

in long suffering, charitable in his judgments, believing in the final triumph of the good, the true and the beautiful. St. Louis must rank him high among its benefactors—as a man who was a maker of true men.”

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## HENRY GEORGE AND SOCIALISM.

We are often asked, sometimes by socialists and sometimes by individualists, to explain Henry George's attitude toward Socialism. Probably no more appropriate issue of *The Public* could be chosen for an answer to all such questions, nor a better answer than that of Henry George himself.

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The first declaration by Henry George on this subject appears in *"Progress and Poverty."* This book was published in 1879, before any controversy had arisen other than that over the two tendencies of Communism which have taken the forms respectively of Socialism and Anarchism. In that original declaration by Henry George he says:

(P. and P., page 317): As to the truths that are involved in socialistic ideas, I shall have something to say hereafter; but it is evident that whatever savors of regulation and restriction is in itself bad, and should not be resorted to if any other mode of accomplishing the same end presents itself. . . . (page 319): The ideal of Socialism is grand and noble; and it is I am convinced, possible of realization; but such a state of society cannot be manufactured—it must grow. Society is an organism, not a machine. It can live only by the individual life of its parts. And in the free and natural development of all the parts will be secured the harmony of the whole. All that is necessary to social regeneration is included in the motto of those Russian patriots sometimes called Nihilists—"Land and Liberty!" . . . (page 431): The advantages which would be gained by substituting for the numerous taxes by which the public revenues are now raised, a single tax levied upon the value of land, will appear more and more important the more they are considered. . . . Released from the difficulties which attend the collection of revenue in a way that begets corruption and renders legislation the tool of special interests, society could assume functions which the increasing complexity of life makes it desirable to assume; but which the prospect of political demoralization under the present system now leads thoughtful men to shrink from. . . . (page 436): Consider the effect of such a change upon the labor market. Competition would no longer be one-sided as now. Instead of laborers competing with each other for employment, and in their competition cutting down wages to the point of bare subsistence, employers would everywhere be competing for laborers, and wages would rise to the fair earnings of labor. . . . (page 453): Society would thus approach the ideal of Jeffersonian democracy, the promised land of Herbert Spencer, the abolition of govern-

ment. But of government only as a directing and repressive power. It would at the same time, and in the same degree, become possible for it to realize the dream of Socialism, . . . but not through governmental repression. Government would change its character, and would become the administration of a great co-operative society. It would become merely the agency by which the common property was administered for the common benefit.

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In a later book, *"Social Problems,"* published in 1883, and while Socialistic lines were still indefinite in practical politics, Henry George discussed the same subject in much the same way. We quote from his chapter on "The Functions of Government":

(S. P., page 175): It is the more necessary to simplify government as much as possible and to improve, as much as may be, what may be called the mechanics of government, because, with the progress of society, the functions which government must assume steadily increase. It is only in the infancy of society that the functions of government can be properly confined to providing for the common defense and protecting the weak against the physical power of the strong. As society develops in obedience to that law of integration and increasing complexity of which I spoke in the first of these chapters, it becomes necessary in order to secure equality that other regulations should be made and enforced; and upon the primary and restrictive functions of government are superimposed what may be called co-operative functions, the refusal to assume which leads, in many cases, to the disregard of individual rights as surely as does the assumption of directive and restrictive functions not properly belonging to government. . . . (page 176): As civilization progresses and industrial development goes on, the concentration which results from the utilization of larger powers and improved processes operates more and more to the restriction and exclusion of competition and the establishment of complete monopolies. . . . The primary purpose and end of government being to secure the natural rights and equal liberty of each, all businesses that involve monopoly are within the necessary province of governmental regulation, and businesses that are in their nature complete monopolies become properly functions of the state. As society develops, the state must assume these functions, in their nature co-operative, in order to secure the equal rights and liberty of all. . . . (page 188): Businesses that are in their nature monopolies are properly functions of the state. The state must control or assume them, in self defense, and for the protection of the equal rights of citizens. But beyond this, the field in which the state may operate beneficially as the executive of the great co-operative association, into which it is the tendency of true civilization to blend society, will widen with the improvement of government and the growth of public spirit. . . . (page 191): The natural progress of social development is unmistakably toward co-operation, or, if the word be preferred, toward Socialism, though I dislike to use a word to which such various and vague meanings

are attached. . . . (page 192): The first step toward a natural and healthy organization of society is to secure to all men their natural, equal and unalienable rights in the material universe. To do this is not to do everything that may be necessary; but it is to make all else easier. And unless we do this, nothing else will avail.

