

**CHAPTER – III**

**SOCIALIST THEORY AND CARL**

**SANDBURG**

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Socialism in its basic sense is the philosophy of the natural rights of man upon the body of social, political and economic construct set forth by ideas that provide an adequate rule of equal privileges in the state and society. Its radical philosophy is traced back to the arrogance of the intellectual labor seeking reform and reconstruction through reaction in the French Revolution and the spread of revolutionary principles throughout Europe. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century after varying political theories produced the systems of economic science, socialism emerged as a universal phenomenon for ideal justification and rationalization of the political and economic institutions. It is the outcome of a working class philosophy in its popular consciousness of economic injustices.

Modern socialism is a consequence of the Industrial Revolution. The socialist ideology arose largely from the concept of the worker's subjugation by the capitalist owners. The workers are fully exploited for the maximum advantage of the capitalist who own and control the means of production. Since

they legally administer the management, they could amass greater profits while the contribution of workers is devalued by meagre wages. Socialism therefore, is a criticism on the capitalist system that runs on the principle of economic domination through exploitation of workers. It presided as a concern for the natural rights of man and continued to evolve as a socialist theory with many offshoots. The different types of socialism generate varying socialist theories depending on the nature and circumstances of the workingman's environment. They are too many to comprehend but what holds them together is in their recognition of worker's exploitation, economic inequality and their advocacy of common ownership. Socialist thinkers perceived of a classless society which Kirkup define as:

A socialist society is one based on the system of public or collective ownership of the material instruments of production, democratic administration of the industries, and cooperative labour (qtd. in Johari 649).

Socialism stands at the vanguard of the working class philosophy for social and economic reforms with the aim to practical realization of a common fellowship. It is opposed to the bourgeois decadence and wielding of tremendous power over the economic units of material and power resources. Capitalism exists primarily for individual gains which promotes acquisitive possession of the propertied class. It is a system that obstructs the socialist goal. Therefore, the socialist ideology assumes an organizational shape to root out capitalism for the collective welfare. As a political philosophy, socialism aims at liberating the intellectual dormancy from years of oppression and to organize the workers for a working class movement to achieve the ends. The socialist measures include labor strikes and protest against unregulated factory system, demand for higher wages and less

working hours etc. The relative impotence of egalitarianism and class and economic divide in the capitalist convention of industrial societies increased memberships into socialism and necessitated a thoroughgoing social movement in Europe.

Marxism or Scientific Socialism is the most important derivative of socialism that provides a philosophical base to scientifically politicise socio-economic evolution. Marx forged the way to an advance methodology for scientific study of social and economic theory called “dialectical materialism.” He improvised the “dialectic” as a logical method for demonstrating the stages of economic growth. Hence, the law of dialectics applied for Marx a combination of the “dialectical” and “materialism” as a tool for evaluating the economic processes of history. He thus, devised the “historical materialism” or the “materialistic conception of history” according to which the economic forces determine the process of social evolution that shapes the course of history. Johari shares Marx’s view:

The *means of production* (like land, machinery, tools, and technology) and the *relations of production* (the two classes—one that owns the means of production, exchange and distribution and the other that is dependent upon them to earn its livelihood) provide stuff that makes the story of social change. The material forces mean the ‘powers of production’ like (i) natural resources including land, climate, fertility of soil and mineral resources like coal, iron, water, power etc., (ii) machinery, tools and techniques inherited from the past, and (iii) mental and moral qualities of the men of the time. The powers of production are the active determinants of historical development (719).

The economic evaluation is that the means of production and the powers of production are both owned and controlled by the capitalist. From here arise the conceivable contradictions in the economic system. The working class produce labor for meagre wages while the capitalist who are the owners of production continue to profit at the cost of the working class labor. The economic scale by which history is weighed delivers substantive thought upon the way the resources and productive forces are controlled by the dominant class.

Accordingly, Marx measured the value of labor and he correlated labor and commodity. Commodity is produced at the expense of labor power. Marx states:

One consequence of the peculiar nature of labor-power as a commodity is, that its use-value does not, on the conclusion of the contract between the buyer and seller, immediately pass into the hands of the former. Its value, like that of every other commodity, is already fixed before it goes into circulation, since a definite quantity of social labour has been spent upon it; but its use-value consists in the subsequent exercise of its force (qtd. in Lemert 65).

