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# The Iowa Socialist

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Vol. 2 No. 67

Dubuque, Iowa, Saturday, Jan. 9, 1904

50 Cents per Year.  
In clubs of four, \$2.00

## What Is Socialism?

James Oneal

"Modern Socialism is, in its essence, the direct product of the recognition, on the one hand, of the class antagonisms existing in the society of today, between proprietors and non-proprietors, between capitalists and wage-workers; on the other hand of the anarchy existing in production."—Engels.

It is not a scheme or a plan no more than feudalism or capitalism are. Great stages of economic systems are not the result of deliberate plans formed by theorists; they are growths. They do not come through conscious selection of "great men," but by historic process, which uses them instead of being used by them. What is this historic process?

It is the increasing mastery by men of their environment; the improvement in the methods by which the means to sustain life is produced and distributed. To illustrate:

On reading your history you are struck by the fact that at different periods which are classified by the historian, the organization of the wealth productive power of society and the forms of government, customs and beliefs of the time, present such a marked contrast to each other that it seems they can have no historic connection and must have had a separate and isolated origin. For example, compare early Rome and Greece with the middle ages and the latter with our own times.

But look again and follow the thread of historic change and we see an old society being slowly modified by the economic changes at its base by the shifting of its labor power and increase of productive forces, till it finally fades with the passing of time, into another system which we thought at first glance was isolated and disconnected with its predecessor. The process of development does not stop, but proceeds through all the forms of chattel, feudal and capitalistic production.

This development is sometimes retarded by the persistence of old forms, no longer in keeping with new conditions, surviving the period of their usefulness. This brings revolution which is simply orderly development bursting asunder that which would hold it in check. It is the last and final phase in the extinction of an old and the birth of a new society.

If this historic drama, with its scenes of carnage, class struggles and all the incidents that it involves, is the result of a plan, then whose is it? Who planned feudal production and who originated the capitalist production of our time? No one. The "statesmen" and generals and all those conspicuous in historical events, instead of shaping history, were themselves the instruments of the ruling class of their time of others struggling to possess their advantages. And how is a class qualified to struggle for supremacy and use these "great men" for their purposes? By them being attached to new powers of production that old conditions have evolved.

In short, progress and historic change from one great system to another is conditioned on the struggle between classes that clusters around the developing means of wealth production.

For example: The capitalist class are the successors to the productive power generated in feudal society which was no longer adapted to it. They secured control of government, the instrument of class rule, and shaped it and all other institutions till they assumed that form which guarantees the preservation of their class interests.

This view of history which seeks an explanation of all social progress in the economic changes constantly taking place, has its justification and proof in history itself. Socialism is, therefore, not a plan, but a forecast of impending change based upon an accurate analysis of historical development and especially that development that is taking place under our very eyes.

What has Socialism, from this point of view to say of the capitalistic system of our time? The answer comes that it cannot escape the fate of the other forms of production on whose ruins it is built. What are the facts?

It exists by the exploitation of propertyless wage workers who sell their labor to the capitalist owners of the instruments of wealth production. The working class sell themselves at a disadvantage by the day, week or month, as the case may be. Their vast numbers result in a struggle for the jobs the capitalist class have to dispose with the result that the tendency of wages is downward. On an average, the wages will exceed little, if any, more than enough to keep them in working order and guarantee a new supply when their vitality is exhausted. The values over and above this average produced by them are appropriated by the capitalist class and re-

resent so much clear gain or crystallized unpaid labor. The appropriation of this surplus value or unpaid labor is the source of the fortunes of all our "self-made" capitalists.

Capitalism is like other systems we have mentioned, the organization of a class ruled society devoted to the exploitation of its wealth producers. Government in all its forms is the instrument by which the ruling class prevents the working class from making an effective resistance to this exploitation.

But capitalism, like its predecessors, is developing the conditions and the necessity for its overthrow. The task which the capitalist class had to perform in succeeding to the productive powers of an earlier time, was to perfect and organize them which they have done in the great factory system with its minute division of labor and the trust organization of industry itself.

