

SINGLE TAX AND SOCIALISM.

(For the Review.)

By OLIVER R. TROWBRIDGE.

It may be conceded that, in its present state of development, the Single Tax is a middle class movement. This fact is held by by the Socialists to be fatal to our ultimate success. What they call the "economic interpretation of history" leads them to declare that the middle and upper classes never have done any thing directly and disinterestedly for the worker and that they never will; and that therefore the worker must become a part of a world-wide working class movement and so emancipate himself. In order to do this a revolutionary change must be made so that history shall pursue an opposite course; for the working class has never yet succeeded in bringing about a radical and permanent change of condition, or in becoming, in anyway, the dominant class.

Socialism prides itself upon making its appeal directly to the working classes. It openly holds that the workers themselves must not only bring about a radical economic revolution for their own benefit, but that they must also exclusively manage the affairs of the new era. This gives to Socialism, early in its career, an advantage which manifests itself in a numerical strength out of proportion to the merits of its distinctive doctrine.

I speak of its *distinctive doctrine* because the mere matter of socializing things is not characteristic of Socialism. In established order many things are socialized more or less completely, but always in a sporadic or unrelated manner. The post office, the public school, the city department, the public hospital and many other features of our civic life are essentially socialistic, but are not so related as to form a part of a socialistic system. And again, the Single-Taxers propose as their distinctive working plan, not only to socialize certain things which are now under individual ownership, operation and control, but to socialize them as a part of all economic system. The things which the Single-Taxers propose to socialize are two in number, *viz.*, all natural opportunities and all public utilities. Natural opportunities are to be socialized through the systematic appropriation of ground rent into the public treasury in lieu of all taxes, and expenditure of ground rent for the common good. Public utilities are to be socialized by the systematic public ownership, operation and control of all businesses which require the use of public property (as the streets), or the grant of public power or authority under a franchise, when conducted by private persons or corporations.

To the systematic socialization of these *two* things (the union of Single Tax and public ownership of public utilities) I have given the name of Bisocialism. This distinguishes it from current Socialism, the distinctive doctrine of which is the socialization of all means of production and distribution. That is to say, Socialism demands the socialization, in a revolutionary manner, of practically *all* property and *all* kinds of business; while Bisocialism demands the socialization, in an evolutionary manner, of *one* kind of property (ground rent) and *one* kind of business (the operation of public utilities), and insists that all other forms of property and all other kinds of business shall be individualized much more fully than at present—so much so, indeed, as to be free from all public taxation. It is this insistent individualism characteristic of the Single Tax programmes *after the socialization of ground rent and public utilities has been secured*, that makes it so largely a middle class or business men's movement.

On the other hand, under our democratic form of government, an economic reform can never prevail as a governmental policy unless it becomes *popular*. It must have the working man's vote. Single taxers must not cater entirely or too largely to middle class interests. They must recognize and learn to emphasize the socialistic side of the movement if they hope to cope with the Socialist leaders in securing for their cause the necessary element of popularity. Nor is there any thing in the socialism involved in the Single Tax programme of which we may not freely speak and call by its right name. In both form and substance it is purely democratic. It is only the bureaucratic socialism of the Socialists which transcends and contradicts true democracy that we should decry and repel.

TRIBUTE LEVYING IN OMAHA.

There is another interesting conclusion of the assessor; that is that land values in the city, regardless of improvements, have increased about \$5,000,000 over last year, due to the increase of population and thrift of the people. Assuming that the land of this city has a value of about \$50,000,000, exclusive of improvements, this shows an average increase of ten per cent. in the value of this land. In some instances this value has increased 200 per cent. Here is a proof of prosperity at least to the landholder, due to the growth of the city, and represents his ability to levy tribute upon the people of this community to the tune of \$5,000,000 per year. In other words, the people of this community during the past year have actually paid \$5,000,000 to landlordism for which landlordism has rendered no service whatever. Suppose this land were owned by one man. He might have lived in China, yet he would have been enabled under the operation of this iniquitous system, to collect this enormous sum from the people of this city without rendering them any service at all. Such a system is legalized piracy, for which a remedy must and will be found. A tax upon land speculation would destroy it. A land grabber fears a just tax.
—*The Square Deal*, Omaha, Neb.

THE LORD OF PEACE.

Wait, wait! not long. The Rectificer will rise;
A purer and more righteous æra come.
The crowd of kings, the sovereignty of crowds,
Shall alike pass, and perish. Time shall be.
When earth one state, the lord of peace rules all.
Deep in earth's caverned heart, self-hidden, I see,
Her loins with wisdom's silver serpents girt,
The Nemesis of nations. Stern she sits
Her monumental throne. The hush of death
Spreads round her, halo-like. Even Hope, her friend,
Oft deems her dead. Yet lives she; live she will.
She hath a vital secret in her breast,
As though she nursed a god which scarcely breathes,
The freedom of the future.

—*Philip James Bailey.*