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# Vote Catching Amendments

## (A Letter to the Editor)

by C.W. Barzee

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An article signed by John M. Crook, *Daily Socialist* January 5 [1910], notes the gain in Socialist votes from 1900 to 1903. Very wisely he notes that the big 1904 gain was a disgruntled Democratic vote instead of Socialist. Many of us have known and commented this fact from time to time. Now, I want to ask candidly of what use is this mugwump vote? Suppose the whole Democratic fraternity should vote the Socialist ticket to the extent of electing that party to office and the next day hawk back to the middle class, populistic, cheap money, low interest, light taxes, etc., etc.? Of what purpose would the Socialist Party be with such a backbone in it? A Socialist is a citizen whose evolved knowledge understands the Marxian theory of surplus value as operated through the profit system and opposes it for the purpose of destroying that feature of our social condition.

We do not want any other kind of votes for our party. Better spend a lifetime teaching truth than court such a blunder as that. We are expected to make good. We must make good and we can never do so until actual social evolution moves up to a place where it will support the action.

Suppose Lincoln had been elected by a majority vote on a straight abolition platform, would he have waited the victory of Gettysburg to have issued that immortal emancipation document? Why did he wait? Simply because the people were not able to receive it before. Just so with our wage emancipation. It will come when the people understand what they want and why they want it. By mere accident the Republican Party slipped Lincoln into the organized machinery of government on a platform that the most of the citizens openly opposed and he had a government without a backbone to it.

Why all of this vote catching "all lands" amendments, pushed into the platform by some office-itching individuals who want to do

something when that something can be better done outside the elected office than within it?

Let me suggest that that something needed to be done is the organization of the citizen voter into a political party that works to make Socialists and does not care a tinker about votes or vote-catching amendments.

Votes will come that will count when we make Socialists enough to carry an election.

If any man is going to be Socialist just because some other man is a Socialist or because the party is becoming a factor, we had better let him “die in the wilderness” before we “espy out the land.”<sup>1</sup>

That the Socialist Party is increasing in dues-paying members, that the organization has stability enough to manage its own internal affairs, that the workingman is being pressed closer to the wall, that the capitalist system is toppling over with its own weight and all and many other infallible signs of the coming revolution is enough to make me continue in the Socialist movement, stemming the tide without even “tacking to the right or the left.”

I want to say that Oregon has just passed through her trial of party solidarity, and has proven the merit of a Socialist and not merely a voter.

Give us organization, founded on well understood Marxian economics, and let the vote go where it may, the party will remain and succeed to the government function when the evolution of society demands it and it would be folly to place it there before that time.

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*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport*

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<sup>1</sup> Evidently an allusion to the followers of Moses in the biblical book of *Joshua*.