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THE  
**Philosophy of Socialism**

BY  
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## THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCIALISM.

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People often speak of Socialism as if it were a system that could be "enacted," a plan that was proposed, or an elaborated Utopia offered for criticism. It is discussed as if it were a "reform" that could be compared with other reforms, and Socialists are asked to unite with "other reform forces." Such talk implies an utter misapprehension of the essential characteristics of Socialism.

It should be distinctly understood from the beginning that Socialism is not the name of a state of society, either proposed or existing. The "Co-operative Commonwealth" is no more Socialism in the true sense of the word than was the Competitive society of our fathers, or the Monopolistic society of to-day.

Socialism is the philosophy of social development that treats of the great economic laws, according to the working of which each of these stages of society must naturally be a development from its predecessor. There is no common ground between Socialism and any scheme or plan for the improvement of society. To attempt to unite it with any of these is as sensible as to ask an astronomer to "fuse" with some reformer who is

seeking to improve the climate by introducing changes in the earth's orbit, because astronomy treats of the laws causing variations in the relative position of the earth and sun.

The basis of Socialism in this sense is found in what is sometimes called the "materialistic conception of history," or Economic Determinism. The foundation of this conception was stated as follows in the preface to the 1888 edition of the famous Communist Manifesto, issued by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, in 1848.

**"In every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange, and the social organization necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch.**

**"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 exploiting and exploited, ruling and oppressed classes.**

**"The history of these class struggles forms a series of revolutions, in which now-a-days, 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 for all, emancipating society at large from all exploitation, oppression, class distinctions and class struggles."**

Perhaps this position can be made clearer by an illustration from the field of biology. It is a well known law in the world of plants and animals that in any organism the entire form and structure is simply the most advantageous manner of arranging the material of which the plant or animal is composed in order to meet the difficulties with which it is surrounded. Every limb, muscle, leaf, branch, or root was developed because its existence was of advantage to the organism as a whole in obtaining its support from its environment.

In the same way society as a whole is simply the form in which its members unite to conquer nature. It is a machine, an organism, a structure with which to obtain the Good desired by its members.

Let this not be misunderstood. If society is but a means to the satisfaction of human desires through conquest of an external world, the lowness of a society does not depend upon this fact but only upon the lowness of the desires that govern. If all the social energies are expended in the production of the means to satisfy the merely animal desires to the neglect of all that is good and true and beautiful, and if even then these necessities are not secured to the majority of the members of society, then that society is indeed bestial.

If, on the other hand, the social organization is such that the animal needs are secondary, secured to all by mechanical means, while opportunity

and leisure are guaranteed to every one for the development of the ethical and artistic,—then the plane of organization is vastly higher.

In other words this philosophy is a “pig philosophy” only to the pigs. To those whose idea of “goods” to be produced and desires to be satisfied embraces the productions of a Wagner, a Browning, a Murillo, or a Shakespeare, there is nothing debasing in the idea that production is the only reason for a social organism.

The position being once granted that the Economic Organization determines all social forms and structures, then, *the manner in which a society disposes of its productive powers, the “goods” it sets about to produce, and the manner of their production,* become the great fundamental social facts.

#### THE RULE OF SOCIAL CLASSES.

The Socialist holds that up to and including the present society the form, mode, and objects of social production have always been determined by a ruling social class in its interest. This class has determined the form and administration of government, set the fashions in dress and manners, formulated codes of ethics, and in general has exercised all the powers of social control.

If its members were Egyptian Pharaohs, they built pyramids with the labor of enslaved Hebrews; if Grecian aristocrats, they carved marble dreams and expounded philosophies of life while supported by the labor of captive helots: if

mediaeval barons, they erected ~~robber~~ castles, and amused themselves in tournaments, supported by the toil of helpless serfs; if modern plutocrats, they built sky-scrapers, wrecked railroads, endowed colleges, and gave Bradley-Martin balls from the earnings of exploited wage-slaves.