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Henry George's next expression on Socialism was made in his "*Protection or Free Trade*," published in 1885. The Socialistic movement had then begun to shape itself in the United States as well as elsewhere, and the author had come into personal relations with some of its leaders both here and abroad. The following quotations are from the chapter on "Free Trade and Socialism":

(P. or F. T., page 303): In socialism as distinguished from individualism there is an unquestionable truth—and that a truth to which (especially by those most identified with free trade principles) too little attention has been paid. Man is primarily an individual—a separate entity, differing from his fellows in desires and powers, and requiring for the exercise of those powers and the gratification of those desires individual play and freedom. But he is also a social being, having desires that harmonize with those of his fellows, and powers that can be brought out only in concerted action. There is thus a domain of individual action and a domain of social action—some things which can best be done when society acts for all its members. And the natural tendency of advancing civilization is to make social conditions relatively more important, and more and more to enlarge the domain of social action. . . . (page 304): While there is a truth in socialism which individualists forget, there is a school of socialists who in like manner ignore the truth there is in individualism, and whose propositions for the improvement of social conditions belong to the class I have called "super-adequate." . . . (page 308): The line at which the state should come in is that where free competition becomes impossible. . . . (foot note at page 302): The term "socialism" is used so loosely that it is hard to attach to it a definite meaning. I myself am classed as a socialist by those who denounce socialism, while those who profess themselves socialists declare me not to be one. For my own part I neither claim nor repudiate the name, and realizing as I do the correlative truth of both principles can no more call myself an individualist or a socialist than one who considers the forces by which the planets are held to their orbits could call himself a centrifugalist or a centripetalist.

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The next notable record of Henry George's views regarding Socialism is the report of an extemporaneous speech he made in the turmoil of the *Syracuse* Convention of the United Labor party in 1887, of which an historical account will be found on page 1151 of this Public. We quote

from a news dispatch published in the *New York World* of August 19, 1887:

"The greatest danger that could befall the party," Henry George said, "would not be the separation of its elements, would not be the withdrawal of anybody who was theretofore connected with it, but would be the continuance within its ranks of incongruous elements. No man recognizes more fully than I do, the energy, the devotion and the industry of the Socialists. In the address of which Mr. Shervitch spoke this morning, I did pay them, as I was in duty bound to do, a high compliment for their action in the last election.\* But I did not state that they were the most earnest in the movement. It would not be proper for me to make such an invidious statement. But we worked together in the last election. We worked together because we were going the same way. The two great principles for which we stood there—principles clearly declared in the Clarendon Hall platform—were, first, the assertion of the equal rights of all men to the land of their country, to be secured by means of imposing taxation; and, second, the assumption by society of all functions that are in their nature monopolies. So long as the Socialists can go with the men whom I represent in that direction, there is no reason why we should separate. But since that election and within the last few months the Socialists have stated very distinctly that they are not going the same way—that they want to go another way. What the Socialists want to do is to nationalize the land in the sense of taking it as the property of the government and working it by the government. What they want to do further is to take for the use of the state all the instruments of production—the machinery, the capital,—and to regulate all distribution. I for one cannot—I for one will not, go that way, and this is the question which we must settle. We cannot compromise"—Mr. George was in the middle of a sentence, when the chairman, who had been keeping a careful eye on his watch, banged his gavel. Mr. George's time was up.

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When Henry George wrote his "*Open Letter to Pope Leo XIII*," on "The Condition of Labor," he again referred to Socialism. This was in 1888, after the Socialists had established themselves in American politics. In that letter he said:

(L. to Pope Leo, page 57): With both anarchists and socialists, we, who for want of a better term, have come to call ourselves single-tax men, fundamentally differ. We regard them as erring in opposite directions—the one in ignoring the social nature of man, the other in ignoring his individual nature. . . . (page 58): With the socialists we have some points of agreement, for we recognize fully the social nature of man and believe that all monopolies should be held and governed by the state. In these,

\*This allusion was to the election of 1886 for mayor of New York City in which Henry George was the candidate of the United Labor Party, against Abram S. Hewitt as the candidate of Tammany Hall and the County Democracy, and Theodore Roosevelt as the candidate of the Republican party.

and in directions where the general health, knowledge, comfort and convenience might be improved, we, too, would extend the functions of the state. . . . But it seems to us the vice of socialism in all its degrees is its want of radicalism, of going to the root, . . . (page 60): As for thorough going socialism, which is the more to be honored as having the courage of its convictions, . . . jumping to conclusions without effort to discover causes, it fails to see that oppression does not come from the nature of capital, but from the wrong that robs labor of capital by divorcing it from land, and that creates a fictitious capital that is really capitalized monopoly.

