Illustrations of Propaganda and Revolution from the *Appeal to Reason*

The *Appeal to Reason* (1895-1922) was the most widely circulated newspaper in the United States. It had a singular mission to spread socialist propaganda to overthrow capitalism at the ballot box. In the years before World War I it reached a weekly circulation of 750,000 subscribers and issued mass-marketed special election editions that reached 5,000,000 copies. The socialist message was in the words and cartoons that appeared in the *Appeal* each week. Two cartoonists, Ryan Walker and Guy H. Lockwood, brought two distinct styles with messages that illustrated the abuse of capitalism and its manipulation of the Republican and Democrat Parties. Walker came from a nineteenth century style of drawing and Walker embraced a style that would come to be associated with Soviet art. Both men’s work was used in newspapers and books to give a visual message that the text supported.

The cartoons in this presentation come from *Appeal* publications. The cartoons were taken from original copies of the newspaper. The color cartoons were an attention grabbing gimmick that modern readers miss on the microfilm copies. The images crossed all lines of literacy and levels of support for socialism. In a pre-electronic media, the *Appeal* delivered images with messages that framed a national dialogue that impacted the political direction of the United States.