
Why I Am a Socialist.

Address at a Mass Meeting of the Social Democratic Party at Central Music Hall, Chicago, September 29, 1900.

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In speaking for socialism tonight I shall be as frank with this audience as I am with myself. I must give my own reasons for standing upon this platform. I cannot give the reasons of any other man, or of any sect or party, for supporting the socialist movement, though I respect all the men and motives that here converge. The best service which I can render the cause is to bear witness to the light that I actually see, and not to the light I know only by report. I am a socialist; and all my voting, for the last eight years, has been with the Socialist Labor Party. But before I am a socialist, I am a free man; I am a socialist because I am free. I have paid too great a price for my freedom, and have left too many blood stains upon the capitalistic order, to make any compromise with what I have won and intend to keep. I will never limit the liberty of another man's soul, nor permit any man or party to limit the liberty of my own. I will not tell lies to support the truth, or conceal one truth for the sake of helping another truth. I will not evade bearing witness to exactly what I seem to see this year, in order to be consistent with something I may have said last year. I will not tell anything less or more than just the truth I see, at the moment I am speaking, to support any party, or even to support the throne of the universe itself. If economic socialism means anything, it means just this liberty of every man to take a free look at life and all its problems and to be gladly heard by his comrades while he tells what he

sees.

When I left Chicago last January for Egypt and eastern lands, I had the intention of staying across the seas until a later time than the present.

For many weeks I was living tent life in Syria, out of the reach of letter and newspaper communication with America. Only recently, on coming into Europe, have I understood something of the beginning and meaning of the American socialist movement. I could have gone on with my plans of travel and have committed myself to the cause of political socialism at a later period. The socialist movement does not seem to me to have yet taken its coherent and conquering form in the politics of America. But when I saw that American socialism was actually in the political melting-pot, being tried by fire, in order that it might come forth as a national effort for that freedom and fullness of life which was promised by our fathers, then I also saw that my place was in the melting-pot. I could not wait until socialism should be exactly pleasing to me in all of its aspects, or until I should be altogether pleasing to socialists in some of my views of life; my place was with my comrades, sharing with them in the troubles that are always involved in the first creative steps of an organized movement. So I gave up my plans of travel



and am here to publicly commit myself to the socialist movement. And I am here to stay until the cooperative commonwealth be established, or until the possibilities of my life be exhausted in helping American labor to consciously and nobly express itself in a coherent effort towards that collective order of society that shall change work from a curse into a song.

It may be that the American socialist party is yet to be formed. If that be true, all of us who call ourselves socialists are ready to form in any party that shall truly stand for the cause and philosophy of socialism. It is to socialism itself we are committing ourselves tonight and not to any particular party as a final expression of socialism. Socialism is larger than any sect or party, any definition or creed. It has no bible except the living human facts as they unfold. The particular name or party under which socialism shall finally come is not here important. The thing of importance is this: that we now have an opportunity to politically express ourselves in a movement which is at least the germ of the American socialism that is to fulfill what was good and true in the democracy of our fathers.

Three great lines are converging in the American socialist outcome. We must name first the Socialist Labor people, who brought from Europe to America what is sometimes called dogmatic socialism. These men have seemed to some of us to be sectarian and harsh, and to have carried class-consciousness into class-hatred. But is it to be wondered at that they have been bitter and dogmatic in their advocacy of socialism and in their attack upon the capitalistic order? Our early socialists were men who had themselves experienced the bitterness and devastation of life that comes to labor in the service of capitalism; they were men who spelled out their Marx in the hideous misery of the sweatshops; men who pawned their threadbare coats to print their tracts. They were socialists when it took a fanatic and a hero to be a socialist; socialists, when to be known as a socialist meant hunger or starvation for themselves and their families. They were men who made brave and pitiful sacrifices for one another as comrades; men who, however fierce, practiced towards each other some of the ethics which we teachers are not even heroic enough to teach. These men do not make a bible of their Marx, and they understand as well as any of us that the economic philosophy of fifty years ago will have to be recast in the mold of

