
Crimes of Christless Capitalists

by Eugene V. Debs

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Th Rev. Dr. [B.F.] DeCosta, of New York, an Episcopal clergyman, writes to Mr. [Thomas F.] Byrnes, superintendent of the New York police force, as follows:

Today capital is forcing thousands of women into a life of shame. By starvation wages capital renders virtue impossible, and when once a girl has fallen, capital takes her out of the factory and shop and sends her to the brothel, which pays enormous dividends.

Dr. DeCosta, in the foregoing, makes the common mistake of substituting capitals for capitalists. It is a mistake that upsets all logic, all facts, and constitutes all arguments based upon it, simply jargon. Capital is inert. It does the bidding of its owners, nothing more. Capital, in the hands of philanthropists, blesses the world and gives glory and dignity to human nature; in the hands of heartless men it does what Dr. DeCosta says it does. Why this eternal denunciation of capital, when it is the monsters, the mind and soul-deformed capitalists who should be anathematized?

The land is full of Christless capitalists who care no more for the crimes they commit against humanity than so many sheep-killing dogs. They fix rates of wages that create poverty, rags, crime, and universal cussedness, and behold their victims going to the devil without a tremor, and by stigmatizing "capital," afford a shelter for the inhuman pirates.

It would be an easy matter for Dr. DeCosta to name the capitalists of New York who are "forcing thousands of women into lives of shame" by "starvation wages." Why doesn't he name them? He lacks the courage. It is easier to say capital than capitalist. Name the capi-

talists who are engaged in the nefarious work, and good men everywhere will be prompted to gibbet them before the world and excoriate them with whips of flame. These infernal capitalists are in all the churches, with iron tongues and throats of brass; they praise God and then go forth, and by reducing wages, pile up fortunes and create such woes as make angels weep.

Edited by Tim Davenport

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