
The ABC of Socialism

by Hermon F. Titus †

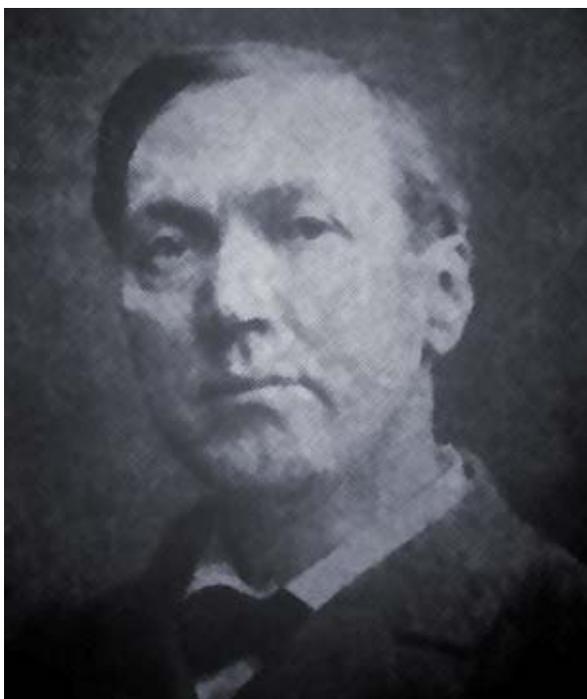
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A. What Socialism Proposes to GET.

In one word, Wealth for all. Plenty of the good things of life for everybody. A fine house to live in, fine furniture in it, and fine lawns and trees about it. A table loaded with good things to eat. Abundance of clothing, comfortable and elegant. Opportunity and means to travel all over the world. Leisure to read and play and work. No poverty anymore with its filth and sickness and vice. With all these things, Socialism will get the consequences of all these things, a natural human development, large, healthy, noble men and women, a happy, energetic, progressive race.

You say all this is a dream? No, no dream at all, but an immediate possibility. By means of the vast new machinery of this modern world, we can produce wealth enough for all without any trouble whatever. A modern cotton mill in place of the old

hand-loom, a modern railroad in place of the old stage-coach, a modern Electric Light Company in place of the old candle-mould, a modern shoe factory in place of the old bench shoe-maker — by means of these new appliances a man can produce a hundred or a thousand times as much wealth as in the times of our fathers.



There is no doubt at all about this. Modern inventions have so increased the productive capacity of civilized mankind that all men could have abundance of wealth by working only 3 or 4 hours a day.

Socialism proposes to get this abundance for all.

†- **Hermon F. Titus** was born in Massachusetts in 1852. As a boy he worked on farm, in a butcher shop, and in paper mill while attending school. Took course in Eastman's Business College, 1867. Bookkeeper and dry goods clerk in NYC for 2 years, attending a college-preparatory school at night. Graduated Madison University, 1873; and its Theological Seminary, 1876. Pastor at First Baptist Church, Ithaca, NY, for 4 years, and in Newton, MA for 7 years. Resigned ministry "because churches did not represent Jesus." Graduated Harvard Medical School, 1890. Practiced medicine in Newton, MA for 2 years before moving to Seattle, where he practiced for an additional 8 years. Always politically independent, Titus made a brief effort to organize the "Seattle Citizens' Movement" in 1900. When this effort fizzled out, Titus joined the Socialist Party. Titus was Founder and Editor of *The Socialist*, established in Seattle, Aug. 12, 1900. Titus was long a bitter opponent of the post-Populist agrarian approach of Julius Wayland and his *Appeal to Reason*; Titus, by way of contrast, was a staunch adherent of proletarian socialism. Titus and his weekly newspaper was a major force in shaping the ideology of the radical Socialist Party of Washington, members of which included future Left Wing leaders Alfred Wagenknecht, Ludwig Katterfeld, William Z. Foster, Elmer Allison, T.E. Latimer, and Emil Herman. Titus was a delegate to 1904 SPA Convention. The 57-year old Titus left the SPA in Nov. 1909 in protest of the NEC's intervention in the Washington factional war in favor of his "constructive socialist" opponents. His paper, *The Socialist*, terminated in 1910.

B. What Socialism Proposes to DO.

In order to get this abundance for all, we must do something. We are not getting it now. What shall we do to get it?

Socialism proposes something very definite to do. It is this: Take to ourselves these vast new inventions and use them for producing new wealth for all instead of producing it for a few.

The only reason we are not all well off now is that a few people own these great modern tools and refuse to let us work at them except when they can make a profit for themselves. The fact is, not more than half of us are allowed by these capitalists, or great machine owners, to work even half the time. If we owned these factories and railroads and mines and mills ourselves and all of us worked at them to produce wealth for our own use and happiness, all the troubles of poverty would disappear at once.

The only thing that lies between us and the promised land is this private ownership of the means of producing wealth.

Therefore, what Socialism proposes to do, in order to get wealth for all, is to take possession of the Instruments of Wealth Production and run them for the use of all.

C. HOW Socialism Proposes to Do It.

This is the practical first step. It is of no use to talk about what we propose to get nor even what we propose to do to get it, unless we know just how to do it.

And we know just how. And this is how:

We propose that all those people who are deprived of their right to use the machinery they have made and to get the riches they make, shall come to-

gether in a political party and "vote the rascals out." These men who are denied the right to use their own machinery are the men who now work for wages, a bare living. They have nothing to lose, and everything to gain. This is the working class. Socialism appeals to them on the ground of their self-interests, the ground on which all practical men base their appeals to other men. Ours is a business enterprise, and like all businessmen, we appeal to men on business principles.

We are a very practical lot, we Socialists, we political Socialists. We indulge in no dreams or false hopes. We say to the worker, now destitute: "Come with us, join our party, vote yourselves into power, use that power of government to capture back those means of wealth production which the capitalists have stolen from you, and then you will get all that abundance which modern inventions entitle you to."

The great present mission of the Socialist Party is to gather together all those workers whose real interests lie in abolishing the private ownership of the Means of Production, and also to shut out of the party the class whose real interests lie in the preservation of the present system.

We do not need to discuss very much what we propose to get nor even what we propose to do, but the question that confronts us now, of immense consequence, is the *How*. If we fail in this, we fail in all.

This is often called a question of *Tactics*. It is a question of *Strategy* rather. It is not a question of the plan of battle even. It involves the constitution of the army itself. In this mighty Battle of the Ballots, he who is not with us, whose real interests are not with us, is against us, and will turn his weapons against us in the final struggle.

A political Party of the Working Class is the *How*, a Class-Conscious Contest.

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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