present American facts and ideals. What they now justly ask is that socialism, under whatever name it appears or by whatever party it is brought before the people, shall base itself directly upon the fundamental fact that those who live by selling their labor-power to capital must become class-conscious of the fact that they are the rightful owners and real producers of the earth; and that this producing class must intelligently and coherently set to work to achieve its own liberty from the capitalistic system of industry. I do not see how any socialist, or any nobly thoughtful man, can dispute this fundamental proposition, however fiercely it may have been advocated. Nor do I see how American socialism can be established until American labor comes to such a consciousness of its manhood and worth as shall lift it into mighty response to this mightiest task to which mankind has ever summoned itself — the task of organizing out of the materials of nature and history a harmonious and free society, in which every man shall equally inherit with every other man the resources and opportunities that open wholeness and gladness of life to human hope.

Another converging line is that individualism which was the genius of our American political origins and which was the meaning of eighteenth century political and social philosophy. The end which that individualism sought was right. Rousseau and Jefferson, and the French Revolutionists, have a claim which must be justly and fully acquitted in the court of American socialism. Socialism does not come to destroy but to fulfill the ideals of liberty, fraternity, and equality, which made our century so big with promises in its beginnings and so sad and skeptic with failure in its endings. The liberty which early American aspiration sought can be fulfilled only in the association which socialism offers. Individualism can be fulfilled only in collectivism. Liberty is a social achievement and must be achieved by men together, not in competition with each other. American democracy, which originally meant voluntary cooperation as the order of the state, will soon be lost, even as an ideal, unless it realizes itself in democratic or cooperative production.

The third converging line is a new religious sense, developing much keener and more comprehensive spiritual attitude in the common life. It is a movement so wide and deep that it is scarcely yet recog-

nized, and has nothing to do with the conventional religious experiences. It is so altogether outside of historic religious institutions, and has come upon the world so unawares, that it does not even know itself as religious or spiritual. But it is upon the tides of this new spiritual movement that some of us have been borne into socialism, and we must be true to our inspiration, while fully recognizing the worth of other inspirations than our own.

Let me explain the point of view and advance from which this unobserved spiritual movement becomes one with the economic movement. We began our working life with the conviction that the individual soul is all that has any worth. The individual man, his wholeness and liberty, are the unrivaled concern of the universe, and all that gives it any worth or meaning. Nature and economic things have a value just to the extent that they are the materials by which the human soul may freely express itself. All material things are intrinsically spiritual values; they are the coin of the spiritual realm. The goal of history, if the universe is sincere and has a meaning, is the liberty of each soul to at last become a law unto itself; the liberty of each man to individualize nature and truth for himself, and to live an original life of his own. If you examine closely enough just what it is that has made the centuries red with human struggle, you will find it to be just this struggle of the soul of man for emancipation from every form of coercion; this struggle of the individual life to freely and unfearingly choose for itself what it should be, to richly and fully be what it should choose, and to actually lay up its treasures beside its heart. It was upon the tides of a spiritual passion for this liberty that some of us were beaten against the hard fact that there is no liberty for the individual so long as some people own that upon which all people depend. We have discovered that no spiritual freedom can achieve or maintain itself except it be realized in economic freedom. Private property in the natural resources upon which all men depend, private property in the capital which all men create, is nothing less than private property and traffic in human souls; yea, it is the foundation of the ecclesiastical claim of private property in God and the truth, which is no less vicious than the claim of the monopolist to private ownership of the earth. The liberty of the soul can be achieved only through the passing away of the capital-

istic form of society and the coming of the free and cooperative state.

The soul cannot find its freedom in "a free field and a fair fight"; for the soul is not free so long as it is compelled to fight for anything; the individual is free only when he is liberated from fighting, that he may live for the common good, in company with his brothers.

But there is still another factor in this spiritual movement towards socialism; and that is, the ethical strain that has come to some of us who have faced the whole truth about our economic selves. We who are at once the receivers and victims of special privileges know that we are on the backs of our brothers. We know that our books, our clothes, our privileges are ours because our hands are in our brothers' blood. I am able to stand here tonight and make my plea for socialism because I have consumed the labor-product which pays for all that I am able to be and all that I am able to give. I cannot believe that I can serve my comrades best by withdrawing from the problem with the Tolstoian and setting up a private kingdom of heaven of my own; it would be an unspeakable relief to me to pay my world-debt so cheaply. My place is in the thick of social pain and travail, in the depth of the resolving chaos, even if I have to bear this ethical strain and shame to the end. The least that I can do to pay my debt to my brothers, the least that I can do to be decent, is to contribute the whole of my life to the emancipation of labor from that capitalistic order which makes the product of the millions the profit and luxury of the few.

