

poorer without being really hurt, and thus reapportion the great unearned fortunes without impoverishing anybody.

Many people would agree that such a policy is worth adopting in the cause of social justice without any special emergency to justify it; but facing the present menace of world communism it would seem that the adoption of a method of social readjustment so certain to arrest growing discontent would be welcomed as an obvious resource of self-preservation.

A Plea in Avoidance

FOLLOWING is a letter to the *New Republic* written by Franklin H. Wentworth, of Wellesley Hills, Mass.:

"I am accepting your invitation to renew my subscription because I believe publications of protest should be supported and not because I personally derive any information or comfort from your paper. There is equally competent guidance toward an improved social order in the editorials of the *Journal of Commerce*. Why can you not occasionally refer to a fundamental wrong that can be corrected by our present political machinery without drifting into revolution? I mean the absorption by privileged individuals of the community value of land. Is it timidity that causes you to be so continuously silent on this important item? The taking of these land values by taxation would not solve all our social ills, but it would clear the political slate of a lot of the problems we are now tilting at in the notion that they are fundamental. Do you think it would hurt your circulation to cease being vaguely socialistic for a time and concentrate on some social ill that can be tackled and corrected by the present generation? It might help it!"

Here is the reply from Bruce Bliven, one of the *New Republic* editors:

"Thank you for your letter of April 26. I am glad to tell you that the editors of the *New Republic* are thoroughly familiar with the principles of the Single Tax and are far from being unsympathetic with the general philosophy expounded by Henry George. Perhaps the chief reason why we do not devote more space to the consideration of this subject in the *New Republic* is that this journal is primarily a weekly newspaper devoted to the discussion of current events, and that so little has happened in regard to the Single Tax in recent years. As you probably know, both the agitation for this tax and the various experiments in its operation are now both practically at a standstill.

"In general, our criticism of the Single Tax philosophy at the present stage of the world is that it is too conservative, does not go far enough in its demand for an alteration of the fundamentals of society. It was worked out by Henry George in a period of scarcity-economics; and no one has ever successfully adapted it to present conditions, which, at least in terms of consumer purchasing power, constitute a period of surplus-economics."

We ask our readers to note the confession, not openly avowed but implied, that the *New Republic* has a policy which is to favor only such principles as are accepted by a large section of the people—in other words, the principles that are acclaimed. Its programme of social reform—and that it has one is its only reason for being—is thus, by its own declaration, narrowly circumscribed. There will be no reason, therefore, for any reader to consult its pages for any specific condemnation of false issues which command a measure of popular approval. It is a humiliating confession, but we are glad to have it, for we were

anxious to know just what the *New Republic* stood for. We know now that it stands for just nothing at all.

We note, too, that what Henry George advocated is "too conservative." Just what is it that Henry George taught? He advocated the transference of thirteen billions annual of publicly created wealth now absorbed by private appropriators into the common treasury in lieu of all taxation, the result of which would be the restoration of every unused natural opportunity, mine, forest, city lot and farm land to the actual workers. That proposition has teeth. Instead of being conservative, it is the most radical proposition ever presented for the consideration of mankind. Find it alongside of everything and anything we find in the pages of the *New Republic*.

Not the strongest magnifying glasses applied to this weekly publication extending over any period of years reveal anything but a skim-milk, rose-water socialism, an ineffable dilution that must give even a Socialist like Norman Thomas a large-sized pain! And Mr. Bliven, who should and we believe does know better, has the nerve to call the doctrine of a free earth "conservative." I shudder to think what he would consider a radical proposition. Certainly nothing that has appeared in the wholly innocuous pages of the *New Republic* can be called radical. There can be found nothing therein to offend the adolescent reformer still in the nursery stage. Where and how Mr. Bliven has persuaded himself that compared with Henry George the *New Republic* is radical is one of those mysteries which we leave to others for solution.

Will our readers note the curious language with which Mr. Bliven concludes? Mr. B. is a journalist, accustomed to plain, direct speaking. Either this language is interpolated by some one else, or Mr. B. has unconsciously absorbed the phrases of his associates that obviate the necessity of thinking hard. Mr. Bliven should know that Henry George set himself to determine the problem of distribution. The period of "surplus-economics," which we understand to mean a large per capita production of wealth, or a period when per capita production is high, has nothing to do with the solution which Mr. George gave. He was concerned with only one thing—the problem of distribution. And that remains the same to this day as when he wrote.

Association in Inequality

WHEN the wages are invariably low, distribution of wealth being thus very unequal, the distribution of political power and social influence will also be very unequal. All of these ancient civilizations reached a certain development and fell away. Where we find the upper classes enormously rich, and the lower classes miserably poor, we find those by whose labor the wealth is created receiving the smallest share of it, the remainder being absorbed by the higher ranks in the form of either rent or profit.—BUCKLE.