This ruling class has often changed in character. Changing economic organization has continually developed new social classes that have sought the overthrow of the rulers that they might obtain its coveted privileges. The chronicle of these struggles for the position of ruling class constitutes the major part of our written history.

At the close of the Middle Ages the nobility occupied the ruling position. The economic basis of their rule was ownership of the land to which the laborers were attached. They despised the arising trading class, and refused them all social and political privileges. But the appearance of this class was the sign of the growth of a new system of production, the development of which was to raise them to the position of rulers.

Lowest of all was the helpless working-class, from time immemorial the tool of every warring class, and the supporter of the whole social pyramid. Absolutely without rights, they had been hitherto utterly ignored even by the chroniclers of events. Save as they had revolted at various times against some more than ordinarily excessive oppression: in a helot uprising a revolt of Spartacus, a Wat Tyler or Jack Cade rebellion.

or a French Jacquerie, or later when they slipped from beneath the hand of the mercantile class who were using them to break the power of the nobility, and in a French Revolution or a Paris Commune forced themselves and their sufferings upon the attention—only in such cases are they even considered a part of the material of history. Each of the other classes of society have said in turn with Louis XIV., “L’Etat c’est moi” (I am the state—everything), but the laborer has ever been but the material upon which all others rested as they would rest their feet upon the earth.

#### ORIGIN OF THE PRESENT LABORING CLASS.

Let us go back for a moment to the time when the modern wage-working class had its origin. While the present laborer is the legitimate successor of all the previous toilers who have lived and suffered and died beneath the social Juggernaut, he has had an origin and a history of his own as much apart from other history as any class or social stage is separated from the vast network of events, the movements of which historians chronicle.

In the middle of the last century he still owned his tools and the material upon which he worked, and was the rightful owner as well as the actual possessor of the finished product. Things were not produced for some unknown impersonal market, but for some specific individual whose needs they were to supply. Prices and wages were

fixed by custom or law, and competition was felt but little as an economic force. Laws of the market fixed the breadth and fineness of cloth, size and weight of bread, price and quality of corn, and the form and place of bargaining. Poor-laws and the assize of wages determined the rate of wages and the hours of labor. Laws of settlement immovably fixed the abode of great masses of humanity. Exchange between nations or cities was hampered, restricted, and regulated at every point in the interest of a multitude of little cliques of nobility residing in the different centers of trade. Population was gathered in small social groups—towns, villages, and parishes, around individual members of the ruling class, and held together by the system of land tenure previously referred to, or by a personal tie to a small employer. But within this apparently fixed and permanent social organization, there were the developing germs of a mighty transformation that was destined to change all this almost in the twinkling of an eye as compared with former social changes.

A new continent was being opened to settlement. New markets were springing up over the entire world. New routes of travel and trade shifted population and changed its character. The methods of production grew wholly inadequate to the changed conditions. Watt, Stephenson, Arkwright, Nasmyth, Hargreaves and a multitude of others transformed the tools of the laborer until they produced beyond the wildest

dreams of former days. A single factory now demanded the entire world as a market for a vast product; and the railway and the steamship opened the way for the distribution thus demanded.

#### NEW SOCIAL RELATIONS FROM NEW ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

The manner in which society produced its "goods" was completely transformed. New relations of man to the external world were introduced. The social environment was changing. Society was securing its "goods" from nature in a new way. By the biological analogy, and in obedience to the economic law with which we started we should now expect to see great changes take place in all social institutions. When a plant or animal meets with new conditions in its struggle for existence it either perishes or changes the form of its structure. For example, the Australian parrots becoming meat eaters, their stomach, beak, and talons became transformed for that purpose. Everywhere the same law governs. The production and distribution of what the organism decides to be its "goods" determines all else. The time of which we speak illustrates this.

