
The People are Soft

by Eugene V. Debs

Published in *The Western Comrade* [Los Angeles], vol. 3, no. 1 (May 1915), pg. 14.

The times are always more or less “hard” for the great majority of the people. There are alternating periods of hard times and times still harder, but there is never prosperity for all the people.

There is absolutely no excuse for hard times in the United States. We are at the very center of fabulous and inexhaustible riches, enough for all and a hundred times more, and in the very midst of these we are unable to feed and clothe and shelter ourselves, and we present a spectacle tragic enough to make stone images shed tears.

At this very time, A.D. 1915, the times are harder than they have ever been in all the 139 years of our national existence.

The National Congress, supposed to represent the people and provide measures for our security, comfort, and happiness, adjourned in the very midst of the most paralyzing panic in the history of the country. When this Congress adjourned, one-fifth of all the productive workers of the nation were without employment, millions of them and their dependent ones actually suffering, but the political state of capitalism, decadent, obsolete, and worse than useless, could do absolutely nothing for them. All it could do was to vote hundreds of millions for port barrel enterprises and spend the rest of the time filibustering and in other political palavering which had no more relation to the actual industrial conditions of the country and the economic necessities of the masses than the croaking of frogs has to the failure of the potato crop.

The fact is that capitalism has collapsed and that the political state of capitalism is paralyzed except in the function of creating bogus issues over which to humbug the people and keep

them divided and fighting sham battles while they are being bled by the vampires that have seized upon the nation's industries and control the government with no other object in view than to perpetuate their own plutocratic piracy and keep the people in poverty and subjection.

The times are hard only because the people are soft.

Socialism makes it clear as the noon-day sun why the times are hard whether the Republican or Democratic Party is in power, and whether Roosevelt, Taft, or Wilson occupies the executive seat at Washington.

Socialism proposes that the industries of the nation shall be taken over by the nation and operated by the nation for the benefit of the whole people, and when this revolutionary change has come to pass the people will never again know the blight and curse of hard times.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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