

Not A Fiscal Reform But A Social Revolution

SOME of the workers for land value taxation are alarmed because some communists, anarchists and other "reds" in California endorsed the Single Tax, and it seems to have led to the abatement of some Single Tax work. This appears to be due to misunderstanding of the real character of the Single Tax, possibly to some unwillingness to understand it.

The "reds" mostly want actually to do something now to make conditions better, and it can easily be shown them that our proposal is in fact the most revolutionary of doctrines. Those who understood the doctrine of Jesus that "love is the fulfilling of the law," that is, "that love fulfilled the entire purpose of the law," saw clearly that such wisdom will end monopoly, slavery, courts, armies and violence generally; therefore the respectables crucified its Teacher. Those in power will some day find out that under the Single Tax there will be no more "reserve supply" of labor, no more bidding for employment, no one living without earning, no more huge fortunes, no standing armies, no litigation and no desire for private property, except in the things which are necessarily personal. If plutocracy wakes soon enough to those facts it will find some excuse for taking out some of us who advocate Single Tax and having us shot.

Let us not deceive ourselves. Although some of our best workers get a hearing before Boards of Trade, Rotary Clubs, Colleges, and Chambers of Commerce, they get it only because they emphasize the fiscal side and allow careless people to think that Single Tax is simply a more efficient and more just way of raising revenue; and they generally fail to emphasize the fact that it means the abolition of private property in rent of lands, that it means the extinction of special privileges, and that it therefore means equality of opportunity and Democracy in practice.

It is remarkable that one of the most successful of our teachers of the respectables is the most intolerant towards those who want the entire Single Tax. He thinks the world is not big enough to exhibit two sides of the shield in, and has some of us scared lest those who have been looking at the silver side should get a glimpse of the golden one and conclude that it was too bright to be real.

We should not minimize the effectiveness of the work of these men who are listened to by the respectables. We may get in that way taxation of land values to a certain extent, as it has been gotten in certain places and as we believe and hope it will be gotten in many others. But the moment that such taxation begins to be heavy enough to check speculation in land, those who depend upon speculation for their living or who think they depend upon it, will raise the cry "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," which being put in modern phrase means "Glory to privilege by which we get our living." When that day comes there will be a sharp line drawn between those who love men and

those who love money, and to hasten that day it seems that the best thing would be to teach these "reds" that the Single Tax is far more practical and far more revolutionary than any programme of theirs.

If we concede that we are to advocate the Single Tax only as long as it has its respectable place, then naturally as the radicals advance in understanding and increase in their endorsement of our peaceable means to revolution, we shall have to recede; as they go forward we will have to step back. We can justify ourselves in doing that only by refusing to look at the confiscation of land rents, as George rightly expressed it, as the means by which real economic freedom can be gained and the way be opened to the realization of the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

The Single Tax claims to settle equitably our rights to the use of the earth on which we live and from which we must draw our subsistence. Plainly, our right to this is *equal*—there can be no other opinion. It is wrong that one man can withhold from another the use of that to which both have an equal right or can charge him for using it; and when the thing that is charged for is "living room on the earth" it is a wrong that goes to the very bottom of our economic and social system.

The right to the use of the earth involves the right to happiness, to liberty and to life itself. It leads to the possibility of living for one another instead of as now upon one another. No question on earth can be as important as this. Our whole social superstructure is built on the inequitable foundation of monopoly. There is hardly a wrong we suffer from today which is not sustained and buttressed by this primary and underlying injustice; and the consequences of the wrong are inextricably interlaced in all the multitudinous transactions of our civilization. The restoration to men of "their right to the use of the earth" would so emasculate nearly all our other social wrongs, that they would probably totally disappear.

The Single Tax is a simple, feasible and effective method of settling this primary monopoly, the land question. That settlement will open the way to liberty; and then, and not until then, can we rightly judge of the real magnitude of those other evils which now seem to loom so large.

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