I said, when I began, that the American socialist movement had not yet been fully and coherently organized, and that these three ethical factors which I have named are converging in that movement. But whether you agree with me or not as to these converging lines, let me ask you to face clearly the fact that socialism in some form is coming, without any regard to what you or I want. Closely speaking, socialism can have but one meaning and issue. Loosely speaking, there might be many kinds of socialism. There can be a thoroughly democratic and spiritual socialism, and there might be an imperialistic or Bismarckian socialism, in which the state would own the people rather than the people the state. If I might prophesy, I would say that in twenty years there will be, as now, two great

political parties in America; but both of them will be socialistic: one the party of Tory socialism and the other the party of social democracy. But whatever the form under which collectivism comes, the next stage of the world will be a collective stage of production and distribution. We might just as well appoint a committee to sit down on the sun to keep it from going on its way as to attempt to obstruct the socialistic issue of the capitalist mode of production. Competition and private industry no longer work, and they ought not to work. The present industrial system is approaching an economic world-crisis, which is also the world's spiritual crisis.

What is the attitude of the two great national parties toward this evident world-crisis? The Republican is frankly the party of the capitalistic order. Under the priesthood of Mr. Hanna, it has been indissolubly wedded to capitalism as its weaker and obedient half. Let us credit Mr. Hanna and his party with all sincerity in their belief that capitalism is the best and only safe order of industry. I am not here to question the sincerity of any man or party; but only to state their attitude towards social reconstruction. The Republican Party is so openly the capitalistic party that its principles need no discussion before an audience anywise in sympathy with socialism.

But the Democratic Party gives somewhat intangible hints of social reform. Let us examine those hints.

So far as I can see, I am not able to find in any of Mr. Bryan's utterances nor in the various platforms of his party, a syllable that indicates the slightest knowledge of the real human problem that now confronts us. The Democratic propositions for economic and social reforms are negative and meaningless. Their talk of anti-trust legislation is childish, as well as unhistoric. You might just as well legislate against the tides of the sea or the movements of the solar system as to imagine that anti-trust legislation can for a moment hinder the present industrial development from going on to its consummation. If Mr. Bryan does not know, I am sure that Mr. Altgeld knows, that anti-trust declarations and legislations are sheer hypocrisy; that they have about as much relation to the real economic problem as Mr. Roosevelt has to modesty and gentle instincts. It is sometimes mysteriously hinted that Mr. Bryan has up his sleeve some very telling card, which

he intends to play in the economic game if he is elected; that he is playing politics just as Lincoln did. I do not believe that Mr. Lincoln played politics in any such sense as some of Mr. Bryan's supporters credit their candidate with doing. It is true that Mr. Lincoln shrewdly adopted every available means to achieve his end; but he knew exactly what he wanted from the beginning and made clear his goal from the opening of his political career as a member of the Illinois legislature. He wanted the progressive abolition of slavery and a nation composed entirely of free men; and he said so. Furthermore, even if Lincoln did play politics in the sense in which Mr. Bryan's friends would indicate, we have nothing to do with that. It is time that we quit asking what Lincoln would do, or what Jefferson would do, or what Moses would do, or what Marx would do, and decide for ourselves, and by our own inspiration, what we are to do in the face of the world-problem that confronts us. No age or its leaders can live by the inspiration and leadership of a past age. There is always more truth and resource in the present than have ever been available in the past. Besides, this method of playing politics as a game will no longer work with the awakening social sense of the common life. The people do not want to know what card a man has up his sleeve, but what coherent and frankly spoken principles a man may have wherewith to meet the problems that are meeting him. There is no game that could be so wisely played just now as the hitherto untried game of honesty. Leaders whom the people will trust in the future must be leaders who believe in principles so strongly that they are not afraid to tell them to the world. They must be leaders who will trust the people and the truth so fully that they will shake out before the face of the people all the truth they have in their heads and hearts.

