
The Democratic Party Will Not Deceive and Destroy the
Social Democratic Party: An Open Letter
to L.A. Russell of Cleveland
(September 29, 1900)

My Dear Mr. Russell:—

The action of Mayor [Samuel M.] Jones in voting for capitalism, while avowing himself a socialist, will, in my judgment, end his political career. I have not time to discuss the matter further than to say that Mr. Jones has made a mistake, and, unless I am wholly in error about its consequences, he will never again be elected to public office.¹ This may be in accordance with his desire, and, if so, his action in supporting a capitalist party will serve the purpose intended.

As for the Democratic Party as such I have no faith in it, nor have I any use for it. It professes to oppose private monopoly, but does it suggest public monopoly? It declares that it will break up the trusts, but it knows such a proposition is idiotic, to put it mildly.

All the old bloated leaders that were supposed to have been kicked out in 1896 are coming back, one by one. Cleveland will probably be the next to declare for the Democratic Party to preserve the republic (?), as against the empire. Perhaps the kind of a republic Cleveland, Croker,² Olney, Whitney, Gorman, Steunenberg, Van Wyck, Belmont, et al., believe in may suit you, but it will not suit me. We have an industrial empire here and whether McKinley or Bryan is elected will not alter the situation, for the means of production will still be private property, and the miners of Pennsylvania and the workers generally will still be slaves.

I am a socialist and my face is set uncompromisingly against capitalism. You say that I should be practical. I am intensely so, and that is the trouble.

Let me remind you that four years ago, just after the election, and just after I had made almost 100 speeches for Bryan and the Democratic Party, the leaders of the party met at Chicago and solemnly declared through the press that such socialists and anarchists as Debs (and others that were named), were responsible for the defeat of the party, and must be gotten rid of, as they had driven out the reputable elements.

Please bear this in mind, Mr. Russell: the Democratic party has chloroformed the Greenback Party, the Union Labor Party, and the Populist Party, but I will guarantee that it will not deceive and destroy the Social Democratic Party.

I have not the least fear of an empire, for socialism is coming. I have not one moment to waste on the miserable makeshifts under which the millions are groaning. The total abolition of the capitalistic system is our uncompromising demand, and with that as our controlling purpose, we are marching direct as a rifle ball to the goal of emancipation. That march may be slow, but it is sure and free from pitfalls.

Eugene V. Debs.

Published as "Debs on Bryanism" in *Social Democratic Herald*, vol. 3, no. 15, whole no. 117 (Sept. 29, 1900), pg. 2.

¹ After unsuccessfully campaigning for the election of William Jennings Bryan in 1900, Toledo Mayor Samuel Milton "Golden Rule" Jones (1846-1904) won re-election in 1901 with 57% of the vote, and again in 1903 with a plurality of 48% in a three-way race. He remained in office until the time of his death.

² NEEDS MORE FOOTNOTES HERE IF USED.