REFORM OR REVOLUTION OR SOCIALISM AND SOCIALIST POLITICS

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Reform or Revolution, or Socialism and Socialist Politics

Either the International must remain a heap of ruins after the war or its resurrection will take place on the basis of the class-struggle from which it took its rise in the first place. It will not reappear by magic at the playing over of the old tunes which hypnotized the world before August 4. Only by definitely recognizing and disowning our own weaknesses and failures since August 4, by giving up the tactics introduced since that time, can we begin the rebuilding of the International. And the first step in this direction is agitation for the ending of the war and the securing of peace on the basis of the common interests of the international proletariat.

Rosa Luxemburg.

On the Eve of the Campaign

Probably no political struggle during the past fifty years can be considered of greater importance and graver social significance to the class interests of Capital and Labor than the so seemingly unimportant local elections recently concluded. The heavily laden social atmosphere prevailing in the United States since the outbreak of the war, an atmosphere filled to a point of explosion with the conflicting issues and problems resulting from this conflict, was the compelling factor which gave to these
ordinarily local struggles a national, yes international character. It cannot be disputed, that since the inception of the bloody orgy in Europe, capitalist society has been repeatedly shaken in its very foundations by revolutions and uprisings; in short, revolutionized by movements making for social reconstruction, and growing out of these turbulent, anarchic conditions. These upheavals and eruptions have been of an industrial as well as political nature, and have left their indelible traces upon the social mind. The intellectual revolutions produced by the effects of the war have led to a general desire amongst especially the workers to study and familiarize themselves with subjects dealing with or throwing light upon the elements actuating social development. This assertion is lucidly substantiated, when we cite the tremendous audiences that attended, yes veritably swamped the Socialist meetings in the last campaign, and the general willingness displayed by the workers to occupy themselves seriously with economic and political questions. The well-known mental lethargy so prevalent amongst the proletarians, that massive bedrock of capitalist political triumphs and domination in the past, it seems, has been ruthlessly swept away with the steel broom of social evolution, making room for a buoyant spirit, an eager longing for knowledge, and a creative energy desirous of actively participating in the herculean task of social reconstruction. Consequently, the social conditions, which existed on the eve of the recent elections, were conditions absolutely different from those of previous years, and reflected fully the magnitude of the changes brought about by the gigantic social turmoil. This country's active participation in the imperialistic scramble, and the logical consequences flowing from the declaration of war—conscription, suppression of speech and press, etc.—only tended to accentuate the already sharply drawn class demarcations, and served to stimulate the revolutionary forces at work, making it possible for them to develop with a rapidity and in proportions truly colossal and astonishing to even the initiated. Therefore, before the inauguration of the recent campaign, the various social layers in the body politic had, by the unrelenting force of conditions, already
been prepared for and made susceptible to the political messages and issues. Labor and Capital, as far as the former was class-conscious, were anxiously looking forward to the beginning of the political struggle; both classes keenly desirous of expressing their respective interests through their political organs—both desirous of capturing political offices and power in the interest of their class. The working class, it can be stated without undue exaggeration, was impatiently marking time, vibrating with revolutionary fervor and keyed up to the highest possible tension, restlessly awaiting the command to strike a blow for peace and emancipation. In the shadow of the mighty and impressive Russian Revolution; plainly hearing the ominous volcanic rumblings in Italy, Germany, Ireland and other countries; indignantly perceiving the attempts of plutocracy at home to foist the despotism of State Capitalism upon the workers; the despised Prussian militarism having become a reality in this asylum of Democracy; prices of life necessities having reached unthought of heights and pitilessly continuing to soar, as a logical consequence of the American food barons finding it more profitable to feed the war; the repugnant and leering visage of industrial feudalism looking at the proletariat threateningly from the windows of the White House; starvation, the possibility of immeasurable sacrifices of life and blood, health and sacred convictions looming up menacingly on the horizon; in the presence of such compelling, inhuman pressure and blunt arguments can the existence of an abundance of revolutionary vitality amongst the dispossessed still be considered a surprising factor?