With technological advancement in the instruments of production, labor power is bought for the manoeuvring of machines. Since it is bought and its price is fixed before production and sale, the profit derived from selling the commodity is not gained by the laborer.

As an upshot of the historical materialism, Marx and Engels formulated the theory of the class war thus, stating “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles” (qtd. in Laski 119). It signifies a

competing history of class tensions. This perspective has become a socialist ritual for advancing the class ideology. It stems out of two divided classes—the oppressor and the oppressed. Marx and Engels further showed a logical premise: “Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinct feature: It has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat” (qtd. in Laski 120-1). Further, the development of class ideology is enumerated by Marx as follows:

Upon the different forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence rises an entire superstructure of distinct and characteristically formed sentiments, illusions, modes of thought and views of life. The entire class creates and forms them out of its material foundations and out of the corresponding social relations. The single individual who derives them through tradition and education may imagine that they form the real motives and the starting-point of his activity (qtd. in Sabine 696).

The individual’s relationship with the forces and his sense of introspection accounts for a collective mode of thinking. From the collective experiences of individuals is derived a motive for struggle. The rationale behind is class antagonism arising out of socio-economic disparities as a logical outcome for a social revolution. The Marxist conception of class conflict is the dialectical struggle between the two dominant classes over the control of the means of production. According to Marx’s famous exposition of social revolution, the control of the economy will eventually fall in the hands of the new dominant class i.e. proletariat or the working class. In Marxist theory, Communism is the culmination of this proletarian revolution that would abolish wage labor and

capitalism to bring about a proletarian state. Corresponding to this view is the political movement of socialism which prepares the grounds for a communist transcendence. The revolutionary ideology is guided by the communist militancy that advocates combating the elements of exploitation and class oppression through a proletarian revolution.

Socialism is not limited to a fixed philosophical or theoretical framework. It embodies different aspects and expositions, each particular to their specific problems and beliefs. Utopian socialism that existed before Marxism evolved out of the ideals of a classless state and mutual coexistence. The term “utopian” refers to the fantastical grounding on paradise like models of ideal societies. The salient feature of Utopian Socialism is collective co-operation on the basis of equal efforts on production and distribution of wealth. However, it lacked the political backdrop of rivalry between the contending classes—the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. Evolutionary or reformism held a socialist philosophy based on the formula of evolution as an antithesis of revolution. It advocated political and economic reforms by means of democratic measures. Its leading exponent Eduard Bernstein states:

“What is generally taken as the goal of socialism is nothing to me, the movement is everything.” The day-to-day reforms, the step by step progress, alone have real significance, the apocalyptic vision of revolution is just moonshine! (qtd. in Mehta 27).

An important socialist variant is Fabianism that emerged as a socialist movement in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century England. This model of socialism was customized for the nation’s parliamentary democratic function. It is evolutionary

in its approach with the main consideration for a strong political party. According to Laidler:

Fabian socialism “regarded the transition from capitalism to socialism as a gradual process, looked forward to the socialisation of industry by the peaceful economic and political agencies already at hand; saw in the middle class a group that could be utilised in developing the technique of administration in behalf of the new social order, and felt that an important step in the attainment of socialism was the arousing of the social conscience of the community in favour of the socialist ideal” (qtd. in Johari 672).

Anarchism is a kind of reactionary socialism defying authority by resorting to force, violence and action and advocated stateless societies. The degree of anarchist tactics differed according to its exponents. Proudhon advocated stern action like ‘strikes’ in the absence of extreme physical coercion as against Bakunin’s violent preaching “for revolutionary action, but one, the abolition of the right to inherit income-producing property . . .” (Ritter 101).

Syndicalism has verifiable links with Anarchism however, what makes it unique is in its promotion of trade unionism as the sole agent to destroy the state and capitalism. Its main objective is self government in industry. Mehta states:

As against the political level, they projected the class level, and they argued that socialism cannot be achieved by elections, reforms. . . . If socialism is to be achieved, workers must organize in militant class organizations, in trade unions, and place before them only one goal—

*general strike*. It was the Syndicalists who first conceived the idea of a total strike which paralyses the country completely. . . . (32)

The French CGT and Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) are examples of these trade unions. Syndicalist tactics include boycotts, sabotage, propaganda and general strikes etc.

