a dozen."

"And the incentive of good policy has been removed through the influence of the unions," I added, inquiringly.

"Yes, by making our proper relations better understood. We no longer regard our employer as a patron to be conciliated by works of supererogation, nor does he look us over in search of a good boy to pat on the head. My employer is a very worthy man and a member of the employers' association. He and I both know that we are liable to be some day engaged in a battle between our respective organizations, a battle caused by no fault whatever of his or mine. Of course this prevents any sense of friendly interest between us, for in war we must not love our enemies."

"These flourishing and prosperous industries of San Francisco then are, in fact, in a state of war?" I asked.

"That is about right. We work under an armed truce."

"Well now, Billy, let us consider. The laborers must be employed, and