The Task of the Socialist Movement

From the foregoing can be gleaned that prior to and during the recent elections, the revolutionary vitality and the faculty and willingness of assimilation were factors and potential forces inherent in the proletariat. They were a logical product of our revolutionary era, pregnant with dynamic energy, and boded ill to American Imperialism. How were these manifestations of
historic development utilized by the vanguard of civilization in this country—the Socialist movement? Did the Socialist movement employ these contributions of social development to shatter the power of Capitalism, by utilizing these potent energies in spreading and strengthening the spirit of class-consciousness in the proletariat? Did this movement, pledged to the emancipation of the proletariat from wage-slavery, obey the dictate of these momentous times?; did it feel the pulse of evolution—of an evolution that convincingly portends the early and inevitable collapse of this economic system?; did it comprehend the significance of the symptoms, and, consistently, commence to prepare the workers for their historic task? Did the Socialist movement read the handwriting on the wall, strip the slew of artificial political and social "problems" of all their irrelevancies, and proclaim the issue of the campaign to be: Capitalism versus Socialism—the international plunderbund against the international proletariat? Did the agitation of the Socialist movement in this country assume the all-embracing proportions, the universal or cosmopolitan character demanded by the international aspects of the problems and interests at stake? In other words, was the campaign pivoted upon an agitation that fearlessly threw down the gauntlet to the war-lords of the world, and unequivocally called for a cessation of hostilities, by courageously and unceasingly preparing and working for the removal of the primal cause of all this misery—the overthrow of wage-slavery? To conclude: was the agitation and campaign waged by organized Socialism in this country a Socialist campaign, a campaign that sought to utilize the dormant, creative revolutionary power in the proletariat for the abolition of the present wages system; i. e., was it a campaign of revolution, an assertion of the class principles, or a campaign of palliation and "reform," conducted by a coterie of political charlatans, not for the liberation of the workers, but for their greater enslavement?
Taking Inventory

The political organizations of Socialism are represented in this country by two parties: the Socialist Party, which is, as far as numbers and popular influence are concerned, the dominant organization, and the Socialist Labor Party. With reference to our investigation, we can dismiss the Socialist Labor Party by emphasizing that this organization carried on, as far as its limited membership and means permitted, a bona fide and vigorous campaign for Socialism, predicated upon the demand for "the unconditional surrender of the capitalist class." The activities of the Socialist Labor Party in particularly these elections were truly in harmony with the demands of historical development and the requirements of the hour. It can only be regretted that the limited facilities of the party and the popular sentiment of the populace, cultivated and misguided by the rival party of Socialism, the S. P., made it so difficult and nigh impossible for this organization to place its message before the masses.

When examining the activities of the Socialist Party during the last elections, it is best to thoroughly investigate a single campaign, carried on in a representative locality. We believe, the campaign conducted in Greater New York furnishes a classical example for investigation in this respect. Therefore, we will confine ourselves to a study of this gigantic political struggle, and the deductions made and conclusions reached therefrom can be considered a criterion applicable to the Socialist Party in general.

The political struggle of the Socialist Party in Greater New York and in other cities seems, when viewed and appraised casually from the standpoint of "practical achievements" or "results," to have netted a remarkable success. In Greater New York ten Assemblymen, seven Aldermen and one Municipal Court Judge were elected; and even if the cherished and fondest hopes of the hyperenthusiasts were not realized, and the standard bearer of the party, Morris Hillquit, had to bow in defeat before the candidate of Tammany Hall, the tremendous increase in the party's vote from 32,000 in 1913 to approximately 142,000, seems
certainly a splendid indication of victory. Judging from the premises of election returns, from the basis of superficial results, the outcome of the political battle in especially Greater New York certainly has all the earmarks of a sweeping victory for Socialism and a forceful protest against American Imperialism.