The new economic relations demanded new social organization. The new developments were hampered by the old restrictions that sought to determine by law the relations of man to man. The old nobility had rested upon custom enacted

into law. It desired stability and had used the powers of the state which it controlled to secure that end. The just arising mercantile class, which had been produced by the new economic conditions, wished freedom of trade and contract that they might not be fettered in the extension of markets and exploitation of labor. They overthrew the nobility and landed class, gained control of the political power, and becoming the dominant class enacted their class interests into legal regulations. They inaugurated the reign of *laissez faire*, competition, and free contract. They abolished the old laws of the market and opened wide the flood-gates of adulteration, shoddy, advertising and all the tricks of trade. They broke down the old barriers that hedged the laborer about with restrictions and protection, and gave to him "freedom of contract": freedom to little children scarce out of babyhood, to be harnessed to cars beneath the ground or to toil for long hours in herds in the newly-erected hells called factories; freedom to women to enter occupations that swept them off like sheep before a plague and laid the curse upon unborn generations; freedom to men to starve by thousands upon the fields of England because they had been released from bondage to their means of production. They swept away the restrictions on international commerce and inaugurated "free trade": free trade with China in opium, at the muzzles of British cannon; free trade in brass watches, tinsel ornaments and vile

rum with African tribes, amid the rattle of Gatling guns and the crack of repeating rifles firing "dum-dum" bullets; and finally free trade in American capitalist products of a similar nature with the islands of the sea, under the protection of thirteen-inch guns and dynamite cruisers. Everywhere and at all times the capitalist class has used its position as a governing class to advance its interests with a recklessness and an abandon never attempted by any previous ruling class.

#### **DESTRUCTIVE FORCES IN PRESENT SOCIETY.**

Within this economic stage and consequent social development as within its predecessors lies the germ of its destruction and the foundation of another order. Its economic organization has developed the class that is to bring about its overthrow and to erect upon its foundation a society without economic classes. This coming ruling class of which all will be members is the present laboring class, the despised proletariat, the actual producers with hand and with brain. At the close of the last century this class had just been driven in from the fields by inclosures and out from the guilds by confiscations and internal upheavals. Deprived of the legal and customary protection that had hedged them about in their old relations, they were almost at a single stroke transformed from individual producers into units of productive force, salable upon a free labor market.

Their tools were transformed into great machines owned by another social class to whom in consequence they must sell this productive power, upon a market where supply must always exceed demand and where all the conditions of bargaining were to their disadvantage.

This new economic condition wrought a social transformation in the laborers. Common suffering forced the brotherhood of toil upon them. They united first in trade-unions, seeking to limit the terms of brotherhood to those who worked at the same bench or beneath a common master. Trade lines disappeared before the machine, individual masters were swallowed up in the trust, the limits of the market were broken at every point by railroad, steamship, telegraph and telephone until the laborer was forced to recognize that wherever there is an outcast from the means of production, a man who must use another man's tools to live—a wage-slave, in short—there is a brother. He begins to see that the only line of division of interest to him is that between the buyers and the sellers of labor power, between the owners and the users of the forces of production, between the workers and the idlers, between capitalists and laborers, between proletariat and bourgeois, between rulers and ruled, between master and slave.

#### **SOCIAL PRODUCTION VS. INDIVIDUAL DISTRIBUTION.**

It is evident to every one that there are great and fundamental contradictions in our present

social system. Our economic and social organization are irreconcilably at variance. Production is now social, while distribution is still individual. A manufacturing plant is to-day a social institution. It manufactures for society, personified in the market. Its products gain their value from the society in which the factory exists. The organization of its members is a social one and forms a social unit. The knowledge of trade processes, powers of nature, and all but a few of the latest mechanical contrivances are the inheritance of society from previous ages.

The owners have long ago abrogated the function of management, and confine their efforts to drawing dividends on stock. An infant, an idiot, or an insane person might well be (and not infrequently is, as the ward of the court) a great capitalist to-day. Money invested in any well established stock company insures to its owner the best talent obtainable for its management, and gives him the power to compel multitudes of workers to toil for him while he lives upon the unearned increment of their labor. The managers of industry are to-day hired laborers, wage-slaves, if you please, who, however much different they may consider themselves and are considered by others, are, as we shall see later subject to the same laws and tendencies that affect their more humbly paid brothers. In so far as present owners act as managers of industry they are as individuals functioning in a dual social capacity. Their function as capitalists in

no way includes such management. The capitalist class, as a class, have become parasitic, but they fail to read the handwriting on the wall, that it is an inexorable law of nature that a useless organ must disappear.

