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FIRST EDITORIAL

That Message.

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The long expected McKinley message to Congress has been sent; by this time it has been thoroughly read and digested, not on this side of the two oceans only, but on the other sides, too. And well it may. The message is indeed significant.

The significance of the document does not lie in its uttering anything new; its significance lies in its attesting the thorough-going change of base that our Government has undergone.

Time was when, still breathing the revolutionary atmosphere, our Government, quite truly representing the aspirations entertained by the class that made the country free, followed the star of "Independence" and the spirit of "Republic" as guides that were essential to freedom. In those days was born the "Monroe Doctrine," so-called, or the doctrine defiantly hulled at the Russian representative of the so-called "Holy Alliance," that "the monarchy may be the doctrine of Europe, but the republic is the doctrine of America." Animated by such principles, the Government of the United States was of the first to recognize the South American republics, and this idea continued with such vigor, even as late as the early seventies, that it was carried by our Government into practice even in Europe; and when a republican form of government set itself up in France, and later in Spain, ours was the first to recognize them—regardless of all consideration whether the monarchy could or could not reassert itself in those countries.

This spirit has, however, been waning and an other rising. Truly reflecting the material requirements of the home capitalist class, our Government and governing class has been looking with more and more favor upon monarchical institutions: they afford greater security to a brigand class in power. How far this spirit has developed, the Presidential message attests; and that is the real significance.

No Socialist is blind to the fact that slavery, that worst of slaveries, wage slavery,

can bloom, if anything, better in a republic than a monarchy. Socialists do not, accordingly, lose their balance over the term “republican freedom”; they know that the republican form of government can be a form that makes for freedom only when the industrial basis of society is the collective ownership of the machinery of production. The promise of a republic in Cuba, held out by the capitalist interests back of the revolution, never yet deceived the Socialists into enthusiasm; it can not, therefore, be that President McKinley’s attitude against the republic, as clearly denoted in his message, which contemplates the continued dependence of the island, should cause sadness.

What the President’s message does cause is surprise at the thoroughness of the revolution that the capitalist mind has undergone, a thoroughness that no longer balks at its own shadow.

For the first time in our history, the country’s Chief Executive steps forth with the pronounced intention of preventing a republic from rising on the ruins of a colonial system, and of continuing on this side of the waters a European domination!

It cannot be denied that such a policy is wise—from the capitalist standpoint.

Republics are born amidst the convulsions of revolutions, and no revolution is so violent as that that gives birth to a capitalist republic. A time comes, however, when even the remembrance of those revolutionary days becomes dangerous to the republic; they suggest revolution to the proletariat or working class. When that time comes the “republic” has rounded the circle, it clings to quiet, and it shrinks from the very mention of the word revolution. The prospect of the birth of a new republic, especially at the very doors of the old one, is not calculated to please the latter.

President McKinley’s suggestion to the Congress of the United States, that he be empowered to step across the path of war in Cuba, and prevent there the birth of the Cuban republic, is legitimate and wise. The capitalist republic of the United States has wholly worn out its revolutionary antecedents, and has entered upon the period of reaction.

[Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.](#)

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