The question which, however, now inevitably crops up and demands an unequivocal answer, an answer which will throw a penetrating light upon the nature of the above victory and enable us to intelligently estimate the value of the same for the Socialist movement, is: upon what platform and issues were these electoral successes and this relatively gigantic support of the voters obtained?; furthermore, were the principles upon which the Socialist Party conducted the municipal campaign in Manhattan Socialist principles, that is: were they in harmony with the fundamental principles of the Socialist philosophy? As stated before, the answer to these queries furnishes the basis for an intelligent conception of the relative significance and quality of this much heralded Socialist victory and vote.

What is a Socialist Campaign?

In order to determine whether the municipal campaign, carried on by the Socialist Party in Greater New York, was a bona fide Socialist campaign, i. e., a campaign not only conducted nominally by a Socialist party, but actually along Socialist principles, we must first establish a criterion for what we consider a Socialist campaign to be. And, in the humble opinion of the writer, the correct answer to this inquiry can only be gleaned from a proper appreciation of the mission of a Socialist party in present-day society. The writer contends, taking the advanced and full-fledged form of capitalist production as his point of departure, that the only demand of a Socialist party in its political struggle with the political parties of the exploiting class should be the abolition of the wages system—the abolition of Capitalism. We are fully aware that the commodity-status of labor-power is only the logical effect of the private or capitalist
ownership in the means of wealth production; furthermore, that this title of ownership, vested in the capitalist class, is the bludgeon which the exploiters swing over the heads of the numerically great class of wealth producers, and which compels the workers to offer themselves for sale like ordinary commodities. In just this commodity-status of labor-power, we also find the source of all surplus value—the source of the various forms of capitalist exploitation and aggrandizement. Therefore, as long as the capitalist system of production remains, wage-slavery remains, and as long as wage-slavery prevails, the worker remains a commodity, must continue to sell his physical or intellectual faculties to the exploiter, and is robbed of the major part of his product. Consequently, the only issue, as stated before, that can be consistently raised and advocated by a Socialist party, always emphasizing and taking the present full-fledged or highly social character of capitalist production into consideration, is the demand for the abolition of Capitalism and the inauguration of the Industrial Republic. Furthermore, all efforts and aims, leading to the realization of this demand, are to be considered Socialist aims and efforts, and all aims and efforts tending to obscure this goal and attempting to palliate the negative effects of this system, thereby directly assisting in giving this moribund society a further lease of life, are capitalist aims and efforts. This applies particularly to Socialist parties that labor under the ridiculous paradox of announcing as their "ultimate" aim the abolition of the wages-system, but formulate and advocate, for immediate and "practical" political activity, an endless series of "immediate" demands, which in principle and effect, and from a standpoint of revolutionary Socialist activity, actually tend to postpone, if not prevent or hinder, the realization of the "ultimate" aim. Such "reform measures" or "palliatives," attached to a program of a Socialist party, not only condemn this document on the ground of being at fisticuffs with the most elementary conceptions of logic, but also on the far graver charge of being a direct and formidable obstacle to the establishment of clarity and class-consciousness amongst the workers. Such a document is compar-
able to two horses hitched to the front and back of a wagon, both pulling in opposite directions, and expending large quantities of energy without moving the vehicle from the spot—without accomplishing any tangible results.

Some Issues of the Campaign

Having a scientific conception of what the basis of a Socialist campaign ought to be, we will now proceed to measure the political activities of the Socialist Party in the recent municipal elections of Greater New York with this yardstick. In seeking a concrete object for our investigation, we will quote the issues of the campaign as formulated and presented by Morris Hillquit, the standard bearer of the Socialist Party. These issues were first announced to an interviewer of the "New York World" and then reprinted in the "Call" of October 8th, thus receiving the semi-official stamp of approval of the Socialist Party. The overwhelming support given to this program of "action" and the enthusiasm with which these practical demands of "social reform and legislation" were expounded and made the crux of the campaign by the party, shows and proves conclusively that the organization did not only passively approve of its standard bearer's position, but supported the same whole-heartedly through thick and thin. The position as mapped out by Morris Hillquit can, consequently, with all fairness also be considered the position of the Socialist Party.