### **NATURE AND DIRECTION OF THE COMING CHANGE.**

These economic changes foretell social transformations. The nature and direction of this impending change then becomes of the first importance. Here then is no room for theories. As ever conclusion must be drawn from existing facts. Whatever change may come, of this we may rest assured, that it will be a development from existing society brought about by the operation of economic laws within that society.

In our examination of industry we have seen that the only vital, necessary portion is the laborers, the producers, the workers at forge, plow, loom or desk. These workers are seen to be organized into carefully graded and systematized bodies who are carrying on the whole process of production independent of the owners. Even when the process of concentration and introduction of corporate management is not yet complete, the apparent function of the owner will generally be found to exist, not in bettering production, but in fighting rivals, and hence an unnecessary function aside from competition.

It is the laborers who alone can organize the society of the future. What form will that organization take?

We have to-day social production and individual distribution. This contradiction arises from the fact that production is carried on by socially organized groups of laborers, while distribution is determined through individual ownership of the means of production which gives the control of the product to such owners. Collective ownership being substituted for individual ownership in land and capital, *the control of production and distribution becomes collective*, and the conflict ceases. In this way only can the social organism be adjusted to economic development. In accordance with the fundamental biological law with which we started, this must be done or our social organism stands out of adjustment to its environment in its most vital organs, and must perish as "unfit." There is no other alternative. It is forward to co-operative production and distribution, or backward to destruction.

#### **HOW THE CHANGE WILL BE BROUGHT ABOUT.**

The direction of the coming change being determined, the next vital question is as to the manner in which it shall be brought about. On this point there is no room for theories, schemes, plans or Utopias. We must turn again to existing facts and seek in them the laws and direction of further development.

Capitalism has drawn the workers together in great masses and then trained and disciplined them in mammoth industrial establishments into

compact organic bodies. The wage-system wiped out personal relations between employers and employés, and threw the laborers upon their own resources, developing independence, self-reliance and initiative.

All this aroused in the laborers a consciousness of their class interests, relations and common brotherhood. At first this feeling was confined to trade lines, and the efforts of the workers were limited to endeavors to secure better bargains with their employers by collective bargaining through their trade-unions. They sought to enforce their demands by common refusals to work, or strikes. The strike required certain conditions for success that are fast passing away. It demanded that a trade education should be of value. If any man from the streets could take the striker's place failure was almost inevitable. The machine to-day has made this condition the rule. A sewing-machine factory has been transformed into one for bicycles with scarcely the change of a man. Prisoners in the Wisconsin state prison become expert shoemakers in a few weeks. One of the owners of the largest soap works in America told me a short time ago that if every man in his factory should leave, he could train up a new force as efficient as the old in two weeks. The brotherhood of labor has broken through trade lines, and to overlook this fact indicates unpardonable blindness on the part of many alleged friends of labor.

Other facts teach the same lesson. Some years

ago there was a strike in the New Bedford Cotton Mills. Although everything seemed favorable to the strikers, they soon came back to work (as many as could) defeated. Their work was being rapidly transferred to the child operated mills of the South. The circle of brotherhood of these New England workers was widened to include these little ones by the same stern law that Carlyle pointed out in his story of the poor widow of Edinburgh, who appealed to one after another of the charitable societies and individuals of that city only to be rejected because she did not belong in their particular circle of humanity, and who was then taken with fever and in her death proved her common sisterhood by infecting twelve of those who had refused her.

Still another instance illustrating a double point. England is the home of "pure and simple" trades-unionism—the organization along trade lines for economic purposes only. The strongest union in England is the engineers. Some time ago this union struck. Their coffers were full beyond the wildest dreams of early trades-unionists. The public gave additional sums of great amount. Their organization and discipline was perfect. Yet they failed at every point. Why? Because while they posted pickets in Leeds and Birmingham and Sheffield and along the Thames and the Clyde, they forgot to guard South Chicago and Homestead and Pittsburg. They never thought of the "scabs" in the Brooks and Baldwin locomotive works, and so they

found themselves being undersold in the markets of the world, and were forced to recognize that only a quick acceptance of their employers' demands would save them from the total loss of what faint opportunity remained for the sale of their labor power.