If we further examine the policy of the Democratic Party, we will find that it is haltingly against the evils that are, but that it has not a single constructive proposition to make as to future good. It is idle to protest that we are against one order of things if we have no better order to propose. Whatever it may disclose in the future, the Democratic Party has not disclosed any constructive ability in the past. The best that its most ardent reformers propose is the abolition of special privileges and the restoration of an imaginary free competition. Now Twentieth Century prob-

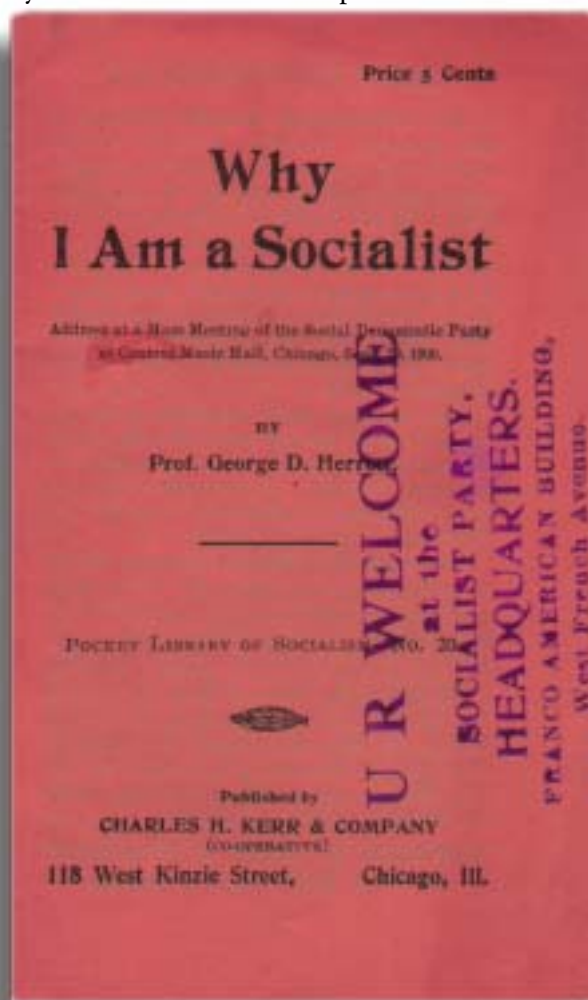
lems cannot be solved by Eighteenth Century phrases. So-called special privileges can be abolished only by making the highest privileges of the few the common privileges of all. The special privileges at which the individualist reformer would aim are the direct results of the very competition which he proposes as a remedy. Special privileges, class legislation, and industrial monopoly are merely the triumph of the strongest competitor; they are the big fish that have swallowed the little fish. Even if the abstract "free field and fair fight," which has never existed outside of the economist's brain, could really exist, the result would again be special privileges and monopoly. In the freest economic field and fairest competition, somebody would get whipped; and the result would be the triumph of sheer brute strength expressing itself in economic might; not the triumph of those men and qualities socially fitted to survive. Besides, a rational civilization has for its end not the so-called survival of the fittest, but the fitting of all to worthily survive. Furthermore, we are not seeking remedies for the existing social order; for it is an order of things that we do not want, well or ill. It is not a remedy for a capitalistic order that the present human situation demands, but a manhood with the spiritual nerve and might to create a cooperative order, which shall realize all the best ideals of all democracies and political philosophies of the past.

I know that there are many that will vote for Mr. Bryan in the hope that the imperialism, which reveals the degradation of our nation and which has made our government the betrayer and the assassin of the liberties of a helpless people, may be rebuked and corrected. But these good people ought to see that imperialism is merely the result of capitalism. Capitalism increases itself out of the produce of the people until they are too poor to buy what they produce. India, starving in the presence of walled-up and plentiful food supplies,

is a monument to the capitalistic order. As Thomas Carlyle said, England was seeking new markets, while the million and a half men and women and children of London who made the clothes went with bare backs because they had nothing wherewith to buy the clothes they made. Strange as it may seem, they were not making clothes to wear, but clothes for the increase of capital. The capitalistic order of America has debauched the conscience of the nation, and used its government to betray and conquer weaker peoples, in order to find markets for the produce of the struggling and blighted lives of the laborers, who cannot buy what they produce. Capitalism, after absorbing the purchasing power

