

## **Capitalism is the Real Issue**

### **(August 17, 1912)**

Liberty, divinest word ever coined by human brain or uttered by human tongue, is the issue in this campaign.

It is the spirit of Liberty that today undermines the empires of the old world, sets crowns and miters askew, and in its onward elemental sweep is shaking the institutions of capitalism in this nation, as frail reeds are shaken in the blasts of the storm king's fury.

It was Carlyle who said of the results of the French Revolution that "democracy had destroyed the reign of the aristocracy of parchment and in its place had established the reign of the aristocracy of the money bag, the only compensating feature of which was that the reign of the latter would be of infinitely briefer duration than the former."

Truer words ne'er fell from human lips. Kingdoms and dynasties founded upon parchment have endured for a thousand years, but after a reign of less than half a century the kingdom of capitalism, the reign of the money bag in America, totters upon its throne and needs but the breath of a united proletariat to plunge it into that oblivion which Liberty has consigned the oppressors of mankind in every age of the race.

Upon a million hearthstones in America the newly lighted fires of Liberty burn today.

With an inspiration born of necessity the toilers of America are uniting under the crimson banner of socialism for the final struggle of human emancipation. From factory and mine, from field and farm, the gladsome cry of Freedom echoes on and ever on.

Faster and ever faster the battalions of labor's hosts are wheeling into action; with the irresistible onward sweep of the ocean's tide, the workers of the world march upon the citadels of capitalism, the defiant cry of unconditional surrender upon their lips, the unquenchable light of Liberty in their eyes.

No longer divided by the false political prophets of capitalism, united as they have never been before, the slaves of factory, mill, and farm are bent on victory on every political battlefield. For the first time in the political history of this nation the workers of every occupation are realizing the oneness of their interests and their cause, and they are recognizing as never before the common cause of their common impoverishment and oppression.

Capitalism stands revealed to the workers of the world as the incarnation of human greed, of human avarice, of human hate, of human slavery — the incarnate enemy of the further progress of the human race.

The issue is not Wilson and the Democratic Party, but *Capitalism*, the father of the Democratic Party and its politicians.

The issue is not Taft and the Republican Party, but *Capitalism*, the father of the Republican Party and its politicians.

The issue is not Roosevelt and his so-called Progressive Party, but *Capitalism*, which spawns politicians and reformers of the Roosevelt type.

The issue is not the Tariff, but *Capitalism*, the father of all tariffs.

The issue is not the punishment of Malefactors of Great Wealth, but *Capitalism*, the father of all malefactors of whatever grade of wealth.

The issue is not Child Labor, but *Capitalism*, which is the father of child slavery.

The issue is not the Prostitution of the Mothers, Wives, and Daughters of the Workers, but *Capitalism*, which necessitates that prostitution.

The issue is not Poverty, but *Capitalism*, which demands the pauperization of the workers of the world in order that capitalism may flower and flourish.

The issue is not Morgan and Rockefeller and the ten thousand other millionaires who plunder the workers of the world, but *Capitalism*, which enables the Morgans and the millionaires to plunder the workers.

In plain, Socialism groups all the so-called “issues” of all the corrupt capitalist political parties of whatever brand or name under the head of *Capitalism* and it damns them to eternal political perdition for their hypocrisy, their gross political immorality, and for their base betrayal of the world’s workers.

The political harlots of Capitalism have raised a thousand false issues, and they have captained and led opposing armies of the world’s workers upon a hundred thousand political battlefields where the only possible issue of the battle would be the defeat of the workers, and the political and economic victory of the masters.

The workers were simply entangled in the miasmic swamps of capitalist politics and no matter how the battle went the workers lost.

But that day in American politics is gone forevermore. Socialism, full panoplied and full armed, has entered upon the field of battle. It declares the issue to be Liberty vs. Slavery, Socialism vs. Capitalism, Man vs. Mammon.

Under the calcium light<sup>1</sup> of the political and economic truths of Socialism the warring elements in American politics are segregating.

On the one side are the disorganized, disintegrating cohorts of capitalism, with their cringing, cowardly leaders madly denouncing each other with a Niagara of personal abuse which exhausts the vocabulary of vituperation.

In the presence of the one supreme issue of half a century, they are lost and impotent.

On the other side are the rapidly gathering hosts of Socialism, marshaling their legions in the orderly ranks of the Socialist Party, with its chosen captains from its own class,<sup>2</sup> serene and confident, awaiting the hour to strike that final blow for Liberty which shall terminate the brutal rule of capitalist class, for the battle of the ages is at hand! Hearken to the trumpet voice of, and usher in the reign of human brotherhood.

Close up the ranks, oh ye toilers of the Earth! Stand true to thine own Liberty, for it summons you to the accomplishment of your own emancipation!

You are upon the eve of the greatest victory since the dawn of time. Millions of your fellows have died upon the gory fields of battle that this day of peaceful victory should be yours.

Your ballot is the flower of the struggle of the ages; its fruit shall be the emancipation of the race. Socialism bids you to claim your own in this election in the name of Liberty and Humanity.

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<sup>1</sup> Calcium light, also known as limelight, was a form of stage lighting used in theaters from the 1860s until the perfection of electricity. Light was generated when an intense jet flame of hydrogen was aimed at a cylinder of calcium oxide (quicklime) to generate an intense illuminating glow. The beam of light so cast was aimed at stars on stage — who were "in the limelight."

<sup>2</sup> The leadership of the Socialist Party of America was actually overwhelmingly middle class in social composition in this period, with lawyers, newspaper editors, former or current Protestant ministers, and shopkeepers heavily represented.