Thus, through the study of some of these Socialist variants, it has been observed that despite their diversity in approach, their meeting point is in the overriding consideration for the working class and the emancipation of the labourers from exploitation.

In America, socialism emerged as an important political thought and movement at the heights of industrialization during the Progressive era. The rise of intellectual socialists in literature and politics further boosted the movement. Prior to this, were the utopian communities of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. But as a political movement, it was intensified by labor unrest, strikes and protest in the first decades. During this, the *laissez faire* economics benefitted the big business but crippled the working class economy. The state did not direct a decree for business functions and regulations. With increased production, capitalist institutions demanded an eight hour day labor. Moreover, the workingmen had to suffice with low wages cheaper than the cost of their labor output. All this promoted radical impulses, further stimulated by the trend of socialist thought, a political belief guided by the principle of the workingman rights. As industrialization increased, the working class population also rose in numbers. They organized into unions and met with increasing opposition from the political

and capitalist institutions. Labor unions like the American Federation of Labor, Knights of Labor and the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World) formed special ties with socialist parties like the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Party of America. For the working class and the socialist, it became the political common sense that the state could not solve the desperate proportions abounding the marginalized.

Socialism in America was an important labor politics for the distraught and deprived lot of the working class. The intervention of machine technology brought substantial growth in mass production and consumer intake. However, the issue was that it led to cheap labor cost and the displacement of skilled labourers. Labor problems persisted even throughout the twenties despite the economic prosperity. Critical issues such as the growing immigrant population, unemployment and the unethical and unhygienic operations in factories were the main causes of worker's agitation. An overwhelming increase in socialist membership took place before the First World War but was narrowed down by communist politics during the Great Depression. The American socialists were mainly opposed to the capitalist dictatorship of the economy. Daniel De Leon, a leading figure of the American Socialist Labor Party states:

The fundamental doctrine of Socialism is that capital is a social product and should, therefore, be socially owned. . . . Despite these pregnant facts, capital is not the property of these co-operating millions, but of a small class of private individuals called capitalists. The capitalist class uses capital to exploit the millions who create and operate it. The capitalist class uses capital to secure more capital, to dominate the State, the law, the university and the church, in order that it may enslave

the millions of workers, while its members live lives of scandalous corruption and parasitism, both private and social (1-2).

Capitalism fosters growth of individualism through manipulating public resources and amassing private income. As such, the injustice in the distribution of resources necessitates rivalry between the wage earner and the capitalist. This gave way to conflict of interests between the monopoly and the monopolized and the latter's struggle for civil and economic rights.

The struggle for political and economic reforms during the progressive era was mainly targeted against the state-capitalist nexus. Particularly, in the early years of the twentieth century, there was growing frustration with the political and economic system. The socialist felt the need to remedy the system and called for socialist democratic principles. Hence, they built their campaigns on the perceived state of despair along the lines of worker's issue. It led the working class to organize against the capitalist's control of profit. At the same time, socialist leaders Eugene V. Debs, Emil Seidel, Victor Berger, Daniel De Leon, Morris Hillquit, and labor unions like The AFL, and the IWW etc., pressed forward their radical thoughts and adopted socialist measures and programs. Inadequate progress in poverty alleviation and near stagnant employment was informed by the socialists to gain public response and support. The Social Democratic Party was the forerunner of the socialist parties in America. Later it merged with the Socialist Labor Party to form the Socialist Party of America. The party's biggest stronghold was Milwaukee, a place for socialist activity and intense labor movement. Led by Eugene V. Debs the party won remarkable votes and took active part in the Progressive movement. Moreover, due to its

association with labor unions it was considered a party solely for the working class by the elitist progressives. During these years, there were a number of striking cases and workers' strikes against the capitalist corporate. In fact, the United States labor history is one marked by social unrest and devastating cases of syndicalism and anarchist politics. Soon the socialist were isolated from the progressive movement due to internal differences with other major political parties regarding foreign policy. They failed to advance their politics when the Socialist Party opposed US entry into the First World War. The socialist saw the war as a capitalist struggle for power. It was the belief that the war was fought at the expense of millions of soldiers' lives who belong to the working class.

