

*Eugene Debs, Socialism in America (1906 - Pottsville, PA)*

*“Socialism is first of all a political movement of the working classes, clearly defined and uncompromising, which aims at the overthrow of the prevailing capitalist system by securing control of the national government and by the exercise of the public powers, supplanting the existing capitalist class government with social administration that is to say, changing a republic in name into a republic in fact.*

*Socialism, also means a coming phase of civilization, next in order to the present one, in which the collective people will own and operate the sources and means of wealth production, in which all will have equal right to work and all will cooperate together in producing wealth and all will enjoy all the fruit of their collective labor. In the present system of society, called The Capitalist System, since it is controlled by and supported in the interest of the capitalist class, we have two general classes of people: first, capitalists and second workers. The capitalists are few, the workers are many; the capitalists are called capitalists because they own the productive capital of the country, and all other sources, means and tools of production, distribution and exchange.*

*The capitalist class who own and control these things also the millions of jobs that are attached to and inseparable from them. It goes without saying that the owner of the jobs is the master of the fellow who depends upon the job. Now why does the workingman depend upon the capitalist for a job? Simply because the capitalist owns the tools with which work is done, and without those the workingman is as helpless as if he had no aims.*

*The capitalist system has had its day and, like other systems that have gone before, it must pass away when it has fulfilled its mission and make room for another system in harmony with the forces of progress and compatible with the onward march of civilization. The centralization of capital, the concentration of industry, and the co-operation of working-men mark the beginning of the end. Competition is no longer “the life of Trade.” Only they are clamoring for ‘competition’ who have been worsted in the struggle and would like to have another deal.*

*The Small Class who won out in the game of competition and own the trusts want no more of it. They know what it is, and have had enough. John D.*

*Rockefeller needs no competition to give life to his trade, and his pious son does not expatiate upon the beauties of competition in his class at Sunday school. No successful capitalist wants competition – for himself – he only wants it for the working class, so that he can buy his labor power at the lowest, competitive price in the labor market. The simple truth is, that competition in industrial life belongs in the past, and is practically outgrown. The time is approaching when it will be no longer possible. The improvement and enlargement of machinery and the ever-increasing scale of production compel the concentration of capital and this makes inevitable the concentration of co-operation of the workers.*

*The capitalists – the successful ones, of course – cooperate on the one side; the workers who are lucky enough to get the jobs on the other side. One Side Gets the Profits, grow rich, live in palaces, ride in yachts, gamble at Monte Carlo, drink champagne, choose judges, buy editors, hire preachers, corrupt politics, build universities, endow libraries, patronize churches, get the gout, preach morals, and bequeath the earth to their lineal descendants.*

*The other side do the work, early and late, in heat and cold; they sweat and groan and bleed and die – the steel billets they make are the corpses. They build the mills and all the machinery they man the plant and the thing of stone and steel begins to throb. They live far away in the outskirts in cottages, just this side of the hovels, where gaunt famine walks with despair and 'Les Miserables leer and mock at civilization. When the mills are shut down, they are out of work and out of food and out of home; and when old age begins to steal away their vigor and the step is no longer agile, nor the sinew strong, nor the hand cunning; when the frame begins to bend and quiver and the eye to grow dim and they are no longer fit as labor power to make profit for their masters, they are pushed aside into a human drift that empties into the gulf of despair and death.*

*The system, once adapted to human needs, has outlived its usefulness and is now an unmitigated curse. It stands in the way of progress and checks the advance of civilization.*

*The present system of private ownership must be abolished and the workers themselves must be made the owners of the tools with which they are work, and to accomplish this they must organize their class for political action, and this work is already under way in the Socialist party which is composed of the working class and stands for the working class on a revolutionary platform, which*

*declares in favor of the collective ownership of the means of production and the democratic management of industry in the interest of the whole people.*

*In the capitalist system the soul has no business. It cannot produce profit by any process of capitalist calculation. The working hand is what is needed for the capitalist's tool and so the human must be reduced to a hand. No head, no heart, and hands to one brain – the hands of workingmen, the brain of a capitalist. A thousand dumb animals in human form – a thousand slaves in the fetters of ignorance, their heads having run to hands – all these owned and worked and fleeced by one stock-dealing, profit-mongering capitalist.*

*This is Capitalism, and this system is supported alternatively by the Republican party and the Democratic party. These two capitalist parties relieve each other in support of the capitalist system, while the capitalist system relieves the working class of what they produce. A thousand hands to one head is the abnormal development of the capitalist system. A thousand workingmen turned into hands to develop and gorge and decorate one capitalist paunch. This brutal order of things must be overthrown.*

*The human race was not born to degeneracy. A thousand heads have grown for every thousand pairs of hands; a thousand hearts throb in testimony of the unity of heads and hands; a thousand souls, though crushed and mangled, burn in protest and are pledged to redeem a thousand men. Heads and hands, hearts and souls, are the heritage of all. Full opportunity for full development is the unalienable right of all.*

*He who denies it is a tyrant; he who does not demand it is a coward; he who is indifferent to it is a slave; he who does not desire it is dead.”*