

dustry as to control free access to the land. They seem unable to separate in thought the product of labor from its source, and have an honest difficulty in seeing that their aim can be accomplished by the law of equal freedom.

One of the most acute and courageous of these thinkers argued for a whole evening that great fortunes can be perpetuated just the same when the land monopoly privilege is destroyed. He is blind to the universal fact that without privilege swollen fortunes everywhere tend to disintegration. Another unselfish reformer and distinguished writer on economic subjects contended that free access to land would not prevent capital from monopolizing opportunity and making self employment difficult. The habit of thought which treats capital and privilege as identical is hard to change, yet to simple minds, unbiassed by academic instruction, a bare statement of the distinction rarely needs the reinforcement of argument.

The cheering consolation of Single Taxers is the obvious fact that no social reform of value can advance until the obstruction of land monopoly is removed. Every worker in the various fields of human advancement sooner or later meets this barrier, and must reckon with it. The sad thing is that so much wasted energy must be expended on palliatives before the cause of the disease is recognized and eradicated.

DISTINCTIONS BETWEEN SINGLE TAX AND SOCIALISM.

(For the Review.)

By JOHN Z. WHITE.

Some of our friends think the tenor of our arguments is too emphatically individualistic, and that a socialistic flavor would render them more acceptable.

Things are known by their differences, not by their likenesses. A horse has four legs, so has a cow. If I wished to sell my horse to another I should not be at pains to explain the similarity of the horse to a cow. It would seem good policy to reveal the superiority of the horse by emphasizing the differences.

Advocates of individualism are not to be confused with socialists, because each member of the two groups agrees that twice two make four, nor because they are agreed that the State is the proper agency to administer the police power.

The distinctive doctrine of socialism is common ownership of productive property. The distinctive doctrine of individualism is equal opportunity to produce property.

Is the common use (common ownership, if you choose) of the highway an example of socialism? Not at all. It is the only disposition of the highway whereby it is possible to maintain "equal opportunity to produce property." It is therefore an example of individualism.

If one shall urge that it as well expresses socialism, we reply that it is a feature wherein the horse and cow are alike. And historically how was the common highway acquired? Did not the feudal lord hold the bridge and charge his dues for its use? Was not the toll road a privilege? Was not the overthrow of these private monopolies the occasion for establishing the free highway? Or was it achieved through an effort to publicly own "all the means of production and distribution," or to verify the "materialistic interpretation of history?"

The overthrow of tyranny results in freedom. Men do not strive to secure freedom, but to get rid of oppression. Freedom is the normal condition. A few are stimulated by love for the beautiful, but the many because they are annoyed by the ugly.

Jefferson expressed the sentiment that history proves that mankind will endure the ills under which they labor so long as those ills are endurable. It is suffering, and the fear of it, that mostly stimulate to action.

Frankly, I am more concerned for the intellectual integrity of our movement than for its popularity. As for success—why, either the Single Tax will succeed, or the world will “go broke.”

It is easy to bend a little here and a little there until the principle involved is obscured and finally lost. The Democratic party for fifty years shows the result of this course. If we say we are socialists—of a somewhat different variety than the usual run, to be sure, as if there were not varieties enough already—for the purpose of being more agreeable, we will no doubt find it still more agreeable (or expedient) to a widening circle to swear to it—and later at it—when we are brought to a realization that socialism

“is a monster of such frightful mien
That to be hated needs but to be seen ;
But seen too oft, familiar with its face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

The simple fact is that the protective theory, in which the American people have been pickled and “soaked,” has taught them to lean on the government, and when socialists push the same theory to a wider field, what could be more natural than that a lot of the dupes should swallow this larger bait?

I am a free trader. As a free trader, I am not a socialist. I wish to be a man, not merely a member of society. The principle of socialism is the protective principle. It is the weapon of tyranny. The curse of all time.

I recognize that to the end that each may peacefully occupy and use the earth, sovereign power must be asserted and exercised, but to call such action socialism is to wrench a word of common use from its common meaning—and I would not deprive socialists of anything rightfully theirs, for kind heaven knows their poverty of possessions must excite the sympathy of those less benevolent than myself.

My friend, Oliver R. Trowbridge, is among those who favor the socialistic flavor. And Trowbridge is no light weight. One cannot easily brush him aside. He won't have it.

He admits that “the final goal of the Single Tax movement is distinctly a matter of individualism.” But “the working plan of the movement is socialistic.”

George said, “We may put the proposition into practical form by proposing—to abolish all taxation save that upon land values.”

To me the working plan of the Single Tax movement is here given. It is the same as that by which all advance toward freedom has been achieved. In the destruction of privilege alone shall we find benefit.

Privilege is private law, or sovereign power subsisting in the hands of individuals. Repeal of the laws that maintain privilege will leave the natural order (or individual freedom) in full sway.

Privilege is to-day maintained by grants of right of way and by taxes on the processes and products of industry, the former relatively being of slight importance. The law which chiefly sustains these grants is not the franchise itself, but the doctrine established by the decision in the Dartmouth College case. That doctrine must be repealed, or the decision reversed. Such action would enable

each State to withdraw every franchise it has granted, leaving sovereign power where it naturally rests and rightly belongs—in the hands of the individual citizen.

In such conditions each State would possess complete authority in regard to corporations or other grants of privilege, and could confer on cities the same power regarding street car, telephone, gas companies, etc., that it now does as to hackmen and pedlers.

