

## Crimes of Capitalism (October 6, 1903)

Fort Worth, Texas, October [6], 1903

The frauds and other outrages perpetrated upon the few remaining Indians in the name of our vaunted civilization are shocking beyond expression. From the very first landing of the white man the shameless crime of spoliation began. The “savage” must be civilized! And forthwith deceit, duplicity, theft, and murder were enlisted in the conquest.

The history of this conquest is crimson with crime.

The cruelest atrocities and most bloodthirsty vindictiveness of the American Indian were inspired and fanned into flame by the treachery and rapine of the marauding and plundering civilization.

It is this that has constituted “the white man’s burden.”

Voltaire once said, as nearly as I can recall his words: “William Penn was the only man who ever made a treaty with the American Indians not affirmed by an oath, and the only treaty that was never violated.”<sup>i</sup>

The investigation of the Dawes Commission<sup>ii</sup> and the wholesale robbery of Indians, squaws, and papooses by the government agents will furnish one of the concluding chapters in the history of civilization (?) of the savage (!) that will fitly climax four centuries of Christian conquest in the new world.

In this connection, the following dispatch clipped from the St. Louis Globe-Democrat of October 4th [1903] is highly edifying:

Miami, Indian Territory, Oct. 3. — Grafters in the Indiana Territory are resorting to a unique method for making money. It has long been known that the Indian squaw readily falls in love with the first white man she meets who is willing to pay her any attention and it does not matter very much whether he is handsome and stylish, or ugly; whether he is old or young, rich or poor. This makes easy sailing for the grafters of the territory, who have been making profitable use of the Indian maiden, by contracting with her to furnish a white husband with a cash consideration. Money has no value to the redskins, and it is said that in some cases they have been known to pay as much as \$100 in cash for a husband.

The brokers have no trouble in finding a husband, as the girls are to come into possession of some very valuable land. When the Choctaw allotment is made every maiden in that nation will come into possession of 320 acres of land and about \$2500 in cash as her share of the tribal funds on deposit in the United States Treasury.

Some of these girls are very pretty, yet they could be readily picked as Indians. Many of them have received good education at the Indian schools, and most of them are willing to marry as soon as they get their allotment and the cash in hand. In many cases the brokers pull strings at both ends. They accept a contract from the girls to furnish her a husband at from \$25 to \$100 and then they advertise in some of the Eastern papers for the husband. They make him a proposition to furnish him with a pretty Indian girl for from \$100 to \$250. When the Eastern lad with a desire for the West learns that he is to get a bride with a fortune, and that he will have nothing to do for a year at least but spend her money, he becomes an easy customer for the marriage broker.

This is some of the “civilization” that socialism is to wreck; some of the “incentive” it is to destroy; some of the “individuality” it is to blot out; some of the “homes” it is to break up.

Yes, by the gods, that is the line of the social revolution and when it has done its work these vile abominations will be wiped from the earth.

The other day I met a full-blood Indian socialist. The light in his eye and the warm, eager pressure of his hand thrilled me through and through.

Welcome, indeed, red comrade!

• • • • •

The Paris (Illinois) Gazette recently had the following which was copied in the Terre Haute papers:

Frizell Thompson, a 19-year old Negro youth en route from Chattanooga, Tenn., to St. Louis, fell or was knocked beneath a Big Four freight train in the Midland Yards at 3:30 o'clock Thursday morning [Oct. 1, 1903] and his left leg so brutally crushed that amputation was found necessary. For four hours the mutilated Negro lay on a truck at the downtown depot while the authorities were settling a dispute as to who was responsible for his care. His ragged clothes afforded little protection from the falling rain. A box served as a pillow.

Had the victim been rich instead of poor, even though black, the “authorities” would have had no dispute about his care.<sup>iii</sup> A ragged white boy would have fared no better. The “authorities” under capitalism are out for the “stuff.” They are also “patriotic” and for “the old flag.”

What utter heartlessness this incident discloses! A man-eating tiger or shark could not be more destitute of mercy. It is enough to make a bronze statue shudder and yet it is not an uncommon occurrence. It is said that “poverty is not a crime.” It is a lie. Poverty is a crime and the penalty is death by torture and neglect.

Socialism and only socialism will banish the gaunt monster poverty from the world.

Published in *Social Democratic Herald*, vol. 6, no. 26, whole no. 273 (Oct. 24, 1903), p. 1.

---

<sup>i</sup> Allusion to *Letters on the English: Letter IV, On the Quakers* (1733) by François Marie Arouet de Voltaire (1694–1778). The common translation reads: “The first step [Penn] took was to enter into an alliance with his American neighbors, and this is the only treaty between those people and the Christians that was not ratified by an oath, and was never infringed.”

<sup>ii</sup> The Dawes Commission of 1893 conducted registration of tribal members with a view to the expropriation of the treaty lands ceded to the so-called “Five Civilized Tribes” in today’s Oklahoma. Communal lands were platted into privately-held individual lots with the federal government “claiming” any surplus land following the process of allotment to individuals.

<sup>iii</sup> The dispute was between the Cleveland, Cincinnati, Chicago & St. Louis Railway, the so-called “Big Four,” and the Edgar County, Illinois, over which entity was financially responsible for the victim’s care. Thompson later attempted to sue the railroad for \$15,000 for the injury he sustained when he was pushed out of a train, but settled his case out of court for a reported \$500.