A view of American socialism is given in the American pamphlet series *The New Appeal Socialist Classics*, 1916 entitled, *Elements of Socialism*: "Socialism is the collective ownership and democratic management of the social means of production for the common good" (Ghent 5). A broad explanation of this definition is furthered:

We use the general term "collective," rather than some more specific term, because common ownership under Socialism will no doubt take on various forms— national, state, municipal, labor-union and co-operative.

We say "democratic management" because collectivism without democracy would not be Socialism (Ghent 5).

American Socialism stood on socialist-democratic principles or Democratic Socialism, an ideology based on the working class rights and control over the means of production. While it relished on the ideology of extreme class warfare

imported by German immigrants and influenced by the revolutionary philosophy of Europe, its goal is confusing because American socialist aimed at restructuring the capitalist system rather than depose it. They were practical reformers with a radical approach; yet they were revolutionary enthusiasts without a real basis for climaxing the class war. And like Fabianism, their aim was directed more towards a strong political movement for winning the electoral.

It was expected that the ideals of the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 would soon swept over America. But the struggle to build a mass socialist movement was never materialized. Despite being the most capitalistic country in the world, America never saw a mass socialist uprising. The reason is rooted in the foundation of the nation. The absence of a feudal society that impeded strong class ideologies, and the political democracy backed by strong socialist objectives which is rather towards equality of opportunity than a socialist state account for the absence of a strong socialist movement. This fact is augmented by Cole:

In the United States, militarism and feudalism were relatively unimportant factors; and the State lacked altogether the autocratic character which it possessed in Germany and Austria. . . . The worker's main struggle was against the employing class—not against the Government; and in particular, it was against a section of the employing class – the great trust, monopolies, and financial interests – rather than against the smaller employers or the employing class as a whole. The extreme ruthlessness of the struggle was for the most part confined to certain limited areas of capitalist enterprise – principally to the newly opened up mining and lumbering and oil areas, to the coalfields, and to the centres of mass-production

industry, such as Chicago and Bethlehem and Detroit. In these limited areas the class-war was waged much more fiercely than in Western Europe. . . . But ruthless class-war never existed over the United States as a whole, or so as to set its stamp on the entire Trade Union movement – much less on the entire working class. (812-13)

Various components of socialist radicalism and anarchism did prevail on a wide scale including communism's brief episode in the thirties. However, the nature of American socialism was directed more towards practical reforms of the day. This is evident in the socialist supported worker's struggles against capitalist corporate where their objective is the fulfilment of certain goals and not on the broader socialist aspect of a classless state. The American socialist movement was directed towards investigating those specific kinds of economic mechanisms that discourages workers' stability. The political struggle, therefore, is towards social change and not necessarily a socialist state. In this sense, the socialist value does not totally diminish from the movement. Therefore, the socialist struggle in America is best described by the political movement of the working class.

Socialism is not only economic but a political movement that advocates worker's rights. From all the accounted facts, it is seen that the socialist critique is against the economic system that prevents the worker from exercising his right to profit and property. Therefore, socialist endeavours collective ownership and democratic governance that imposes no arbitrary limitations to making life more humane and less coercive. Even in the extreme forms of socialism where the goal is the proletarian state and self government, the political resolution of their ideal state is modelled on democratic lines. The ultimate goal of socialism is the

breakdown of the capitalist profit system and the socialist system in its place is programmed for the welfare of the workingmen.

Socialism in its simplistic sense is politics of the working class with a goal for common fellowship free of social and economic suppression. History evidences the exercise of owning and controlling wealth and private property in limited hands. From this arise the class structure and the class tensions. This is further aggravated by the arrival of the machinery. It gave way to stiff competitions among the capitalists. As capitalism fell into fewer hands, the proletariat class increased. The socialist implication is one of class antagonism and conflict. The contention is between two orders of classes, that of the proletariat, the labor class and the bourgeois or the capitalist. Their determining power is the control of the means of production. So far, it has made the rich richer and the poor poorer. In the economic structure of class, is a battle line drawn between the two hostile forces. Thence, the route to a socialist state is through a social revolution as predicted by Marx. A brief outline of the socialist framework is thus given.

An aspect of socialism also reveals its psychological humanism as simply an inherent belief system. If detached from the doctrine, socialism resides in the instinctive response to inequality and injustice. It may also be interpreted as a belief of the ethical kind that opposes the oppression and subordination of man. No doubt socialism is a science of the social relations in the economic structure of the society. But it principally rest upon the recognition of the human condition enslaved by capitalist dictatorship. In other words, it stems from the inherent sympathy for the laboring masses.

