## DEBATE—REBUTTAL (Continued from the last issue)

# Is Government Ownership Socialism?

### Mr. Talbott

Mr. Landis states it is absurd for me to state that government ownership of industry and land and credit constitutes a Socialist State. Unless we use words with the same meaning we can not expect to reach an agreement. I have no way to determine the idea a word is intended to convey except the definition given in dictionaries and encyclopedias. Webster's Encyclopedia Dictionary defines socialism as follows: The name is applied to the theories of social organizations having for their aim, the abolition of that individual action on which modern society depends and the substitution of a regulated system of cooperative action; especially a system in which the government owns, and controls the means of production and distribution. I prefer to use words with the meaning that the public accepts, with idea that the the word conveys to the general public. Every true Socialist's objective is, to establish a society where every able-bodied adult citizen, will live from the results of his — or her — own efforts. That the land is nature's gift to all mankind, and that it is immoral for one person to hold title to any portion of the surface of the earth or to be allowed to exact tribute from another for the use of any of the earth's surface, or for any individual or private group to hold title to the minerals or oils or gases under the surface of the earth. Every true socialist condemns any grants to an individual or private group of any special privilege. The Socialist objective is that all shall labor and live from the results of their own toil. That no able-bodied adult shall live from the labor of others. Mr. Landis states that no State has put into practice Marxian Socialism. That is not the question we are supposed to be discussing.

We are supposed to be discussing the question: "Does government ownership and operation of all industry, land and credit constitute a Socialist State?" No one can honestly claim that a state is not a Socialist State where there is no private title to land, no private enterprise and no private money lenders. If I am not wrongly informed there is no private titles to land, no privately owned banks or money lenders or privately owned industry in Russia. While there may be many things done in Russia that many socialists do not approve of, just as many things are done in capitalist countries that many capitalists do not approve of, it still remains that Russia is a Socialist State, in which all land titles, all banking, and industrial enterprises are common property. A country where no land titles or wealth accumulates in private hands. The curse of every capitalist Nation, is the accumulation of wealth and land titles in a few hands. This is inevitable under the profit system, but not so where there is no private enterprise, private money lenders or land titles.

Unemployment, poverty and crime are the inevitable result of profit taking through profit on industry, land rent and interest . . . Since no man can create a million dollars of wealth in a lifetime, it is clear that a nation can not have millionaires without reducing many to poverty and dire want. All can not be constantly employed because all products can not be purchased off the market. The Socialist system is the only Social System that I am aware of that can give peace and security to all citizens. That can abolish poverty and establish a classless society. We often hear speakers say "Socialism would work if human nature could be changed." Human nature is just what heredity and environment has moulded the individual into. Every individual is simply a product of heredity and environment. If the Dionne quintuplets had been separated at birth and each one placed in a different country with different languages, different religions and customs, each one would have grown to act and believe as their associates act and believe. That is if they never learned of their origin. Capitalism produces its individual kind of citizen. Since capitalism is a system of struggling on the part of all business men for advantage over others, and that spirit has been instilled in the minds of children as they grew up, it follows that the nature of individuals is just what prevailing customs make them. An unjust social system must result in unjust citizens. Likewise a just Social System can be expected to develop just citizens.

It must be a stupid person that does not recognize the fact, that crime in the U. S. began to increase drastically about the time the good land was mostly privately owned. That as wealth and land titles accumulate more extensively in private hands, that crime increases in about the same ratio. From childhood I could not understand why the victims (the producers who worked constantly for just a meager existence, and knew that exploiters were becoming immensely wealthy), did not protest. It was a common boast that ours was the greatest country in the world, that a man could start with nothing and become a millionaire. With a modicum of foresight every producer should realize that all large fortunes are created by labor, and owned by non-producers, and are detrimental to the producers. One should further realize that the accumulation of wealth in private hands must eventually break down industry in any country. Every manufacturing country is dependent on selling its surplus product (that portion that can not be sold at home) in other countries. In order to do so loans are made to non-manufacturing nations, to be used to purchase the surplus goods. In the U. S. the surplus is so great that industry can not be kept going except by extension loans and investments in other countries, as well as in our own country. Americans are prone to boast of our country, as a democracy. Our country is not a democracy in any sense. The best we can say is we elect our rulers. The voters have nothing to say in regard to what laws are enacted. We are not allowed to register opposition to the laws that Congress enacts. In some States laws enacted by the legislature can be referred to the voters by petition, and may be rejected. This is not true of acts of Congress. We have had many laws foisted on us by acts of Congress that no honest man would have sanctioned at the ballot.

The voters have never evinced any concern for the general welfare on election day. The fact that the socialists are split into half a dozen political parties all antagonistic to each other is the greatest evidence of the above fact. One thing I deplore above all else, is that many leading socialists violently oppose any reforms that would correct even the greatest injustice. For 158 years privately owned banks have had authority to issue their notes as money. Since the Appeal to Reason and The American Guardian suspended publication I have never seen a socialist publication that exposed that monstrous legalized robbery. It is the moral duty of every publisher — as well as every voter — to condemn unjust legislation. Yet socialist papers are published for decades and their readers never learn who owns the stock of the Federal Reserve Banks or why we have 23,589 million dollars of Federal Reserve notes loaned into use at perpetual interest. A bank note is not wealth in any sense no more than your blank check is. The fact you sign a blank check does not transfer it into wealth. Neither does the fact that the president of a