

**The Progressive Party Convention:**  
**Letter to the *New York Times***  
**(August 10, 1912)**

Terre Haute, Ind., Aug. 10, 1912.

To the Editor of the *New York Times*:—

The most significant thing about the Roosevelt Progressive convention is that it represented hundreds of thousands of men who have voted the Republican ticket all their lives, and who have now quit the Republican Party forever. The progressive tendency here manifested can never be checked, but will become more and more pronounced until it finds expression in socialism.

So far as the Progressive Party itself is concerned it contains too many diverse and conflicting economic elements, and its platform is too much of a hodgepodge to give it the character and stability of a great national party. It is built largely upon the personality of one man, and no great party has ever been reared upon that kind of a foundation.

The really progressive planks in the Progressive platform were taken bodily from the Socialist platform, and even the red flag of socialism was appropriated, or at least imitated, by the red bandana of the Roosevelt followers.

As the leader of the Bull Moose Party Mr. Roosevelt must be judged by his performances and not by his pledges. He was president almost eight years, and how he dealt with the trust evil is well known to the country. It is especially well known to the trusts themselves, who financed his campaign for the nomination and are now financing the campaign for his election.

The Progressive Party as a party is not only not progressive but it is reactionary. In the aggregate it is a middle class protest against trust domination. The middle class will furnish the votes and the trusts, in the event of Roosevelt's election, will take care of the administration.

There is no doubt that Mr. Roosevelt and his new party will start off with a great hurrah and make considerable noise during the campaign. There will be plenty of trust funds available, and with such substantial inspiration any kind of campaign could be made a howling success. But men and women who do their own thinking and who know why political parties are organized and what they stand for will not be deceived by the

Bull Moose Party, which is neither fish, flesh, nor fowl. At one end it is going to head off the trusts, and at the other end it is going to head off socialism. As a matter of fact Mr. Roosevelt has shrewdly seized upon the prevailing popular unrest and has baited his platform like a trap to catch the votes of discontented people.

There is no room in this country for such a hybrid aggregation as the Bull Moose Party. It corresponds to the Liberal Party of Great Britain, which professed to be organized to represent the common people, and especially the working class, and turned out to be the most reactionary party in that country. If the workingmen of this country would profit by the bitter experience of workingmen in the old country, they would better give a wide berth to Mr. Roosevelt and his Progressive Party.

At bottom the Progressive Party is a capitalist class party. It stands for the present capitalist system, aiming only to mitigate some of its most glaring evils. There is nothing in the record of Mr. Roosevelt, its candidate for president, and nothing in the platform upon which he stands, some of the planks of which were denounced as treason and anarchy when he was president, that will appeal to socialists, or to the intelligence of the working class.

*Eugene V. Debs.*

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