of the real producers, destroys the liberties of weaker peoples in order to compel them to furnish a market, and besides coerces them into paying interest upon bonds. Suppose a man should come into your room to-night with a revolver and forcibly take your money, watch, clothes, and available possessions; and then suppose that, tomorrow, he should send an armed officer with a bill for services rendered in keeping you in order while he robbed you; suppose, further, that in lieu of your having nothing left wherewith to pay the bill, he should compel you to sign a

note for an amount of money so large that you could never pay it, but not too large to consume the produce of each year's toil in paying the interest thereupon; suppose all this and you have an epitome of imperialism, which is nothing less than capitalism preserving and extending itself through diplomatic and military force. Imperialism has always been the im-



mediate result of centralization of wealth in the hands of a few and can be dealt with only by changing the order of things from which it naturally springs.

Socialism comes not as a remedy for the evils of existing society, but as a program of principles for a new society; or rather, let us say, as the first proposition for social order that has ever been presented to the world. Mankind has not yet had anything that can properly be called social order. Society has not yet been created. The materials for the building of a human world are here, but the creation remains to be undertaken. The task of creating a coherent and free society is the mightiest to which man has summoned himself; and it is a task which now presses urgently upon us. Socialism does not recognize as society anything that has hitherto come, but it sees in every preceding human stage a preparation for society. The socialist is an evolutionist, but with this difference between himself and much that is called scientific evolution: namely, that the social will is henceforth to be the supreme factor in evolution. Hitherto, what we call society has been the evolution of blind forces, which man did not understand and could not control. But we are reaching that moment when man will become the evolver as well as the evolved; when man will become conscious of himself as the decreeing and creative force in evolution. Man will henceforth take evolution into his own hands and fashion creation according to his own will and make out of society what he wants it to be. Henceforth the social will is to become the creator and master, which the winds and waves shall at last obey and at whose word the strifes and storms of history shall be stilled and give back their responsive peace to the masterful social will of love.

Socialism starts with the brotherhood and unity of the race as a fact. It does not proclaim it as a sentiment, but recognizes it as a scientific fact. Each for all and all for each is the only rational mode of procedure, in view of this fact. That where one suffers all suffer is not a sentiment to meditate about, but the hardest inescapable fact with which we have to deal. The grippe breaks out in a wretched hamlet of two or three hundred peasants on the Siberian frontier; and every home in America is endangered or broken. A little girl is shot down by the constituted authorities at a Pennsylvania coal mine; and every thoughtful American recognizes that capitalistic government is not law,

but brutal and lawless authority founded on economic might and that his little girl in Chicago or California may be the next victim of the brute lawlessness of capitalistic government. For good or ill, whether we will or no, we are bound up together in this world and can only achieve our well-being together. We might like to have separate interests and be able to extricate ourselves as individuals from the compulsions of this unity; but we cannot do so any more than we can individually extricate ourselves from the law of gravity. We all in common depend upon the same common resources of nature and history. None of us is rightly or nobly born until every child born into the world as the immediate inheritor of all the resources of nature and history, of industry and society, of inspiration and culture; of all that tempts to goodness and greatness and makes for fullness, freedom, and gladness of life. If the whole world were full and glad with life and should yet consent that one child should be born with less, the world would be economically and spiritually damned. Until all of us together see to it that every man is equal with every other man in resource, opportunity, and liberty, we shall none of us see the kingdom of fullness and freedom upon the earth. In this sense brother-interest and self-interest are one and the same; for no man has a true and noble interest in himself who does not regard the whole life of man as his calling and interest; and no man has a true regard for his brothers who does not seek to make himself a whole and free man in their service.

