

**THE RIGHTS AND  
WRONGS OF  
LABOR; PP.1-83**

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The Rights and Wrongs of Labor; pp.1-83 by W. J. McSweeney

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**W. J. MCSWEENEY**

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# THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF LABOR



BY

W. J. McSWEENEY.



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# WHAT THEY SAY

REGARDING MCSWEENEY'S GREAT BOOK

## THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS OF LABOR

EUGENE V. DEBS

The treatise on "The Rights and Wrongs of Labor" from the pen of our old and much loved Comrade, W. J. McSweeney, should be read and carried in the inside pocket of every wage worker. It is a flaming torch held aloft by an old workingman, in the light of which his enslaved class can see how their pockets are picked, by whom, and how to stop the robbery.

Those who know the author need not be told that it is a unique production. The living principles of Socialism are stated with such clearness that the dullest mind can grasp them; while the sombre facts of industrial slavery are marshalled in startling review. Alternating flashes of wit and sarcasm illumine the pages and hold the interest of the reader to "The End."

A. S. EDWARDS

McSweeney's book, "The Rights and Wrongs of Labor," presents the interests of the working class from the standpoint of a Socialist and a Trades Unionist, and does it in such a way as to convince every man that the writer has done a good piece of work for the cause he advocates.

Without the literary style of the author of "Merrie England," like that writer's productions it is in a class all by itself among American Socialist productions. It is packed with facts, brightened by fun, enlivened by stories and bristling with arguments.

... 2-42  
1924

## The Rights and Wrongs of Labor.



MUCH has been said and written for and against Socialism. The great writers, thinkers and students, the world over, have endorsed its principles, and we find the well-paid professor, the man of cloth in the pulpit, and the grafting politician oppose it. The churches are frantically fighting Socialism as well as free school-books, at the present time, in Chicago; but the people are taking good care of the college professor as well as the man of cloth. They are getting some very cute as well as funny fish stories for all this care of their shepherd. They are told about heavenly mansions in the skies; they are told that their master can no more go to heaven than a donkey can go through the eye of a needle. They are told that when they die the gates of heaven will be open, there will be no questions asked and no ticket required. An attendant will show them to the wing-room, fit on a pair that will not hurt or chafe their shoulders, take a spin around, visit their old friends and comrades who get there ahead of them for no other reason than that they were meek and lowly, were willing to work for ninety cents a day and did not disturb the business of their masters.

Then size up the average newspaper man who is fighting Socialism for his pay. Do they know much? No, very little; as a great many of them don't know whether Bryan carried Canada

7-9-14 D.M.H.



for 16 to 1 or not. And it is a fact which cannot be denied that no great intellectual characters, no broad-minded thinkers and students of economics are in the newspaper business in this country.

They are, as a general rule, selfish, greedy, unscrupulous, untruthful and dishonest.

The next great opponent of Socialism is the politician; but as I intend to deal with this class and thoroughly expose their rascality in subsequent chapters, I will just say here that they are an ignorant, low-lived class, who would work for anybody for money; they would work for Socialism if they could get more pay than they do from the owning class, but they would not be worth one penny a day fighting on the side of the people, as they are not thinkers, students or writers, but are an unscrupulous gang of vultures who are ready to steal, lie, cheat and deceive at any and all times to further their own interests. Great meetings, conferences and banquets are being called from time to time by the ruling or owning class for the special purpose of combating or riddling the Socialist armor. Did you ever notice how systematically those little lackeys of capitalism try to attack Socialism, and all use the same argument at the same time as well as drop it and try something new when the string is pulled? As you well know, my friend, the dividing up string has been pulled and played on the capitalist banjo until there is neither noise nor music left. Not that this string has not done good work for the plutes in the past, as indeed it has. It has caused many a long-eared jasper who has the lordly income of a dollar a day to say that he did not want to divide up the contents of his tin can with anybody; but the danger line was reached by the master class, when through a notice on the factory door, declaring a suspension, a strike, or lockout, and the dollar-a-day man found his tin can being thoroughly aired to take the musty smell off, while his stomach was being thoroughly renovated and cleansed of all the impure and dangerous ingredients that had accumulated in the past; time hung heavy on his hands, he met some dangerous and discontented Socialists who

told him for the first time that his master was both robbing and fooling him. He started to read and think and became in the exact condition of the boy who believed in Santa Claus no longer. But if you will put this dividing-up tune to a severe test and examine it closely, is it even strong from the side of capitalism? No, on the contrary, it is very weak. You say "What do you mean?" I mean this, that if they happen to reverse this argument and accuse the Socialists of being a cold-hearted, uncharitable lot of mortals who want to keep everything they produce to themselves and let the old and the young, the decrepit and the insane, starve while they are willing to give charity and alms, as well as dance at charity balls and invest the profits in wooden legs for war heroes who fought for the glories of their flag and Morgan's country, their argument would be stronger. Of course while the wealth of this country was in a good many hands, the dividing-up tune took nicely with a great many people. But if Socialism actually meant dividing up instead of putting a stop to this brutal and one-sided dividing-up system we are living under now, as it will very soon, it would not work with the people in the future, as only Morgan and a few of his comrades in the branch with him will have anything to divide.

Just think of telling a full-grown man who has been shaved by a barber as well as having been shaved by every other schemer whose pockets as well as his stomach are empty, who has nothing and never will as long as this system lasts, that there is a danger of him having to divide up with the other fellow. Even the good party man who has been voting his ticket straight for thirty years, and who has risen to the exalted position of getting soup and beans in exchange for his labor, would laugh at such nonsensical clap-trap.

Yes, this dividing-up bugaboo has been dropped by the capitalists. They found that the figures issued by this government showed that the worker received one-tenth of the wealth he produced in the shape and name of wages and that this dividing up

was so glaring, not to speak of downright robbery, that they tried another string. This new string is called the incentive string, and is called the very latest tune given on the capitalist's banjo. It seems to have a very fair run at the present time, especially among the highly protected seventy-five-cents-a-day man in Pennsylvania. It is even popular among Morgan ninety-cent-tagged heroes. A little intellectual midget called a professor, in the City of Chicago, has written a book against Socialism which deals entirely with incentive. He says in the "opening chapter" that if the workingmen of this country would spend less on food and wear cheaper clothing he would be all right. Now you will see at a glance that this receipt should be made plain, as there is a danger of a wrong class trying it, and in that way ruin business and spoil the workingman's economy. As there are but three classes of people in the world, namely: workingmen, beggars and thieves. Now, if you are a beggar or a thief you don't have to economize, as you can eat and drink all you can lay hands on, and the more you eat the better, as in that way you will help the workingman by eating up what he has saved, then he will be sure of plenty of work. The factory will always be open, there will be no over-production or panics, no strikes or lockouts, and all will be happiness. The beggar and thief will be in clover and the workingman will be as happy as if h—l had him, even though he has to live on pig's feet to get there. To be sure that the wrong class don't try the above receipt it might be well to state here that if you are in the tramp class you are a beggar. If you are in the Morgan class you are a thief. Now be sure of your class, as you can see that if a beggar or a thief should start any economy foolishness it would spoil the whole arrangement.

I would like to ask this little intellectual hireling if he would be willing to reverse his cure-all receipt for the workingman's happiness? As the workingman's great curse the world over is now and ever has been, that he has not used enough of the wealth he has produced. Suppose the producer could live on five