But this colossal productive power called into existence under their rule implied the passage of production from an individual to a collective form. This also made necessary its centralization into fewer hands and the crushing of small producers no longer capable of struggling for a place in the market.

The wealth productive power flows to one pole of society and the propertyless workers to the other. The class struggle between the exploiters and exploited grows more acute as this development proceeds.

The parasitic character of the ruling class—a symptom of their impending overthrow—now becomes apparent. The surplus values they appropriate they are unable to sell to their victims because of the limited purchasing power that a "living wage" gives. The ruling class cannot consume the Midas stream and is forced to conquer and "civilize" barbarians in order to dispose of some of it. This may help, but it does not prevent an inevitable crisis. The capacity of foreign markets is insufficient to absorb the vast volume of surplus values accumulating in the hands of the capitalist class. The channels of exchange choke with the surplus and the whole machinery of society comes to a standstill. This is duplicated in all other capitalist countries. The working class must suffer because they have produced more than the capitalist class can sell or consume and more than they can buy. This continues till the surplus either rots in storage or the meager consumptive power of the ruling class receives it. The process is then repeated with added intensity.

The means of wealth production has reached such colossal proportions that it escapes and defies direction and control of the class under whose rule it evolved. Instead of controlling it they are carried off their feet by it. This paralysis of industry implies the incapacity of its owners to direct it in an intelligent manner.

Their parasitic character is further seen in the fact that the dominant form of capitalist production has left the capitalist class without any useful service to perform. The whole complex mechanism, from the function of superintendence down to the humblest laborer, is now operated by the working class. The capitalist owner tours the continent or engages in yacht races and other amusements and his absence, though it extends for years, is never missed. Industry goes on just the same as though he never lived. The economic structure necessary for Socialism has evolved from capitalism itself while at the same time it provides no place for the capitalist class and the workers now demonstrate their capacity to operate this collective form of production. This has come from historic necessity and not from conscious and deliberate plan.

Collective production necessarily implies collective ownership and control by the workers who now operate it. If they are competent to operate it for a few owners they are competent to operate it for themselves under popular control.

How will it come?

As capitalist production has evolved the necessary economic structures so is it developing the conditions and organizing the class that will bring it about. The working class is constantly being recruited from other classes whose petty productive power becomes extinct when coming in contact with large scale production.

The class antagonism assumes a more glaring character each day. The working class strike and rebel against capitalist exploitation which grows keener with every improved method and machine that is introduced. They leave the mines, factories, etc., in great droves and leave the capitalist in control. A strike is on. The class antagonism is apparent. The police, armies, judges and all the machinery

of government are called into action by the class that controls them. If the workers are fortunate to win against these odds it merely results in an armed truce. The struggle is resumed again in a more violent form only to meet with a firmer resistance of capitalist government. This directs the attention of the workers to the control of government in THEIR interests and abolishing capitalism forever.

The strike in its final phase assumes a new form. The ballot is added to the strike and the workers get in line for political action in the interests of their class. Capitalism spurs them on by the growing antagonism.

The last strike will be one in which the working class succeed in controlling the powers of government and instead of leaving the factories, mills and mines with the owners in control,

they will stay inside and assume the ownership and control themselves.

Through the power that government control gives they will abolish the parasitic appropriation of surplus values and appropriate it for themselves. The wealth produced will go to the actual producers, which will be guaranteed by collective ownership of the means of wealth production. This will be the termination of the class struggle and class rule, and the triumph of Socialism.

It is not a plan, but an accurate analysis of an inevitable historical development and a logical prediction or forecast based upon it. The working class is now at the task of building the party that will usher it in. This is the answer to the question, "What is Socialism?"