Some notable writers of the early twentieth century America aligned themselves with socialism. Most popular socialist poet was Carl Sandburg. He was an active socialist who expressed his socialist views in a number of pamphlets and articles. In his pamphlet *You and Your Job*, he made apparent his antagonism for capitalism:

I believe in “obstacles,” but I say that a system such as the capitalism system, putting such obstacles as starvation, underfeeding, overwork, bad housing and perpetual uncertainty of work in the lives of human beings, is a pitiless, ignorant, blind, reckless, cruel mockery of a system (Sandburg, *You* 11).

Thus, he implicates the pernicious impact of capitalism. In the same pamphlet, he announces his socialist ideology:

This man, the true Socialist, realizes the class-struggle. He sees a war going on between two classes, the capitalist class and the working class. Strikes, boycotts, demands for higher wages and better factory conditions on the part of the toilers ; lockouts, blacklists, Pinkertons, bull pens and the preaching of “thrift and industry” on the part of the employers—these are partial evidences of the class struggle (Sandburg, *You* 20).

Sandburg who was fascinated by Lincoln’s socialist sensibility of the workingmen quotes the latter’s speech on “labor”: “But it has so happened in all the ages of the world, that *some* have labored, and *others* have, without labor, enjoyed a large proportion of the fruits. This is wrong and should not continue”

(Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln* 88). In another socialist pamphlet *Labor and Politics*, he elucidates the importance of unions and their agitation:

Under the old plan of links and pins connecting cars, the slaughter of railroad men was something fearful. Today, it is bad enough—a railroad man has to pay twice as much for insurance as those in “non-hazardous occupations.” But it took more than ten years of organized agitation, making a “hell of a noise,” to get the public and congress to recognize that it was brutal to sacrifice human lives, in order to save a few dollars for the capitalist class” (qtd. in M. Sandburg 259).

Further in the closing lines he states: “Only through the Socialist Party will the workingman get what belongs to him, the full product of his toil” (qtd. in M. Sandburg 261). Similarly, his main concern throughout his volumes of poetry is for the workingman.

Sandburg’s poetry exhibits the characteristics of socialism and often underlined by the Marxist inspired doctrines of class war and class antagonism. Politically, he was allied to the Social Democrats and the Socialist Party of America. In the thesis, Sandburg’s poetry is mainly explored through analysis of the poet’s criticism and investigation of the individual’s position in the contemporary social and economic environment. The socialist significance is derived from this basis. Firstly, the elemental subject of the workingman forms the major part of his works. He accounts for the specific wrongs and injustices done to the working class, their endurance as well as their reaction against the weaknesses of the system. Secondly, there is the ideological understanding of the economic injustices in the poet’s preoccupation with the prejudices held

against the capitalist and corrupt governance. Thirdly, the poet gives ample evidence of socialist elements such as the class divide by his clear distinction of the rich and the poor. Then, there is the penultimate issue of the class conflict between the working class and capitalist class that often underlie his poems of protest. Finally, the poet's unrestrained preaching for revolt affirms his socialist stance. There are enough references to socialistic ideas in his poetry.

Although, he did not subscribe to all the variants of socialism, it is possible to access his poetry in the light of some in fragments and in parts. His socialist democratic vision is seen in section 51 of the *The People, Yes*: "The sea has fish for every man. / Every blade of grass has its share of dew" (CP 509). Again, at several instances of this volume, the poet gives utopian hints in man's search for the ideal. For instance, Section 56 states: "In the people is the eternal child, / the wandering gypsy, the pioneer homeseeker / the singer of home sweet home" (CP 518). Though Sandburg was not a utopian socialist, perhaps, he occasionally gives in to the ideal "home sweet home" as is the nature of man however fantastical and different it may be from his political ideology.

Many of Sandburg's poems have verifiable links with the Marxist revolutionary principles embedded in the text. A poem such as "Harbor" of *Chicago Poems* indicates a mass uprising: "Masses of great gray wings / And flying white bellies" (CP 5). The line that follows, "Veering and wheeling free in the open" (CP 5) could be interpreted as the communist triumph of social revolution. Sometimes Sandburg presents revolutionary violence not through direct accounts but by fairly suggesting the potential of the "mob." The poem "I am the People, the Mob" from *Chicago Poems* ends with a threatening note of

revolution: “The mob—the crowd—the mass—will arrive then” (CP 71). The last stanza of “Always the Mob” from *Cornhuskers* depicts a revolutionary violence: “I cross the sheets of fire in No Man’s Land for you, my brother—I slip a / steel tooth into your throat, you my brother—I die for you and I kill you—It is a twisted gnarled thing, a crimson wool:” (CP 111).