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In harmony with all the foregoing was Henry George's action at the two Singletax conferences of 1890 and 1893 (of which we told in *The Public* of September 1, 1911\*), when he wrote the final paragraph of the *Singletax Platform* at the first Conference and opposed its alteration at the second.

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Also in harmony with the foregoing quotations is his discussion of the principles of Production† in the "*Science of Political Economy*," which did not go to the printer until after his death in 1897. Considering in that work, and at another stage of his inquiry, what was called "scientific socialism" at the time he wrote, he criticized this as having "a tendency to confuse the idea of science with that of something purely conventional or political," as taking "no account of natural laws, neither seeking them nor striving to be governed by them," as being without religion and in tendency atheistic, and as having "no system of individual rights whereby it can define the extent to which the individual is entitled to liberty or to which the state may go in restraining it."

\*See current volume, page 903.

†See "*The Science of Political Economy*," book iii, chapters ix, x, xi, xii, pages 371 to 415.

## EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE

### SIGNS AND OMENS IN NATIONAL POLITICS.

Washington, D. C., November 4.

It was my good fortune to reach Washington from my long speaking tour of the western country in time to hear the arguments in the two cases involving the validity of the Initiative, Referendum and Recall principles in the Oregon constitution.

One case came up through the refusal of the Pacific States Telephone and Telegraph Company to pay certain taxes under an Initiative law, and the other through the objection of one Frank Kiernan of Portland, a taxpayer, to the issuance of bonds for the building of a bridge, which also involved the Initiative principle.

The case of the telephone company was poorly presented to the Court; but that of Kiernan was well and forcibly presented, Mr. Duniway, the attorney, in closing asserting that as a tax question the case was insignificant, but that as a governmental question it very closely concerned many of the States.

This fitted into the line of argument the attorneys for the State of Oregon had intended to take. Their contention was that both cases were political and not judicial. Attorney General Crawford, of that State, made a most admirable opening and was assisted very ably by City Attorney Grant of Portland and Assistant City Attorney Benbow, and also by Mr. Jackson H. Ralston of Washington, D. C., and Hon. George Fred Williams of Boston.

From the nature of the questions from the Bench to counsel it appeared pretty evident that the Court regarded the cases as political. If it shall hold so it will decide that they are out of its jurisdiction.

There are many here in Washington who, for other reasons, believe this will be the Court's course. Regarding the Court as human after all, they believe it will not care to run counter to strong public opinion by deciding against the Initiative, Referendum and Recall so soon after the notoriously unpopular decisions in the Standard Oil and Tobacco cases. The Court, therefore, is expected to consult prudence and, while not declaring in favor of the Initiative, Referendum and Recall, at least to take to the woods and assert that it has no jurisdiction.

If the Court should however assume jurisdiction and declare against those principles it seems certain from what I saw and heard in the whole western part of the country, that something like a political revolution will occur west of the Mississippi, and that the flames of the revolution will leap across the Mississippi and fast spread toward the Atlantic.

And why not? These principles reduced to their lowest terms are nothing more or less than the assertion by the body of the people of the right of self rule.

But my reading of the Court as I sat there listening to the arguments was, that no matter what the eminent citizens sitting on that Bench may think about these principles, and especially about the principle of Recall as it applies to judges, they will keep "hands off"—at this juncture at least.

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The strong popular feeling for the Initiative, Referendum and especially the Recall, I am persuaded had much to do with the cold reception Mr. Taft met with from Michigan westward. The veto of cotton, wool and the free list had cut deep, but the veto of the Arizona Statehood bill because of its recall constitutional provision was a peculiar affront, because to get it had cost and was costing the West much. It would appear that he has learned his lesson from his western trip and that he now intends to take a marked change of course. My information is that his message to Congress will anticipate radical action by the House of Representatives; that he will try to blanket the House on the tariff issue by again insisting that no action can properly be taken by that body until the Presidential Tariff Board examines conditions and reports,