## A Fair Day's Wages

Frederick Engels

This has been the motto of the English working class movement for the last fifty years. It did good service in the time of the rising trades unions after the repeal of the infamous combination laws in 1824; it did still better service in the time of the glorious Chartist movement, when the English workmen marched at the head of the European working class. But times are moving on, and a good many things which were desirable and necessary fifty and even thirty years ago are now antiquated and would be completely out of place. Does the old, time-honored watchword, too, belong to them?

A fair day's wages for a fair day's work? But what is a fair day's wages? And what is a fair day's work? How are they determined by the laws under which modern society exists and develops itself? For an answer to this we must not apply to the science of morals or of law and equity, nor to any sentimental feeling of humanity, justice or charity. What is morally fair, what is even fair in the law, may be far from being socially fair. Socially fairness or unfairness is decided by one science alone—the science which deals with the material facts of production and exchange, the science of political economy.

Now, what does political economy call a fair day's wages and a fair day's work? Simply the rate of wages and the length and intensity of a day's work, which are determined by competition of employer and employed in the open market. And what are they when thus determined?

A fair day's wages under normal conditions is the sum required to procure to the laborer the means of existence necessary, according to the standard of life of his station and country, to keep himself in working order and to propagate his race. The actual wages, with the fluctuations of trade, may be sometimes above, sometimes below, this rate, but under fair conditions, that rate ought to be the average for all oscillations.

A fair day's work is that length of working day and that intensity of actual work which expends one day's full working power of the workman without encroaching upon his capacity for the same amount of work for the next and following days.

The transaction, then, may be thus described—the workman gives to the capitalist his full day's working power—that is, so much of it as he can without rendering impossible the continuous repetition of the transaction. In exchange he receives just as much, and no more, of the necessities of life as is required to keep up the repetition of the same bargain every day. The workman gives as much, the capitalist gives as little as the nature of the bargain will admit. This is a very peculiar sort of fairness.

But let us look a little deeper into the matter. As, according to political economists, wages and working days are fixed by competition, fairness seems to require that both sides should have the same fair start on equal terms. But that is not the case. The capitalist, if he cannot agree with the

laborer, can afford to wait and live upon his capital. The workman cannot. He has but wages to live upon and must therefore take work when, where and at what terms he can get it. The workman has no fair start. He is fearfully handicapped by hunger. Yet, according to political economy of the capitalist class, that is the very pink of fairness.

But this is a mere trifle. The application of mechanical power and machinery to new trades, and the extension and improvement of machinery to trades already subjected to it, keep turning out of work more and more "hands"—and they do so at a far quicker rate than that at which these superceded "hands" can be absorbed by and find employment in the manufacturing of the country. The superceded "hands" form a real industrial army of reserve for the use of capital. If trade is bad, they may starve, steal, beg or go to the workhouse; if trade is good, they are ready at hand to expand production; and until the very last man, woman or child of this army of reserve shall have found work—which happens in times of frantic overproduction alone—until then will its competition keep down wages, and by its existence alone strengthen the power of capital in its struggle with labor. In the race with capital, labor is not only handicapped; it has to drag a cannon ball riveted to its foot. Yet that is fair, according to capitalist political economy.

But let us inquire of what fund does capital pay those very fair wages? Out of capital, of course. But capital produces no value. Labor, is, besides the earth, the only source of wealth, capital is nothing but the stored-up produce of labor. So that the wages of labor are paid out of labor, and the workman is paid out of his own produce. According to what we call common fairness, the wages of the laborer ought to consist in the produce of his labor. But that would not be fair according to political economy. On the contrary, the workman gets out of the produce no more than the bare necessities of life. And thus the end of this uncommonly "fair" race of competition is that the produce of the labor of those who do work get unavoidably accumulated in the hands of those that do not work, and becomes in their hands the most powerful means to enslave the very men who produce it.

A fair day's wages for a fair day's work! A good deal might be said about the fair day's work, too, the fairness of which is perfectly on a par with that of the wages. But that we must leave for another occasion. From what has been stated it is pretty clear that the old watchword has lived its day, and will hardly hold water nowadays. The fairness of political economy, such as it truly lays down the laws which rule actual society, that fairness is all on one side, on that of capital. Let, then, the old motto be buried forever and replaced by another:

Possession of the means of work—raw material, factories, machinery—by the working people themselves.

