

CONSTRUCTIVE SOCIALISM

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Constructive Socialism by George Thomas Millar

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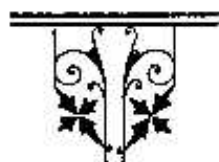
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Constructive Socialism

CHAPTER I.

The Socialist Movement

The social problems that confront us today are caused by private ownership of land, mines, tools and all other means used in the production and distribution of wealth; and can only be solved by the collective ownership by the people of these means which are used socially.

This social industrial system with the form of society resulting from it is termed Socialism, but there are various beliefs in regard to the method or tactics to be used in attaining it.

Political Socialism

Political Socialists believe that the working class must be educated into class consciousness and by organizing themselves into a political party, gain control of the government and then proceed to inaugurate Socialism.

Industrial or Syndicalist Socialism

Industrial Unionists or Syndicalists believe in using the general strike or other forcible means of gaining control and possession of the industries.

Constructive Socialism

The term "Constructive Socialism" is used here to designate the belief that having the

legal right to own property in common, and that our economic activity and method of producing wealth being the fundamental physical factors in our development, we should commence changing the social system by organizing into an Association to collectively acquire and own land and tools; establish industries to produce the necessities of life and secure to the worker the product of his labor without rent, interest or profit; and with the purpose of extending this collective industrial organization until by its power the present system has been conquered and abolished, thus securing at once the benefit of living and working under sane conditions, as well as aiding in the surest manner the complete overthrow of Capitalism.

It Can Be Done

It can be done now because there are enough people who desire it, who know how to do it, and have the power and opportunity to inaugurate it at once. We have the essentials for all action, either individual or social: Necessity, desire, intelligence and opportunity. One more is needed, the willingness to do it, and that exists but is quiescent because it is not generally taught that the power is in our hands.

It can be successfully accomplished because collectively owned capital by the workers is a

greater economic force than capitalism. If it is not, it should never take its place. If it is, it should commence to demonstrate it now by that inherent force. It has a greater strength because it lacks all the weakness which capitalism derives through its organization for rent, interest and profit, with its parasites and wasted efforts. With all the strength of capitalism and none of its weakness, and with a more efficient organization it can meet capitalism on the economic field where it should and must meet it, and conquer it, as the Trusts have defeated competition in capitalism by cooperation.

All things of which we are cognizant have small beginnings, it is the law of progress and of all development. The small seed planted in the earth grows to a tree, dominating and compelling the earth to give it sustenance. We know of no other method on the earth or in the universe. It is the only logical method based on all that goes to make up human intelligence from social evolution, the domain of nature, or even in the metaphysical or spiritual aspects of creation and growth. The CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH will begin the same way, and can only come from that beginning.

On account of the teachings of the Socialist political parties it is very commonly assumed that this can not be done, and the failures of

some cooperative colonies or communities are quoted as evidence. But failure is the forerunner of all practical human endeavor. Back of all mechanical construction lies a line of failures before it received the touch which made it successful, and if failure is to become our guide, all human advancement would stop until man became absolute in knowledge, but even this can only be gained through the experience of both failures and successes. The failures of cooperative attempts only indicate that the correct method has not been used or the appropriate time arrived.

CHAPTER II.

Society and Its Development

All forms of life have two aspects: the positive and the negative; and man is not an exception to this rule. He is an individual and also a social man, and his duty to society is as great as to himself, because without society he would not be what he is. Even in one generation a man or woman, if completely separated from all human society from birth, would not have much more intelligence than the animals. So we owe our language and other intellectual acquirements which we display either mentally or physically, to society and thus from our

indebtedness to society we have incurred the obligation of the social man.

Society is an organic unit composed of individuals and also has two aspects; the social and individual. Our individual and social activity must necessarily take form and the social industrial or economic system is the concrete result of the thought and action of mankind and is representative of his intelligence. The economic system creates necessity and determines what the next step will be, just as the position in which I am now standing in a degree determines where I shall stand next, but I have the freedom to go backward, forward or to either side; but necessity, desire and willingness enter in and all these factors act on each other and thus all are developed.

Environment is not greater than man, because man is its creator, and in creating it has developed necessity which demands a change, and intelligence to do it. In the beginning when man stood naked in nature's own environment he made it subject according to his ability, and the same degree of superiority still exists.

Man has advanced by going to extremes in making the social and then the individual aspect the dominating force. In the tribal and patriarchal states, the social aspect was positive and the individual negative. The individual aspect commenced to become positive