

## Bolshevism or Sanity

THE experiment now going on in Russia, regarding which the most intelligent and intelligible account has come from Hon. Bertrand Russell, is simply communism in action. It is a try-out of that kind of economic government that comes of reaction. It demands even for temporary success the dictatorship of the strong hand. Lenine appears to furnish *that*, and Trotsky is his left arm.

A system of long continued injustice must result in one of two things. Either the injustice must be supplanted by justice, or the victims of economic oppression seize power by revolution. The Russian workmen appear to have done this. That they should have tried an experiment in democracy was impossible, or wildly improbable. Democracy requires an apprenticeship—this the Russians lacked. Czarism breeds czarism and Lenine succeeds Nicholas, a perfectly natural succession. The Russian is an idealist without practicability—even Tolstoy thought it necessary to illustrate an economic revolution by personal sacrifice that advertised his own eccentricity rather than the great ideal for which he stood.

Russia is the natural home of violent economic reaction, and furnishes a hospitable experiment station for just the kind of economic society that has grown up almost in the twinkling of an eye. That it should have happened anywhere else is hardly thinkable.

Yet—and this is spoken as a friendly warning to the conservatives of this country—the influence of such a system, with active or secret propaganda agents in every great center, with the support of parlor radicals whose mushy economic thinking leaves them incapable of virile conclusions, is bound to produce *some* results. That this tendency is with us, and may go from more to more, is not unlikely. The demands of the Socialist Party and the Farmer-Labor Party should give the conservative press and public, the small and large business men, serious pause. The almost pathetic ineffectualness of Harding and Cox and Coolidge to meet this particular issue cannot be very reassuring to the conservative. Mr. Coolidge's statement that these ideas are "importations" is illustrative of the feeble way that the party leaders seek to parry these assaults on our institutions. Their statements that property is inviolable is hardly a satisfactory answer to those who question its inviolability. These institutions are subjects of serious questioning, and the equity of their standing is under scrutiny. No mere *obiter dicta*, no talk of property rights, of imported foreign ideas, will avail. These critics have an economic "reform" which they propose to submit to the non-propertied classes—about ninety per cent. of the people—for the overthrow of all this. Talk of American principles does not interest them—especially as their opponents do not trouble themselves to define what these principles are. Nor are they concerned whether the ideas they hold are "imported" or not—they are free traders when it comes to ideas. Cries of "confiscation" do not frighten them—indeed it is confiscation they are bent upon, and they

are indifferent or wholly ignorant of the immorality of their proposals.

Now in this there is food for thought to all those who wish well to their country. To the wild schemes of the anarchist and Bolshevik and the milder claims of the Socialist, there is, in fact, an answer. It is furnished in the Single Tax. It meets the assaults upon all property with the explanation that that which is really property should be secure from all attack and even from governmental contribution. It would take for government the economic rent of land created by the people, leaving the product of the individual's industry and enterprise untaxed. It satisfies the claim of those who ask for nothing but what they earn, and it takes from none the wealth in their possession. And it leaves to them all the wealth they can produce in the future.

What more, or rather what less, can the owner of wealth, the business man, the employer of labor ask for? He hears everywhere the suggestions that smack of confiscation. Wildly or mildly communistic proposals are formulated in the demands of the new political parties. State and Federal taxation levy an ever increasing tribute upon the earnings of capital and labor. Government regulation and control, as part of our war policy, continues in time of peace to further hamper industrial movements. Between the socialism of government and the further socialism that is proposed by forces ready to seize the reins, the business man is confronted by perils on every side.

Is it not about time he stopped to think? The Single Tax would take away the vexatious imposts, the irritating inquisitions of tax departments, the legislation of operation and control by government—at all events, it would make nearly all such regulation and control unnecessary. It would remove the menace of socialism in front of him. It would take nothing from him save the opportunity to speculate in the needs of his fellow men. It would take nothing for government save what is produced by the people in common, the economic rent of land that is due to their presence and activities. It would remove forever the dangers of communism, save and perhaps that sort of communism, which none need fear, that might be indulged in by groups within themselves and for their own satisfaction, and from motives arising from feelings of Christian fellowship as a result of the increased production that would follow from a free earth.

Is it not worth while thinking about?

TO GIVE labor full freedom; to make wages what they ought to be, the full earnings of labor; to secure work for all and leisure for all, and abundance for all; to enable all to enjoy the advantages and blessings of an advanced civilization—we must break down all monopolies and destroy all special privileges.—HENRY GEORGE.

TO DEVELOP YOUR CITY: Stop taxing industry and commerce. Tax land values only.