

PRINCIPLES OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

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Principles of scientific socialism by Charles H. Vail

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CHARLES H. VAIL

**PRINCIPLES OF
SCIENTIFIC
SOCIALISM**

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OF
SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

BY
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"National Ownership of Railways," Etc.*

THE
PUBLISHERS
OF
THE
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SERIES
OF
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AND
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AND
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PREFACE.

THE Socialism of to-day is distinguished from the Utopian theories of the past by the fact that it is scientific. All great movements inevitably pass through a Utopian phase and Socialism is no exception to the general rule.

Socialism is evolutionary in character. There have been the John the Baptists of the new order, proclaiming the way of peace in the industrial wilderness. As alchemy and astrology preceded chemistry and astronomy, so the Utopias of Owenism, Fourierism and Simonism had to precede the full development of Scientific Socialism.

These precursors of social democracy aimed to run society into a special mould. In the absence of a thorough knowledge of economic laws they conceived that an industrial system was something society could put on, as a man puts on a suit of clothes, ready made. They thought a perfect system could be invented and superimposed upon society through propaganda. Their crude theories corresponded, as Fredrick Engels has pointed out, to the crude state of capitalist production and to the crude state of the classes. Nevertheless, these men had a far-sighted historic penetration and sagacity. They

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were admirable critics of capitalist methods, depicting with keenness and satire the evils inherent in capitalist society, but they had not the data to enable them to clearly perceive the genesis of capitalist exploitation. The Utopianists did well, but it was left for Karl Marx to clearly point out the source of surplus-value and the evolutionary tendency in economics. Marx did for economics what Darwin did for biology. The discoveries of Marx placed Socialism upon solid ground and reduced it to a science.

Modern Socialism, then, is scientific and rests upon a historical, economic and scientific basis. It points out with accuracy the laws of social and economic evolution.

Socialism is the only solution of modern problems, and a clear understanding of its principles and purposes is the one great need of the world to-day. To explain the principles of this world-wide movement, and thus aid in a better understanding of the subject, is the purpose for which this book has been written. I trust that it may contribute to this end and so be of service to the cause. With this hope I send it forth on its mission.

CHARLES H. VAIL.

JERSEY CITY, N. J.

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CHAPTER I.

THE INDUSTRIAL EVOLUTION.

THE economic activity of man is of two kinds— isolated and social. The former belongs to the earliest stages of human development. Here man, as yet but little differentiated from the beasts of the field, closely resembles them in his economic life. This is precisely what we should expect when we realize that man has gradually developed from the lower animals. Thus we are not surprised to learn that the wild men of Australia never co-operate in their economic efforts.

In the course of time the family arose, and with the strengthening of the family relationship there grew up the unit of human society. But the economic life of this social unit was at first isolated, beginning and ending in itself. Gradually the family enlarged and grew into