Everywhere the fact of a world market and a cosmopolitan laborer is arguing out to the logical conclusion of an international brotherhood of toil and a world-wide revolution. In vain does the capitalistic class raise the cry of a false patriotism and seek to arouse race and national prejudice. The fatherland of labor is as wide as human suffering and will not be bound by narrow geographical or racial lines.

#### **FURTHER EXTENSION OF BROTHERHOOD.**

Even with all this broadening of human unity there yet remained lines of division and separation to wipe out before the laborer was ready to enter upon his last strong struggle for human freedom. There are, so to speak, vertical as well as horizontal lines of division. There was an aristocracy of labor composed of those having a more elaborate education or preparation for their work than others. These have constituted the so-called "brain workers." A common complaint of the ignorant against socialists has been that they refused to accord to such workers the dignity of being productive laborers. On the contrary, no other philosophy has ever so clearly pointed out the value and historical function of the labor of

organization and direction. It has only been insisted upon that the fact previously alluded to, that such labor is no part of the capitalist's function, be recognized. These workers, however, have always sought to keep aloof from their more sorely oppressed brothers and to affiliate with and imitate the manners and customs of the capitalistic class. New economic developments, however, are changing this.

#### **ENDOWMENTS.**

Widespread systems of popular education, numerous trade and technical schools, with universities and colleges in abundance have fitted great bodies of men for these hitherto favored positions and brought home to those who had looked upon themselves as "not like unto those other laborers" the fact that competition and capitalist exploitation are no respecters of persons. From this class the workers receive the intellectual training and direction that is to give scientific accuracy to their struggle for liberty. Thus all things work together to unify, solidify, educate and prepare the laborer for the duties and responsibilities of the function the evolution of the ages has assigned to him.

#### **THE ECONOMIC STRUGGLE ALWAYS A POLITICAL ONE.**

The change is then to come through an international movement of the laborers to obtain control of the tools and land upon whose use

their life depends, that they may control the distribution of the product. What will cause them to take this step? Turn again to the book of life and read your answer in the course of events. The laborer seeking through economic struggles to better his condition comes ever in conflict with the fact referred to in the beginning of this article, that the governing power belongs to his opponents. When he strikes it is not the capitalist as a capitalist that overthrows him, but the capitalist under the disguise of government. In the last analysis it is the municipal police, the state and national troops and courts that conquer him.

He sees the laws, the courts, the press, the force of public opinion, the system of education, yes, too often even the pulpit in the hands of his masters. Yet he has the ballot and is told that he is a ruler. He has, then, been blindly led hither and thither through his ignorance and compelled to elect to power his own oppressors. This process has at last taught him his power. When he has once thoroughly realized that the economic division is the only political one of interest to him, and begins to use his vote with which to strike, the beginning of the end of capitalism is at hand, and it is time to prepare to write the closing chapter of its history.

Let us now in one sentence recapitulate the philosophy we have been discussing. *Our present society is to be transformed through a class-conscious revolt of the workers having as its object*

*the capture of the machinery of social control that the productive and distributive forces of society may be collectively organized in the interest of all producers.*

I would ask the reader to study the above sentence carefully. It is the fundamental position of the socialist philosophy. Given to the world over fifty years ago, it is the common platform upon which to-day over ten million workers, with branches in every land where capitalism has entered, are marching on to certain victory. Yet in all the multitude of discussions concerning Socialism, this position has never been disputed in one of its essential portions, and unless it is discussed the Socialist position is left untouched. It would seem fair to say now that if after fifty years of hostile examination by the best intellects that the capitalism of every nation on earth could produce, no flaw has been found, there is at least a tremendous presumption raised of its invulnerability.

