

The Pressing Need (September 17, 1904)

Comrades and Friends:—

We are the heat of the greatest socialist campaign ever waged in the United States. The conditions of the country all combined to give us our long-sought opportunity to organize our propaganda on a national scale and build up a militant national party of the working class.

Now has the time arrived. The workers everywhere are moving toward socialism, and the people of all classes want to hear what socialism is and what it proposes to accomplish.

The crowds that attend our meetings are enormous and the enthusiasm intense, and at these meetings many new supporters are won to the party and the movement.

The party is in excellent working order, the members in excellent spirit, and the outlook is all that could be desired. There is but one element and weakness of our campaign: *we lack funds*.

The harvest is ripe for the reapers, but they come not.

Comrades, there ought to be a thousand speakers in the field from now until election day. The people are hungering for the message of socialism.

Now, right now, is the time to bring it to them in all its splendid meaning and awakening power. To fail at this time is to turn our backs upon the supreme opportunity and set back the movement instead of pushing it forward with united energy.

Comrades, the insignificant campaign fund of less than \$5,000 is not creditable to us as a national party, nor is it eloquent of the fealty of our membership to the international movement.

There are a million socialists and sympathizers in the United States who would average a ten cent contribution to the national campaign fund. This would give us a fund of *one hundred thousand dollars*, and this is what we should have, and with such a fund we could attack the capitalist strongholds all along the line and arouse and enthuse our rank and file while striking terror to the capitalist enemy and their army of political mercenaries.

Comrades, the money can be raised. It is simply a question of making a thorough canvass of every crossroad, hamlet, village, town, and city in the land.

Do it now.

Appoint a committee or go at it singlehanded, and give every socialist, semi-socialist, and sympathizer a chance to chip in a dime or more to the campaign fund to be used to send our speakers and spread literature to rouse the people and strike capitalism a body blow in November.

Comrades, every one of us must count this year. Let not one stand back or wait for another to take the lead. If ever the time was when the best we had and all we had was needed by the socialist movement, that time is now.

The badge we wear is not a decoration merely. It represents obligation, and no true comrade will shirk it in the hour of battle.

Every fiber of our bodies, every particle of our energy, every atom of our united capacity must be strained this year.

The battle is raging as never before, and we must rally with our combined power for the assault upon the bulwarks of the enemy.

Let each and every comrade be a volunteer in the service of the campaign fund. Send what you can to the national secretary, collect what you can and then send that, and then collect and send more, and for every penny you manage to turn in, the propaganda will be strengthened and you will have added to the great working class victory awaiting us in November.

Eugene V. Debs.

Approved by the National Quorum,¹ September 17, 1904.

Note:— All remittances should be sent direct and made payable to William Mailly, National Secretary, 269 Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill. Contributions acknowledged in the socialist press.

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¹ The National Quorum was an elected committee of five living in proximity to the Socialist Party's headquarters city. The Quorum held frequent physical meetings as an executive committee in charge of the daily affairs of the party, supervising the national secretary.