The vastly more important matter of taxation involves the same process; that is, the repeal of the laws upon which privilege rests. George stated the matter correctly, "Abolish all taxation save that upon land values."

I regard the Single Tax movement as distinctly conservative. It is obviously the next—and may be the final—step in the age long march toward personal freedom, which possibly may be said to have begun with Magna Charta. It does not mark out a divergent path, but urges continued progress along the way that our fathers pursued in their efforts to escape from despotism. That is, again abolish privilege.

In remote times privileged men (lords, and such like) held other men as serfs, etc. Later they grabbed the land and held it by armed force. Later still national necessity centred military power in the crown. Land owners provided the revenue. None else had anything to give. Later still commerce and manufacture grew. Here was the opportunity for the privileged. In the time of Charles II taxes were to a considerable degree shifted to industry by the privileged gentry who controlled legislation.

That form of privilege has been found to be more effective than all others, and therefore has been cultivated, until to-day a majority of our good American fellow citizens actually believe it to be a blessing if it comes to them in the guise of a tariff on imported goods. In the old time the lord held the serf in bondage, but it is not recorded that the serf believed himself thereby benefited. The notion that the burdens imposed by privilege are blessings was reserved for a generation that enjoys free schools, an untrammelled press, manhood suffrage, and various other advantages that seemingly might as well be afforded pigs.

But meanwhile nearly all other forms of privilege have been overthrown, and the hosts gather for the final struggle. To attempt to alter the direction of thought or change the nature of the purpose at this juncture, it seems to me, would be in the highest degree inexpedient, if for no other reason, because it cannot be successful. The whole spirit of our race, its education and its history make for individualism. To describe the Single Tax movement as a sort of socialism would be to yield to the seduction that has flung a self-respecting people into the mire of protection, and nothing would better please our more capable enemies. For twenty years they have endeavored to give us that identity, well knowing that under that name we would more easily be submerged.

If there is one prejudice, or unreasoned belief, stronger than another among the American people, it is faith in private property. That our real enemies appreciate this is shown by the fact that to convince the novice that George was a socialist, they seize upon the same quotation that Mr. Trowbridge says is given in "a separate paragraph in italics," viz.: "*We must make land common property.*" This quotation is accurate, but it is the summing up of a philosophical discussion of economic forces.

When George came to offer a practical proposal, it was also given in a separate paragraph, and also in italics, and is as quoted above, "*Abolish all taxation save that upon land values.*" At a later day, and with fuller experience, he wrote in the platform, "abolish all taxes on labor and the products of labor."

Mr. Trowbridge illustrates the practical difficulties by supposing an inquirer to ask a Single Taxer, "What, then, do they propose?" The Single Taxer replies, "The first great step to be taken is the appropriation by the community of ground rent in taxation and its expenditure for the common good." And it is held that this reply suggests socialism to the inquirer's mind or confirms him in the belief that we are socialists. But suppose the reply were in harmony with the platform, viz.: "The first great step is to abolish taxes on labor and the products of labor." The inquirer would naturally ask for the source of revenue, and would be told that taxes would be increased upon the value of land. There is here no suggestion of socializing anything. The thought emphasized to an inquirer is the abolition of a burden. We take some rent in taxes now. Is this socialism?

Mr. Trowbridge then goes to the second step. We are supposed to explain that Single Taxers favor public ownership of public utilities. In fact, we propose to abolish the legal power of the franchise owner—the private monopoly—the privilege. Upon what other ground can any proposal be made? The platform says public "control." In given instances ownership may or may not be desirable. With the federal usurpation of authority removed, the determination of the matter will be in the hands of the people concerned.

But the point is this, that public ownership of public utilities is no more socialism than is public ownership of the highway. Public control of public functions is necessary to the preservation of individualism, i. e., "equal opportunity to produce property."

I am quoted as saying that I have no objection to "socialism—with a safety valve." Socialism is public ownership of productive property. I have no objection to this, if private ownership on equal terms be permitted. As an example, suppose a publicly owned and operated shoe manufacturing concern. With *all* privilege removed, how long would it last in the face of private competition? Run your machine to your own liking, provided there is a hole through which I can get out. That is the safety valve.

Does our cause move slowly? What proposal to alter fundamental social adjustment moved more rapidly? Can we not see our enemies doing our work? The president is not one of us, yet what is his rate regulation but a step toward abolishing privilege? Very weak and tottering, to be sure, for so strenuous a gentleman, but still in our direction. Silly income tax proposals are at least negative indorsements.

We may agree with Mr. Trowbridge that the marginal theory obtains in all economic relations, but are we thereby compelled to change our complexion?

I would discourage no effort to win socialist sympathizers, and it is evident that Trowbridge found one with unimpaired intellectual process, and that undoubtedly helps some. But I do not think our proposals are socialistic, and therefore do not think "we should avow it openly at all times." I object to being classed with socialists. To assent to such classification is, to my mind, to assent to what is not true.

The Single Tax is the logical conclusion of the doctrine of free trade. That doctrine is surely individualistic. Clear the ways, and then let things alone. To clear the ways is to abolish privilege.

When the good effects of the land values taxation laws of New Zealand are pointed out to people in this country they say that these things may be all right in a new country. The opponents of the system in New Zealand used to say that it was all very well to try these experiments in an old country!