The victory is certain, the ultimate goal clear, the manner of its attainment indisputable as to its general outline. The workers will soon have possession of the governing powers.

Upon the solid foundation of the principles here outlined the workers of the world are uniting in mighty class-conscious bodies for this last step in social evolution. Thoroughly aware of their peculiar mission and firm in the assurance of final victory, they never "compromise truth to make a friend, never withhold a blow from error

lest they make an enemy." Recognizing in all other political parties only divisions of the ruling capitalist class, or even worse, as a reactionary middle class, they consistently look upon all suggestions of fusion as traitorous to their mission in social evolution and a betrayal of the class they represent. This unswerving attitude brings continually recurring disfavor upon the party from the ignorant which is used by their enemies on all occasions to mislead the workers from their actual interests. In France their support of Dreyfus branded them for the moment as Semitic. In Germany their steadfast maintenance of the principle that the brotherhood of toil included French as well as German workers gained them from the emperor the epithet of "Fatherlandless rascals." Steadily as economic development has reduced their principles to demonstrated laws of social growth and their predictions to historical facts, they have grown until to-day they are upon the threshold of victory.

#### **GROWTH OF SOCIALIST PARTY.**

These facts have resulted in the formation of the International Socialist Party, which has already cast 2,700,000 votes in Germany, 1,500,000 in France, 530,000 in Belgium, 17,000 in Holland, 63,000 in England, 43,000 in Denmark, 44,100 in Sweden, 7,013, in Norway, 50,000 in Spain, 170,000 in Italy, 100,000 in Switzerland, 800,000 in Austria, 150,000 in the United States.

In Russia, there are strong secret organizations

of university students and wage-workers. A lively agitation is carried on by growing Socialist parties in Roumania, Bulgaria, Canada, Argentine, Australia, Japan. Porto Rico has a Socialist party of six hundred members. The conditions in Cuba, Mexico, Hawaii and New Zealand are just laying the foundations for the growth of Socialism in those countries.

In every land where capitalism has entered, Socialism follows it like a shadow. Everywhere, a measure of economic development, and not of the spread of an idea, this mighty proletarian army is gathering upon the borders of the promised land of the Co-operative commonwealth, ready to enter in and possess the inheritance of the ages, as the rightful heirs of those past toilers, whose labors created all, and in the name of the present laborers who alone can add to this heritage.

#### DEVELOPMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

It has only been until within a few years that economic conditions in the United States have been ripe for the growth of Socialism. So long as a boundless frontier with free land, and free opportunity for escape from the most galling conditions of capitalism existed, those who had within them the spirit of rebellion turned from the oppression of social relations to fight the crude battle with nature. But this avenue of escape is now closed. At the same time the growth of the trust and the disappearance of com-

petition have written above the doors of American industry, "Leave hope behind, all ye who enter here as wage-workers." Hence it is that the time is now fully ripe for a great and powerful Socialist movement in America.

Conditions within the Socialist organization have also formerly operated to hinder the progress of American Socialism. But to-day, with united forces and an extensive literature, the *Socialist Party* is pressing on to new triumphs in every corner of the country.

We may be sure that the headlong rush of American economic development will be reflected in an equally rapid growth of the class-conscious workers. In no other land is capital more arrogant, old political parties more corrupt, or labor more relentlessly exploited. Coming with the tremendous momentum of a world-wide movement, with program, policy and tactics tested in other lands, Socialism offers to the laborer of America an opportunity to join hands with his suffering brothers the world over in their onward march to universal freedom. That the American laborer will be less intelligent, less alive to his class interests, responsibilities, opportunities and duties than those of other nations, is incredible.

The duty of the American worker under these conditions is clear. He can have no possible interest in the success or failure of parties composed only of classes whose interests are antagonistic to his own. Passive inaction is the policy of the coward. As a man, as a citizen, as a

laborer, his place is with his fellow workers in their universal struggle for liberty.