Now socialism comes as the scientific and economic recognition of unity. Since all people in common depend upon the sources and tools of production, there can be no individual liberty save these sources and tools belong to the people in common. There can be no social peace and sanity, no full liberty of the human soul, so long as some people own that upon which all people depend. All that can be said against slavery can also be said against the private ownership of economic sources and tools; for the private ownership of the common sources and machinery of life is nothing less than a substantial ownership of human beings. No man is free so long as he is dependent upon some other man for the chance to earn his livelihood. If a man owns my bread, or owns that which I must have in order to get my bread, he owns my moral being, unless I choose to revolt and starve. Pri-

vate ownership of the earth, of its productive machinery, means private ownership of the people who live on the earth. He who sells his labor-power for wages sells himself; for his labor-power is his life. The wages system is merely an advance in the slave-system, but it is no fit system for free men; and there can be no true freedom for all men until there is not another hireling left under the sun. The labor of the world is essentially slave-labor. There is not a wage-earner on earth tonight who is not in some degree debauched in soul, even in spite of himself, by his dependence upon the private buyer of his labor. So long as some men own that upon which all men depend, the owners and the dependents are alike corrupted, enslaved, and robbed.

Yet our industrial system rests upon this power of private capital to legally appropriate the fruits of the labor of society. And behind the economics of capitalism rests the question of elemental right and wrong. If nature and history have a meaning and goal, if the universe be sincere, then it is elementally wrong that some people should own that upon which all people depend; and the only elemental right is that the people in common should own that upon which the people in common depend; and the only just reward of labor is the whole produce of labor.

This elemental right cannot be amended or evaded, as history well witnesses. The centralization of the wealth of the people in the hands of the few has been the poison of history. It has brought the decline or destruction of every nation, every civilization, every religion that has come to its end or decline. The pages of history are red with the retribution that comes to the whole people through the centralization of wealth in the hands of a few; for centralized wealth is not prosperity but disease, congestion, and destruction. No man or civilization can escape this retribution.

It lies not in the power of man, of governments or armies, to make practicable what is elementally wrong. No religion can go deep enough to bring forth universal individual nobleness out of a political or economic system that enslaves souls and bodies by enslaving labor. No law or custom is mighty or sacred enough to bring forth peace and order out of injustice and elemental disorder. It is beyond the power of kings or parliaments, priests or politicians, to bring forth good effects from bad causes. There is no God in the

universe almighty enough to make right out of sheer economic might; and there is no civilization strong enough to prevent that which is elementally right from becoming the ultimate and universal might. A house built upon the sands cannot be made safer by priestly steeples, political declarations, and police protection; the longer and stronger the building, the more appalling and complete the ruin. A civilization build upon fraud and force, gambling and lying, stealing and political debauchery, capitalism and slave-labor, simply builds for its own retribution. Unless the universe itself is a lie, such civilization cannot stand. We build on a sure foundation only when we build a system that has for its end the commonwealth, the common wholeness, the common freedom, the common abundance and gladness of all men and women. Nature convicts our impoverishing civilization to its face; for profusion of life is nature's eternal message. Nature offers resources enough for abundance of life for countless billions of human beings, and will never consent that these resources should be appropriated by the few for the exploitation of the many.

I know that some of you are indulging in the popular saying that socialism might answer for a society of angels, but not for a society of human beings such as we are; that we must wait till we have a better brand of human beings before we can have socialism. All of which is very much like saying that it is not safe to cure a man of his disease until he gets well; or like saying that well will not come in out of the rain until we first get dry; or like refusing to abolish the devil in order that we may preserve the job of saving the people from him. It is a strange superstition that makes men regard what they know to be elementally good as dangerous in practice, and what they know to be elementally wrong as practically safe. Socialism strikes at the root of the chief cause of our unangelic conduct and proposes to abolish that slavery and competition and capitalism which sends all its forces in the direction of making men brutal and dishonest. The whole influence of competition and capitalism is to war against love and liberty, and to make all that is noble and lovely in human life impossible. Socialism comes to remove the causes that prevent men from being lovers and brothers one with another and to bring in that equality of opportunity without which there can be no true fellowship, no abiding social love.

Many of you, too, are raising the question of whether people are yet prepared for the economic administration and liberty involved in what we call public ownership. The question is often raised with reference to a public utility, such as the railway system. First of all, there is the principle that nothing prepares people for responsibility save experience in responsibility. It is only in liberty that man learns to be free; only in the possession of his rights does a man learn to practice the highest right. Then underneath the question of advisability lies the foundation fact that it is elementally wrong for public functions to be privately owned and administered for private profit. No principle of expediency can make this elemental wrong result in the good of either individuals or society. That I may think some other man shiftless with his money does not excuse me in taking it away from him and spending most of it for myself.

