

Capitalism in its Dotage

(February 17, 1912)

The capitalist exploiters who have spent all their lives and devoted all their energies to money-getting don't know much about anything else. They know how to cheat, lie, swindle; how to corrupt politicians, bribe preachers, and perjure themselves, but that is about the extent of their education and accomplishments.

Not one capitalist in a thousand knows what capital is or can define the term capitalist. He is a profit-gouger by instinct and as such is sharp but not intelligent, cunning but not wise.

If capitalists as a rule were intelligent instead of ignorant, if they were not all absorbed in their frenzy of profit mongering, they would deal far differently than they do with the socialist movement. The militant tactics they have thus far employed in combatting socialism are nearly all calculated in their very nature to quicken socialism and increase the power of the movement. Their servile courts, their asinine kid-nappers, and their bungling, disreputable J. Wesley Hills¹ et al. are all operating in unison to arouse the socialist sentiment that is latent in the people and hasten the overthrow of their system.

It is only the impetus that capitalism received in the past, when the forces underlying it were operating to upbuild it, that prevents it from collapsing and capitalist society from being swallowed up in chaos and old night.

When we look abroad we cannot but conclude that in its present stage capitalism has reached its dotage. Its vital organs show all the signs of declining vigor and are ceasing gradually to function and to nourish the capitalist organism. Capitalism can no longer find employment for the workers and as a consequence it can no longer feed itself. Its food supply is being gradually cut off — by itself.

Millions there are of workers this winter who ought to be at work, producing profit for capitalism, its very lifeblood, who are idle, paralyzed, helpless, eking out an empty existence somehow, preying upon decaying capitalism as certain species of birds prey upon carrion.

But because capitalism is in its dotage there is no occasion for alarm or dismay. On the contrary this is but the condition precedent to social resurrection. Society, which is forever renewing itself in the process of

evolution, is to be born again. The very decay and senility of capitalism quickens the new life that is springing from the outgrown old shell.

Capitalism has had its period of growth and activity and now that it has served its historic time and completed its allotted work, it is going into decline and doddering in its dotage to the open grave which its own diggers are now preparing for it.

Vale, Capitalism; Hail, Socialism!

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¹ John Wesley Hill (1863-1936), a Methodist minister, was the controversial head of the Metropolitan Temple of New York City. Hailing from Ogden, Utah, where he came into the public eye as an outspoken foe of Mormonism, Hill became a prominent orator for Republican politicians and against the socialist movement during the decade of the 1910s.