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## The Individual vs. Socialism (January 6, 1897)

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There is a theory, an assumption, a conjecture, that in some way socialism is inimical to liberty and independence of the individual. Just how and to what extent this diminution of individual rights and prerogatives is brought about is not distinctly stated; indeed, it may be said is not explained at all, and therefore takes on the characteristics of a vagary.

Let us see: Suppose A works for B, earns \$3 a day and receives \$1 a day, while B pockets the other \$2. In this case it is held, and rightfully, perhaps, that A maintains his individuality at a loss of \$2 a day. But it may be said with far more reason that A is a wage slave and that B is his master; that he lives and moves and has his being by permission of B. True it may be that after A gets his dollar, one-third of what he has earned, he may spend it as he pleases and boast of his individual independence and a' that.

On the other hand, A, as advocated by socialism, becomes a member of a cooperative society, earns \$3 a day and gets it all; in other words, A works for himself instead of toiling for B, and gets what he earns. This suggests the query: In what way and to what extent has A by becoming a member of a cooperative association lost any of his rights as an individual? In what way have his rights been abridged? He is still a sovereign citizen. Socialism has deprived him of no right. It has not dwarfed his manhood. It has not invaded his home, but has made it possible for him to secure for himself and family his entire earnings, two-thirds of which, under the flaunting banner of "individualism" and the wage-slave system, B pocketed and grew sleek and fat while his victim sunk steadily lower in the scale of poverty.

The wage-slave system is the one jewel in the diadem of plutocracy which socialists propose to remove and that is why socialism is not popular with the plutocracy.