## "Christmas Bargains"

Franklin H. Wentworth in Vanguard

"Marshall Field & Company announce special Christmas bargains in silks, laces and women's finery."—Chicago Record-Herald.

In every great magazine; in every village newspaper; in every cross-roads weekly, throughout that part of the world popularly known as "Christendom"—meaning the territory devoted to Christ,—may be found during December days the counterpart of this advertisement of Marshall Field.

It is interesting to observe how our simplest, most common and unconscious words and actions expose our hypocrisy of life.

To have our life fabric so interwoven with pretense and fraud that our obliquity is thus unconsciously exhibited, is to be vile indeed.

It is to appear morally as vain Chicago women often appear physically; wonderful creatures in their finery, heads erect, peacock pride blazing from their eyes; their faces streaked with soot!

When commonly in any trade we are so "fortunate" as to get a bargain, we bar the gain of the other party to the transaction; that is, we beat him.

When we get a Christmas bargain we do the other fellow up partly for our gain and partly to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

In every bargain one party of the trade must lose—that the profit of the other may be gained.

When we buy a silk waist it may be some consumptive girl of the sweatshop or factory that goes hungry to the extent of our gain.

When we get a bargain in rare lace

it may be some worn woman with dimmed eyes and patient fingers that is underpaid.

Under present conditions either profit to the merchant or bargain to the purchaser means deprivation of the worker.

Whenever we buy a thing of any kind without paying the full value of it, somewhere down the line of production will be found human labor unrequited; the transaction bears upon its face the stain of human blood.

The coupling of the word bargain with the birthday of Christ exhibits Christian society exactly as it is, a hideous infidelity, a profanation of human life.

Christianity is so defiled that its unconscious language, finding expression in common advertisements, publishes its glaring infamy.

To make the birth-month of the gentle Jesus a time of huckstering; to allow for a single instant the association of His name with the idea of human exploitation, is to debauch His image and to drag His ideals in the mire.

Is it not singular that the Socialist, whom the average Christian in his futile ignorance reckons an enemy of law and order, should feel called upon to defend Jesus against defamations at the hands of those who profess His philosophy?

Merry Christmas! This is Christ's birthday. Peace on earth; good will to men.

Have you succeeded in getting any bargains—in robbing or beating anybody?

PRAISE THE LORD!

## X-RAYLETS

People who are wise vote for what they want; people who are otherwise beg for it.—Erie People.

Abraham Lincoln said, "Labor is superior to capital," but Abe didn't know Teddy, Mark and Rocky.—New Time.

We are told that the White House season will be a gay one. Yes, and the other side of the picture may be seen in the slums of the cities, where humanity is rotting in poverty because others revel in gay luxury.—Appeal to Reason.

"Fire-proof theatres" that burn up seven hundred or more of human beings are a testimonial to the commercial honesty that prevails under capitalism. Chicago ought to be contented with theatres that are not "fire-proof" hereafter.—Social Democratic-Herald.

A man cannot claim the title of Socialist—the most honorable title that any man can have—unless he is a member of the Socialist party. The man who says he is "just as good a Socialist as you are," but stays out of the organization, is only a Socialist sympathizer. He has yet to develop into a full-edged article.—Boswell's Nuggets.

Capitalism tramples beneath its feet all that is sweet and beautiful and sublime in human life. It knows no faith, no love, no friendship. Or it knows them only to feed upon them. It accentuates and exaggerates all that is worst in human nature. It personates and sums up all that is evil in the world. It is time to abolish it.—Los Angeles Socialist.

The "smart set" of the east have evolved a new amusement which is called "Panic," and which is a mimic presentation of the industrial collapse which brings shame and misery to so many. To the vampire class, otherwise known as "the smart set," it is, however, nothing more than a joke. Nero is again fiddling; Louis is inviting to the deluge.—A. L. U. Journal.