What is the duty of the so-called leisure and professional classes, of those who have been secured opportunity through the toil of the laborers to obtain culture, refinement, education? To whom do these gifts belong? By every principle of justice and equity they belong to those whose labors made them possible—to the workers. Yet more often than not such persons are found hanging on to the capitalist class and aping their manners and imbibing their prejudices and defending their interests. This notwithstanding the fact that many of them actually belong to the ranks of wage-workers as members of the class of exploited "brain-workers," to which reference was previously made. With these it is only a question of time and education when they will be made to see their true interests and duty.

For all who profess sympathy with the laborer there is but one opportunity to effectually show that sympathy. That is to unite themselves with those workers who to-day realize the historical mission of their class, and are aiming to bring about its fulfillment in the wisest, safest, and best manner possible.

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## GREAT AMERICAN FORTUNES.

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From time immemorial paid biographers, parasitical panegyrists, preachers and Sunday school teachers have sung the praises of the rich and wealthy citizens of the land; muckrakers have muckraked Rockefeller and members of the Standard Oil Company group until a magazine no longer sells merely because it is publishing stories of graft and corruption; books have been published by the score telling magnificent and marvelous tales concerning the holders of the great fortunes of the United States, but it has fallen to the lot of Gustavus Myers to write the first full and authentic account of the actual sources of these vast accumulations of wealth and to disclose the methods used in their acquisitions. His "History of Great American Fortunes," in three volumes, published by Kerr & Company, of Chicago, marks an era in the field of economic research.

Mr. Myers is unlike most authors in that he has no axe to grind, he has no philosophy to preach, he has no monthly check from capitalist or corporation. He is a searcher after truth, and, unlike most writers, he does not hesitate to publish the facts when he finds them, be they good or bad. The result is a three-volume work filled to the brim with startling disclosures and surprising statements based upon Congressional and State documents,

court records and various other authoritative sources. At no stage of his narrative does Mr. Myers mince his words; he bores directly into the heart of his subject and leaves nothing undone to show that our parents and teachers have filled our minds with falsehoods of the most baseless sort when we were children by telling us that as we grew up we could become wealthy and still retain our ideals of honesty, in both theory and practice. Through three volumes containing more than a thousand pages Mr. Myers gives us a most depressing story of the graft, bribery, corruption, avarice, debauchery and chicanery lying behind the great American fortunes. Truthfully, the story is a sickening recital of man's inhumanity to man in his greedy pursuit of wealth, but it is nevertheless a work which should be read by every American citizen be he high or low, rich or poor, naturalized or native.

Volume I, already in its second edition, tells the economic conditions prevailing during the colonial period of the United States, and of the origin and development of the large land fortunes such as those of the Astor and Marshall Field families. Volume II, also in its second edition, and Volume III, just published, deal with the great railroad fortunes of Vanderbilt, Gould, Sage, Elkins, Hill, Morgan and others. It is in this volume that the author devotes a chapter to the Pacific quartet, composed of Huntington, Crocker, Stanford and Hopkins. Future volumes are to describe the acquisition of vast railroad

properties by Harriman and the Standard Oil Company, and will also deal with those great fortunes which have grown out of the control of public franchises, mines and various manufacturing industries.

The author arrives at no conclusions as a result of his investigations, but leaves the readers to do so in accordance with the facts which he has presented. In brief, there can be but one conclusion, and that is that thrift, temperance and hard work are not the recipe for getting rich, else many millions of people who have to work hard and who are thrifty and temperate would forthwith become so. Through all fortunes large and small there runs the same heavy streak of fraud and theft, of bribery, graft and corruption. The little trader with his misrepresentation and swindling is different from the "big fellow" in degree only.

The three volumes will prove to be a perfect arsenal of facts for the economist, newspaper man, trade unionist and reformer. They will take their place among the season's books as the most important work ever issued in this field, far surpassing any other study of the same sort by their scope, by their foundation on facts disclosed by years of patient study and investigation, by the temperate yet graphic and sarcastic presentation of the author, and by many other things which mark them as a most unique contribution to the economic literature of our time.—*Prof. Ira B. Cross, in San Francisco Bulletin.*

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