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EDITORIAL

MUCH SENSE AND AS MUCH NONSENSE FROM COL. W.A. TAYLOR.

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WILLIAM A. Taylor, Colonel William A. Taylor, is a gentleman who occupies front rank as a distinguished member of the Ohio Democracy. Just now the Colonel is in a dazed state of mind. The unprecedented minority into which the last election threw the party officially styled “Democratic” in Ohio is, indeed, enough to cause any Democrat “to pause.” The Colonel pauses—and he reflects. His reflections are set forth in a signed article in the Columbus, O., *Citizen* of the 11th instant.

Col. Taylor describes the recent programme and campaign conducted in Ohio by the Democratic party as having been Johnsonian—single-tax or socialist balderdash; he speaks of the Single Tax and Socialism as one and the same thing; he denounces both as destructive of individualism; and he ascribes to that the crushing defeat sustained by his party.

Undoubtedly there is much sense in all this, but as much nonsense too. Hard as it may be to disentangle such a tangle of sense and nonsense, it will repay the effort.

That the Single Tax would be utterly destructive of individuality and hence a national calamity none, informed on political economy, will deny. What is the programme of the Single Tax? It is for the State to appropriate all the land-values, that is, the rent. The inevitable result of that would be that the capitalist class—which to-day is forced to divide with the land-lord element among them the plunder that the former now levies upon the working class—would then keep the whole to itself. The reason is obvious. To-day the power of the capitalist lies in his ownership of the machinery (capital) without which land (natural opportunities) are inaccessible to the capital-less man. To-day, the power that lies in the capitalist (holder of social opportunities) compels the landlord (holder of natural

opportunities) to deal with the farmer, and on the other hand, the power that lies, and ever lay, with the landlord (holder of natural opportunities) in turn compels the capitalist (holder of social opportunities), this social upstart and recent intruder in the body social, to treat, and share his plunder with, the old-time sole possessor “of the earth and the fullness thereof.” Eliminate the landlord, as the Single Tax would by stripping him of his rent, and “free the land,” as the Single Tax proposes, to the highest bidder, and the “man on the street” can see that the land would be “freed” only to the capitalist class, because that class alone holds the social opportunities (capital) that render the natural opportunities (land) at all accessible to labor. The capitalist class would, accordingly, have alone the chance to bid; and, seeing that “Government is ever held by the class that rules,” the capitalist would be bidding to itself—the only ruling class left, with the masses left out in the chilly cold. To-day, the capitalist bids to the landlord; having, under the Single Tax but himself to bid to, he will be the undisputed “cock of the walk.” Every economist who is a historian, and every historian who is an economist knows that the Single Tax idea originated in the capitalist revolution of France, the capitalists seeking to rid themselves from the landlord and bringing him under, where they already held the working class. To-day, a grasping twin-exploiter, the capitalist would, under the Single Tax, be an overpowering tyrant, crushing the population like a juggernaut car. No room for individuality there. And so far Col. W.A. Taylor reveals profound scholarship.

Socialism, on the other hand, proceeds from the unshakable principles that:

1. The land on and the capital with which to work are essential to man;
2. He who has not these essentials is the slave of him who has:
3. The ownership of these essentials establishes a ruling class, owning the government, with which it crushes the people.
4. Such a state of things tends to destroy individuality. And the proof of it is seen in increasing poverty, increasing dependence, to the point of people swarming, as they did the other day in this land, ready to sell an ear in response to the advertisement of a physician who wanted an ear for a rich patient, while at the same hour a millionairess was being wedded to a European prince.
5. Such a state of things is upheld by the Republican and the orthodox Democratic parties.

From all the above facts it follows:

1. That Socialism and the Single Tax are antipodal, exactly the reverse.

A scheme to abolish eleven out of twelve pirates and place in the hands of only one of the gentry a concentrated power to plunder the people is not Socialism. That is the Single Tax scheme in seeking to abolish the landlord pirate and “adding grease to the elbow” of his younger and now overtopping pal, the capitalist.

A scheme, or be it dream, from which popular freedom, the abolition of the effect of class rule, is expected, despite the fact that the social opportunities (capital) are left the monopoly of a class, a small one, at that is not Socialism. That is Single Tax—consequently balderdash.

2. Individualism is being crushed now by capitalism. Its salvation depends upon the triumph of Socialism.

So far, accordingly, Col. W.A. Taylor talked nonsense.

Finally, it is pearls of wisdom that the Colonel emits when he ascribes the recent and overwhelming defeat of the Ohio Democracy to Johnsonianism. Johnsonianism, as may be judged from the above, is revolutionary freakishness. Whether freakish or not, the Democratic party has no business to dabble with revolution. The Democratic is the twin sister of the Republican party. They are the political arms of capitalism—of the rule of the capitalist class, and the plunder of the working class, the upholders of the system of wage-slavery. For either party to hold revolutionary language, is simply to drive the capitalists in a lump into the other—as happened before with Bryan. When either talks freakishness, it thereby deprives itself also of the labor vote. The Democratic party has no chance unless where it returns to its old stand, the good old Grover Cleveland stand, of dealing the free trade rifle diet to workingmen on strike for human conditions.

Then the chances of the Democratic party will again be even with those of the Republican party, and their chances will continue even—down to the day when the two will evenly suffer their final defeat, jointly rolled in the dust, like another double-headed monster-dragon by the avenging Archangel St. Michael, the embattled Working Class of America, giving battle under the oriflamme of the Socialist Labor Party.

There is much to be learned from the sense that Col. W.A. Taylor

emits—enough to pardon his nonsense.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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