The lesson of association in freedom must be learned and it can only be learned by practicing it. We shall have to go the whole length of liberty, or finally have no liberty at all. You doubt whether liberty can be trusted. I am very sure that tyranny cannot be trusted, and I am furthermore sure that the care of liberty cannot be delegated to any representatives. Liberty cannot be put under bonds to keep the peace without liberty being lost and peace unattained. All the so-called evils of liberty have been the evils of a lack of liberty. We shall have to accept the full logic of liberty at last, for there is nothing under the sun that can be trusted in its place. The lesson of cooperation has got to be learned, and learned in liberty; and the lesson of liberty has got to be learned, and learned in cooperation. We had as well begin.

Again, some of you are offended at the class-conscious appeal of socialism. I think it is because you do not rightly understand its meaning. Socialists have no thought of arraying one class against another class as individuals; class-consciousness does not mean class-hatred. Let us admit that socialists sometimes give utterances that have the class-hatred ring about them. Class-hatred is nonetheless alien to the spirit and genius of socialism. Even so bitter a controversialist as Karl Marx says that, of all men, socialists can afford to be tolerant and kindly toward the capitalist class, knowing that class to be victims of a system as truly as the laborer. What the socialist does mean by class-con-

sciousness is this: that nothing can obviate the hideous fact that one class of human beings is living off another class; that a capitalistic class is heaping up the produce of the producing class. And he appeals to labor to become class conscious, because he knows perfectly well that the laborer cannot achieve his freedom, nor have the produce of his labor, until he becomes conscious that he is the real producer and the owner of the earth. Capital lords and landlords will exist and despoil the earth with economic and military wars until the disinherited labor of the world arises to nobly take possession of its inheritance. So long as the laborer is willing to be a mere wage-earner, so long as he is led about by politician and agitator, so long as his weariness and poverty, his dependence and hopelessness so eat out his nerve of soul and body that he will not act, just so long will his condition wax worse and worse. Labor must achieve its own liberty, if it is ever to be achieved. Liberty cannot be handed down by a superior class to an inferior class; it has never been so achieved, and ought not to be so achieved. If liberty were something that could be imposed upon one class by another, or could be presented as a gift from superiors to inferiors, it would vanish in the night. Men are not free until they have won and established their freedom in experience and in the power of their own manhood.

The class-conscious appeal is not for strife or hostility, or antagonism, but for manhood; for constructive purpose and spiritual nerve and genius. The end of socialism is the abolition of all classes and parties and the coming in of but one class, the people, with opportunity for every man to produce his own living and at the same time to become, as Charles Kingsley said, "a scholar, a saint, and a gentleman." Unless American laborers as a class are so spiritually awakened that they become noble and courageous enough to adopt the cooperative commonwealth as a working ideal, and adopt it in the spirit of goodwill toward all men, no one can achieve their liberty for them, or ought to achieve it for them. All history demonstrates how the people have had to achieve for themselves each inch and gain of liberty, and how they have been again and again betrayed when their liberties have been committed to those above them in worldly condition. Even the best and truest of men hesitate when the moment comes for them to get down into the thick

of the blood and dust of the human struggle.

I know that some of these are waiting until socialism shall present a more pleasing aspect. But we cannot await until the socialist movement is just to our liking before we take creative part in it. Our place is in the blood and the dust, the struggles and the disgraces, that always inhere in the beginnings of every great movement. Our place is at the heart of the chaos in order that we may work with the developing purpose. How can we truly respect ourselves, or help to make the socialist movement what it ought to be, if we fail it in its moment of sorest need? Socialists are not appealing to you for support on the ground that socialists are better than other men, but on the ground that socialism is better than capitalism. Socialism proposes to bring forth and educate the best that is in man; capitalism and competition are bringing forth and educating the worst.

