

Advice to First Voters (October 25, 1904)

Answering your two interrogatories,¹ viz: “Why should the first voter cast his ballot for the Socialist Party?” and “Why should the first voter ally himself with or become a member of the Socialist Party?” I have to say:

First, that the Socialist Party is the only party that squarely meets the living issues of the day; the only party that stands for pure democracy.

The tariff, finance, and collateral relics belong to the past. The first voter, unless he happens to be of the few who inherit a fortune, has not interest in these fossilized issues.

Under a high protective tariff or free trade, the gold standard or free silver, the condition of the first voter, if he has nothing but his labor-power to support him, remains the same.

What chance has the poor young man of today to rise above the dead level of wage slavery? About one in 100. And even then he may lose all and tumble down to where he started from, or make his exit from the competitive carnival through the back door of suicide.

The Republican and Democratic parties are one in their allegiance to Wall Street and capitalist supremacy; they draw their campaign funds from the same source and are severally and jointly mortgaged in advance to the trusts and syndicates that constitute, in the present system, the economic masters of the working class and the political rulers of the nation.

A vote for either of these parties is a vote for plutocratic misrule and wage slavery.

The Socialist Party is essentially the party of the working class; and it appeals also to the middle class who are being driven from the competitive field and forced into the working class.

The working class, the only class without which society could not exist, is the coming ruling class, and its emancipation, which will follow the abolition of the wage system, will mean the freedom of humanity, based upon cooperative industry; and it will also mean the end of the animal struggle for existence in human society and the beginning of the first real civilization the world has ever known.

The Socialist Party, therefore, is the coming party, and the young man who wants his first vote to count against the private ownership of the earth and the tyranny of class rule and for industrial democracy and the freedom of the race will cast that vote for the Socialist Party with all his heart.

Second: The Republican and Democratic parties are the twin tools of Wall Street and their candidates are equally acceptable to Rockefeller, Morgan & Co., the throneless monarchs of the American people.

The Socialist Party stands diametrically opposite to this hybrid political aggregation.

Every millionaire in the land is in the Republican Party or the Democratic Party. Not one of them is in the Socialist Party.

Rockefeller is the enemy of socialism for the very reason that socialism is the enemy of Rockefellerism.

The first voter whose ambition it is to become a Rockefeller should not vote the Socialist ticket, but the young man who aspires to become a free man among free men should join the Socialist Party, the only party that believes that the people have capacity for industrial as well as political self-government; the only party that proposes to make this in fact a government of and by and for the people.

Shall the trusts rule the people, or, shall the people rule the trusts? That is the only issue in this campaign.

The Republican and Democratic twins are for the trusts and against the people.

But the Socialist Party does not intend to “smash” the trusts. It took too long and cost too much and they are too useful and necessary to destroy.

The Socialist Party, when it gets into power, will take over the trusts and have them owned and operated by all the people to produce wealth for all the people. Then there will be work for all and wealth for all who are willing to work for it.

In other words, the Socialist Party proposes to transfer the sources, means, and machinery of production and distribution from the private hands to the collective people, so that wealth may be produced in abundance, not to enrich a small class, but for the comfort and enjoyment of all.

This is the overshadowing issue, notwithstanding the capitalist attempts to obscure it by juggling with galvanized dummies to divert the attention of the people; and upon this great issue every first voter in the

land who prefers freedom to slavery, intelligence to ignorance, peace to war, love to hate, plenty to poverty, happiness to wretchedness, man to mammon, should cast his lot with the Socialist Party.

Syndicated to various papers by the Newspaper Enterprise Association. Published as "Advice to First Voters" in *Pittsburgh Press*, vol. 21, no. 296 (Oct. 25, 1904), p. 6.

¹ These same questions were also asked of representatives of the Democratic, Republican, Prohibition and People's parties, as well as of J. Lincoln Steffens as an independent advocate of the policies of good government.