

A WORD TO THE WORKERS!

By EUGENE V. DEBS

As I may not meet you face to face in this campaign I address this brief message to you from my prison cell.

I am, as you know, the candidate of the Socialist party for president of the United States. The nomination came to me unsought, contrary to my personal wishes, by a unanimous vote of the convention.

The election takes place November 2nd. On that day the workers will register the degree of their intelligence or their ignorance, according as they cast their votes for themselves and their families or for their exploiting masters and their families. They will decide for four years more the political and industrial destiny of the nation.



Eugene V. Debs

The workers have a majority of votes. They outnumber their masters and bosses overwhelmingly at the polls. There they are masters, if they only will.

The workers elect every public official from justice of the peace to president of the United States.

No man can be elected to any office in this country without the vote of the workers.

Recollect that!

Don't forget it on November 2nd!

The men and women who are elected to office that day and who will be the political rulers of the people will be elected by the votes of the workers, and the workers will be responsible for their administration.

If the president who sits in the White House after March 4th next is the political tool of Wall street and the exploiting master class, the

same as the one who sits there now, I want the workers to know that it was their own votes that placed him there and that they were themselves responsible for the consequences.

Let us take another step.

The political and economic interests of all workers, regardless of race or occupation, are the same. They are all in the same boat. They float or sink together. They are one family and they will either reach their destined port in safety or they will go down to the bottom together.

Then why should they divide and face each other in opposing camps at the ballot box?

Why should they fight each other there?

Or anywhere?

United they can elect their own candidates and place their own class in power.

Divided they defeat their own candidates, elect those of their masters, and place the master class in power.

That is what the workers have been doing with their votes for fifty years and more, and I myself used to help do it.

But I have learned to do better. My eyes have been opened and I know better now.

That is something, but not very much as long as YOUR eyes are not opened.

We are all one, and I and my comrades can do but little until you are with us, and then there is nothing we cannot do.

We are **the people** and we have **all power**, **IF WE ARE UNITED**.

We are slaves only as long as we are divided.

Unite!

That's the order of the day. Everything depends upon that.

I hope you know me well enough to know that I am not a candidate because I want office. Had I wanted office I would not be a socialist. I would have remained in the Democratic party and gloried in its rottenness as Governor Cox is now doing, or joined the Republican and glorified the same rottenness as Senator Harding is doing.

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Let us take a step farther.

What is a political party?

An aggregation of persons seeking primarily to advance their material interests. There are exceptions, but that is the rule.

Measured by this standard, both the Republican and Democratic parties are capitalist parties. They are financed by the capitalist

class; they are supported by the capitalist press; they nominate capitalist candidates, and they rule in the interest of the capitalist masters.

Of course! How could it be otherwise?

Isn't that why court injunctions only hit labor unions, and in labor disputes, policemen's clubs only light on workingmen's heads?

That's the way the masters have of treating the slaves whose votes put them in power.

What business has a workingman in a capitalist party?

Quite as much as he would have in the Manufacturers' Association or the Chamber of Commerce, where they make a footmat of him.

What would you think of Rockefeller if you discovered him in the Socialist party? You would think he had lost his mind. Well he doesn't think that of you when he sees you in a capitalist party; he thinks you never had any to lose.

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The Republican and Democratic parties are Wall street's political twins; they do the dirty work in the dirty system of which they are the dirty products. They are as near alike as corruption is to corruption and rottenness to rottenness, and there is between them an equal exchange of both in every campaign.

I challenge anyone anywhere to show me any difference between these two hypocritical old political frauds so far as the worker is concerned. They both stand for capitalism and exploitation; for the supremacy of the capitalist class and the slavery of the working class.

A vote for either Harding or Cox is a vote for wage-slavery, and if cast by a worker stamps him as a servile tool of his master and an ignorant betrayer of his class.

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I am not asking you workers to vote for me. I am asking you to think for yourselves and refuse any longer to be deceived and delivered like live stock by crooked politicians and lying newspapers.

Ever since my boyhood I have been in your struggle. I am in it now. I shall be in it until the breath leaves my body. There is no other place for me.

I can talk plainly to you men and women of labor. We have been in the trenches together. I have seen you ahunger and athirst; I have seen you in rags, you and your wife and child; I have seen you battling for bread, and I have been with you when the blood trickled down your furrowed cheek.

I have seen your matted, bloody head and the bullet wounds in your body as you fought the gunmen of your masters. I have seen you at bay with a dangerous glint in your eyes; I have seen you turned out

of a job into the street for being a man; I have seen you blacklisted and your children starved because you refused to be a dog; I have seen you a tramp, an outcast, sharing your crust with your pal in rags; I have seen you in jail, beaten by a brute into insensibility in the name of the law; I have seen you in the penitentiary, a branded convict, shorn of every right to be a man, and everywhere my heart has been with you; everywhere I have felt the hunger pangs, the biting blasts that you endured; everywhere I felt the blows that fell upon your head and the bullets that pierced your body; everywhere you were my brother and I loved you, and never in my life have I loved you as I love you now, behind these walls, where there are so many of our class who fell in the tragic battle for bread, to keep me company.

You have been starved under both Republican and Democratic bosses; you have been clubbed by a policeman under a Republican as well as a Democratic mayor; you have been enjoined by a Republican and a Democratic governor, and you have seen hard times, no jobs, and low wages under a Republican and a Democratic president.

They are alike! They are your enemy. You have had enough of them, and I appeal to you from behind these walls to turn squarely about and march out of their camp forever.

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The Socialist party is your party and you should know this by the way the capitalist press has defamed it.

The Socialist party is the party of the workers, the producers, the common people. It has principles, not slush funds. It stands for freedom, not slavery.

The Socialist party proposes to take over the industrial machinery of the Nation and turn this capitalist republic into a People's Commonwealth.

It is the historic mission of the workers to free the American people and the people of all the world.

The Socialist party, the only real democratic party, is the political expression of the International Social Revolution that is sweeping the world onward and upward out of darkness and slavery into Light and Freedom!