Section 76 of *The People, Yes* express an anarchic moment: “No strike is ever lost”: either a thought or an instinct / equivalent to “Give me liberty or give me death” (CP 562). So strikers should strike to achieve the measures for “Any kind of death is better than this kind of life” (CP 562). Prior to the publication of *Smoke and Steel* in 1920 was the Great Steel Strike of 1919. Popularly termed as the Red Scare, it was against the U.S. Steel Corporation’s labor policy. The background of the title poem “Smoke and Steel” accounts for an anarchist inspiration: “Smoke at the heart of it, smoke and the blood of a man” (CP 152). The line stimulates a revolutionary sentiment by the poet’s insistence of the loss of blood in the making of steel. Another poem of the anarchist and syndicalist subject is “Memoir of a Proud Boy” from *Cornhuskers*. The poem is a direct reference to the coalminers strike against the Colorado coal companies: “Out of Ludlow and coal towns in Colorado / Sprang a vengeance of Slav miners, Italians, Scots, Cornishmen, Yanks / Killings ran under the spoken commands of this boy / With eighty men and rifles on a hogback mountain” (CP 103).

Sandburg’s poetry thoroughly presents the working class in their various industrial professions. For instance, the working girls, manual operators, work gangs, steel workers, coal miners etc., are prospective members of the guilds and unions. Again, it may be observed that Sandburg’s socialism is rooted to the working class ideology. It is the workingman who combats the forces at every

stage of the nation's progress. Section 19 of the title piece "Good Morning, America" voices this:

"Your mothers, America, have labored and carried  
harvests of generations—Across the spillways come  
further harvests, new tumultuous populations, young  
strangers, crying, "We are here! We belong! Look at us!"  
(CP 335)

The passage recognizes labor power in the making of the nation. It also indicates America's continuing growth as the working progress of the generations of the working class. In his writings, he talks about the American Revolution, the Civil War, WWI, and the Great Depression. The nation's struggle against these forces reflects the struggle of the workingman. The gradual development of the nation relates to the economic and political convergence which is evolutionary in essence.

American socialist were investigating agents who checked the conduct of the capitalist and of injustices committed to the working class. This is true of Carl Sandburg whose poetry was conspicuous of the common hardships of the workingman and dictates of the capitalist. His voluminous books of poetry are abundant in the subject of the working class and their social and economic problems. In fact, it is for this reason that the critics charge him for his narrow subject and theme of poetry. He enforced his political views in poetry at a language and rhythm easily perceptible to the common masses. Golden informs:

The Socialist with whom he identified himself all  
through those years were the Wisconsin group of  
Social Democrats, the Fabians of England, the

Christian Socialist of France, Germany, and Italy, and the trade-union Socialist of New York (124).

However, his socialism mostly pertains to the American Social Democrats. Bernard Duffey gives a detail account:

The Socialism he espoused was, among members of the left generally, regarded as a conservative variety. . . . Derived largely from European and especially German groups in the Midwest and representing a continuation in the United States of German Social Democracy, it was gradualist in its methods, committed to parliamentary means . . . and was sufficiently intellectualized and liberalized to include many a populist romantic of Sandburg's own kind. Its German origins were those of Marx, but it was far from strict in its application of them and included much of the diffused form of German romanticism in its regard for individual human beings, their nature and needs. . . . As it knew the proletariat, recognized something of the substantial and real conditions of economic life, and spoke especially for the victims of that life like those Sandburg had known at first hand. . . . Many of its tenets appeared directly in his work, and the urban interests of *Chicago Poems* and *Smoke and Steel* were largely defined by its force. Its thought cast a shaping light over all his early work (Duffey 215).

His poetry is flexible in its socialist theme just as the nature of socialism is. This is why it is possible to study his poems in the light of the socialist variants. Besides, his socialism is simply one of inherent philosophy and sympathy for the poor and deprived.

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