
Socialism.

[excerpt]

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Introduction.

It is not with the view of making an apology that the following explanation is given when so many editions of various writers on Socialism are extant.

We have *Socialism Made Plain* [by Allan Benson], *The Purpose of Socialism* [by ???], *The Common Sense of Socialism* [by John Spargo], but there is one Socialism, the Socialism which has its foundation in the worldwide International Socialist Movement.

At this time, the organized expression of Internationalism has practically disappeared in that world horror known as War, in which the economic slaves of the various nationalities are being hurled against each other.

Nevertheless, when the war is over a new and more powerful international movement will present itself to the attention of the world. It will be the international workingmen who will understand more than ever that to emancipate themselves, they, the workingmen, rather than some swell heads literary wonders, must do the work themselves.

Socialism No Invention.

Socialism is not an invention of any fertile mind. It is not a marvelous haven of rest for those who are good. It is no utopian scheme which good intentioned people prepare so that the world may be regenerated.

Socialism has its roots in a thorough understanding of the significance of the evolutionary expressions in history.

Many good men and women who in the development of our modern social and industrial life have viewed with pain and anxiety the sufferings of the working class have attempted to make reforms which

would ease the masses.

But these reforms have inevitably failed, not because the intentions of those who proposed them were not good, but because they did not fit in the struggle with the forces dominant in social and industrial life. *They lacked force.*

Let no one underestimate the element of force which is absolutely essential in the development of the Socialist movement.

Evolution, on which the Socialist movement is based, is simply the expression of the force which was able to assert itself; and that is the reason why Marx and Engels by an examination of historical events came to their celebrated formula, Historical Materialism, which is the foundation of Socialism.

They said that the only way that labor (the working class) can emancipate itself from the oppressions which are imposed upon it, is by gathering force sufficient to constitute itself the ruling class.

This historic research and conclusion which Engels gives Marx credit for formulating is well to reproduce right here:

That in every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, formed a basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained, the political and intellectual history of that epoch; that consequently the whole history of mankind [since the dissolution of primitive tribal society holding land in common ownership] has been a history of class struggles, contests between the exploiting and the exploited, that the history of these class struggles forms a series of evolution in which a stage has been reached where the exploited and oppressed class, the proletariat, cannot attain its emancipation from the sway of the exploiting and ruling class, the bourgeoisie — without at the same time and once and for all emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions, and class struggles.

[Historical Materialism.]

Historical Materialism explains the events in history on the basis that material motives underlie all actions.

This to a degree ought to be illustrated. The working class have been oppressed, have been kept in mental, moral, social, and even physical slavery, largely to not understanding the causes of the phenomena that surround them.

They hear or read of historic events and they are deluded by designing elements in society who want to maintain their dominance and the slavery of the working class.

They are told that the wonderful phenomena that present themselves in history are the doings of some all-wise providence; that the contending parties fight in response to that; that they undertake great expeditions in response to this supernatural power. Just so far as the working class will accept the theory, just so far will they remain slaves.

Changes in society are not the work of something beyond the ken of men. They are the result of designing elements in society who either try to acquire or to maintain a dominance which enables them to ride on the backs of those who make life and the enjoyment thereof possible.

This slavery based on superstition and ignorance brings some awful consequences, and those who foster the supernatural idea, tell the masses that this is the will of some all-wise providence.

A general recognition of the underlying forces that today give social expression, the discarding of superstitious belief and the challenge of all false authority, would do more to emancipate mankind than all the remedial legislation coming from kindhearted people who try to make a bargain with the unseen and unknowable.

It is for this reason that Socialism demands that the worker repudiate all supernatural justification of their oppression, challenge every assumed authority and demand its mandate.

Socialists do not deny authority but they challenge a self-assumed authority.

It is for this reason that Socialism has veneration for true democracy — a democracy which speaks the voice of the people, of all the people.

[Class Consciousness.]

While society is divided into classes, the working class will recognize the voice of the working class as the only authority which has any justification.

To make the working class speak clearly is the mission of the Socialist movement of the world; to explain to them that the things that seem miraculous and beyond comprehension have an explanation which appeals to the reason of man and not to his fear.

The working class democracy, intelligently expressed, understanding the history of the past and the tendencies of the present, thereby gets an insight of what the future may have in store.

The main proposition not depending upon any supernatural forces to give them relief is the developing of the spirit of class consciousness.

Class consciousness will make them understand that they must relieve themselves of the burdens that are imposed upon them, to challenge the authority of any individual or set of individuals [who seek] to deprive them of the enjoyment of the results of their socially applied labor.

To this end the working class must get together, gather force, seize power, and use such power when acquired in behalf of their class to relieve them of oppression.

When sufficient force shall be gathered, the new and clean authority based upon the will of the people, mentally and socially free, will be obeyed without challenge.

When the worker is secured in his rights and the enjoyment of the social value of his labor, the cause for divisions in society will have disappeared and the struggle for existence will not longer be an internecine strife, but a struggle with the forces of nature for the betterment of humanity.

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