We do not deny that socialism has its risks; that its advocates have the common share of human passions and imperfections; but we insist that the risks of adventuring upon socialism are as nothing compared to the risks of continuing in capitalism. Besides, if we only knew it, the dangers to human life all lie on the side of staying where we are, while safety lies only in going on. As Louis Kossuth pointed out, conservatism has been the cause of every violent revolution. We cannot avert disaster by sitting on the throttle valve of the forces that are making for universal change; we cannot prevent the change; we only cause explosion and disaster.

In the truest sense, socialism is essentially conservative. It comes not to destroy, but to fulfill — to fulfill all the true ideals of order and liberty and property. It offers that equality which must be the foundation of brotherhood; that liberty which must be the vital breath of the love which the great teachers taught. It offers the economic basis for the realization of that fraternity which has been the dream of the ages. It comes with no attack upon any man, but with the message of goodwill among all men. It comes with no attack upon property, but rather to save property from the attacks and ravages of a system that is the destruction of all that makes property sacred; for property is sacred only as it serves the highest uses of all men in common. It comes not to destroy private property; for capitalism has already destroyed the possibility of

the bulk of mankind ever becoming property owners; but it comes to place within the reach of every man that private property upon which he must stand, in order to live a free and original life of his own, and express his noblest ideals in being. It comes to make the strong bear the infirmities of the weak, until the weak, too, have become strong; knowing well that if we do not actually become our brother's keepers, we shall be destroyed in our brother's destruction, as we ought to be. It comes to put all the temptations of life on the side of service and freedom and goodness, and to abolish the temptation to avarice and meanness and oppression.

I know that there is needed a vast spiritual preparation to prepare the way of political socialism; but that preparation will come. In its essence, socialism is a religion; it stands for the harmonious relating of the whole life of man; it stands for a vast and collective fulfilling of the law of love. As the socialist movement grows, its religious forces will come forth from the furnace of experience. No matter how materialistic its origin, when socialism brings men together in a great purpose, it soon begins to develop fidelity and tolerance, patience and goodwill, and the noblest of human graces. As American Socialism goes on its way, it will become a spiritual passion; not a cry for rights, but a call to elemental righteousness. It will make its appeal to the instinct of man for a beautiful public life, for communal heroism, and will show how the individual life can fulfill itself only by relating itself to the whole life of mankind. It will create a conscience that shall at last become cosmic and titanic and able to grapple with all the problems the universe can bring forth. In place of the individual hero of the past, it will submit to you the ideal of a heroic common life; the ideal of a common citizenship that shall truly have its consciousness in heavenly things.

It seems to me that America stands in order to be the birthplace of just such an appeal and the social ground for just such a realization. Emerson once said that America seemed like the last stand of Providence in behalf of the human race. If the sorrows and the struggles that have made centuries red with effort are to have their fruition, it must be upon our American soil. Back there in the shadows, the oppressed peoples of history are waiting for some great word to be here spoken that shall call them into resurrection and lib-

erty. Egypt and Persia, Greece and Italy, and peoples that we have forgotten, are waiting for the word from us that shall call them out into the sunlight. Peoples and nations unborn are stretching forth entreating hands to us from out of the future. If we should fail here in America, then six thousand years of history will have failed; for history has come to its limit on the shores of the Pacific; it has come back to its starting point. If we fail, the heart of the world will break again, and another cycle of history, with its weary procession of bleeding centuries, will have to begin. But we cannot fail, we dare not fail. Liberty, fraternity, and equality are not tantalisms to hopeless human suffering; they are ideals to be realized by human worth and effort. We must prove our worth and power to match these ideals. Potential within this meeting, is a power which we may use for the freeing and the healing of

the nations. Within this audience are the resources and weapons for conquering the world for love and liberty. The saving sword which the peoples now need is not the sword of Joshua or Cromwell, but the sword of an awakened and inspired and ennobled common life. And as the hand of destiny reaches out in the dark of our social chaos, it is our privilege to put within that hand the sword of comrade-love that shall liberate the world and make every child indeed the heir of all the good of all the ages. I plead that the highest and most unselfish that lies in you and in me may respond to the highest and most unselfish inspirations of history, as we go forth to support this cause of socialism and to support, in our presidential candidate, one who has proved his fidelity to American labor and who is in his rightful place as the leader of this first national campaign for social democracy.

*Edited by Tim Davenport. Punctuation modernized.
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