The class struggle in our present society can only end in one of two ways. It will either be an industrial despot-

ism or complete industrial freedom; the working people will either be absolute slaves to the master class, or they will be absolutely free from them. The ballot is the weapon through which the workers can secure their industrial freedom. If they don't use it, they will be ground down still lower and lower. Which route are you going to choose?—Ohio Socialist.

Thomas Edison, the "wizard," has openly declared himself an enemy to the labor organizations, his bitterness having carried him so far as to discharge every union man in his laboratory. He even went so far as to go through the Edison Storage Battery company (a shop not implicated in the present strike) and discharged every man who admitted he was a member of the union. The International Association of Machinists wish this notice given the widest circulation.—A. L. U. Journal.

The average yearly salary paid to the women teachers of the United States would not keep a carriage horse in Chicago. In addition to that, as long as a horse is able to do his work, he is sure of his keep and the public would condemn one who would take all that the animal had to give in the best years of his life and then turn him out on the highway to starve, yet this is the lot of teachers everywhere in the United States, from Maine to California, except in New York city.—Margaret Hailey.

The supreme court of Pennsylvania has just decided that the child labor law of that state is unconstitutional. It was the only law advocated by the United Mine Workers that received the governor's signature. Had there been no chance for knocking it out, the governor would have vetoed the child labor law also. As it was, he passed the job to the courts. The employment of children is against the interests of workers everywhere because it brings the man into competition with the child or vice versa. The working class of Pennsylvania are in the real majority. What asses they are to expect anything from a class whose interests are against theirs. And, by the way, the asses are not all confined to Pennsylvania.—A. L. U. Journal.

## Call for Funds

To the Socialists of the United States of America:

Comrades: For the past eighteen months the Socialists of New York and vicinity have been at work raising funds for the establishment of the first daily Socialist and trade union newspaper in the United States, to be called the "New York Globe." By hard work and constant effort we have managed to collect over \$13,000 in cash; an additional sum of about \$6,000 has been pledged and will be paid in this winter. With several hundred dollars more already pledged by the more progressive trades unions the sum of \$20,000 is already in sight. As it will require a capital of at least \$50,000 to successfully launch and uphold a daily newspaper in the city of New York, where we shall have to combat and compete with the largest capitalist dailies in the country, a larger amount than we have on hand at present is needed, and we therefore again call the attention of all Socialists of America to the grand undertaking of the New York comrades and appeal to them to help us in our efforts by contributing such amounts to the Daily Globe fund as each one individually can afford to give for this purpose.

The establishment of the first Socialist daily is a matter which should concern and interest every Socialist in America. It is not a local matter, but one of national importance to the Socialist movement. The publication of the daily will have a beneficial effect upon the movement all over the land and will strengthen the Socialist party organization in every state. Comrades, we therefore appeal to you in

behalf of the cause of Socialism and the speedy adoption of Socialist principles, which can best be accomplished through the medium of a daily Socialist press, to contribute at once to the fund for the establishment of the Daily Globe.

The Daily Globe should be published during the presidential campaign and if every Socialist in the country will contribute we will have enough money to begin publication in the near future.

Address all communications and contributions to "Daily Globe," Labor Lyceum, 64 E. Fourth Street, New York City.

Thus the King's will is:  
There hath been slaughter for the sacrifice  
And slaying for the meat, but henceforth none  
Shall spill the blood of life nor taste of flesh,  
Seeing that knowledge grows, and life is one,  
And mercy cometh to the merciful.  
—Light of Asia.

Don't kick when the boss reduces your wages. That is only his way of showing you that you must do away with the wage system. He can't help showing you, and you can't help learning what he is trying to show you; eventually.—Bond of Rrotherhood.

The coming year is more likely to see "harmony" between the republican and democratic parties than between "capital and labor."—Erie People.

A Socialist is a man you can't buy, dicker or faze. Once a Socialist, always a Socialist.—Referendum.