Speaking on the burning question of Socialism, and replying to the interrogation of what he would do if elected mayor of New York, the candidate for the mayoralty says:

"Let me begin by saying what I shall not do," Mr. Hillquit answered. "If elected, I shall not undertake to turn New York into a Socialist commonwealth in my term as mayor. But there are certain very definite things I can do without contravention of the city charter, and these things I shall do if I am elected."

Judging from this very definite answer, the crucial issue or paramount question in the recent electoral struggle to the So-
cialist candidate was not "the Socialist Commonwealth versus Capitalist Feudalism," but hinged more on the putting into office of a municipal administration, conducted by "Socialist" officials for capitalist taxpayers along "efficient" (capitalist) lines of exploitation: an administration that would so adapt its presumably "Socialist" demands to the requirements of capitalist standards and practices of government, as not to have them collide with the sacred city charter. Here the right of political acts is not determined and sanctified by the class interests of the workers, which Morris Hillquit is pledged to represent solely, but by the dictates of New York's charter, a document granted to the metropolis of American Capital by the political agents of exploit- terdom in control of the glorious Empire State.

However, in studying the other "practical demands" in this so-called program, we gradually begin to realize why the standard bearer of the Socialist Party was not at all in a hurry about inaugurating, or at least demanding the inauguration of the Socialist Republic. A perusal of this interesting interview reveals to the uninitiated that the recent candidate of the Socialist Party was greatly absorbed in the task of improving the miserable lot of the workers under Capitalism. This Morris Hillquit intended doing via the road of municipal nurseries, hospitals, kitchens, recreation centers, etc. In the case of providing aid to the impoverished, the candidate of the Socialist Party was even going to employ the services of the Department of Charities. Of course, the municipalization of street railways was also advanced as a medium to improve the conditions of the downtrodden. It seems, however, that the fundamental issue of Socialism involving the procurement of the full product for the worker, does not worry or interest this Socialist half as much, as the by far more weighty problem of providing meals to hungry children, parks in which the unemployed may take breathing exercises and study the beauties of nature, and nurseries for the proletarian mothers in which they may deposit their little ones, when Capitalism drives them mercilessly into the sweatshops. However, we will desist from further comment; here are some of the paramount
duties of a Socialist administration as Morris Hillquit perceives them:

Medical care of poor mothers before and after the birth of children, and, when necessary, material aid to them. This care, Mr. Hillquit believes, could be given through the department of charities.

Municipal nurseries where children of mothers who have to work could be cared for during the day. (This refers, of course, to children under kindergarten age.)

Better schools.

More schools.

More teachers (consequently no overworked teachers).

Meals to be supplied by the city to poor children who are obliged to come to school unfed.

Lung centers—breathing spaces through the city for overworked men and women. (Mr. Hillquit says there are only two real parks in the city of New York—Central and Prospect parks—that dusty, deserted little squares, without vegetation, cannot be called parks.)

A free beach at Coney Island.

Municipal ownership of street railways, including the elevated and the subway.

“A Socialist Conception of the City”

Continuing, Morris Hillquit proceeds to give his version of a “Socialist” city administration to the interviewer of the “World.” The candidate of the Socialist Party states amongst others:

“The Socialist conception of the city is different from that of any other party,” he said. “A Democratic candidate may make certain promises, a Republican-Fusion candidate may go him one better, but fundamentally their conception of city government is the same. It is a conception of the city as a mechanism, a thing of buildings and streets and railways rather than of people. The Socialist believes that the principal business of the city is to take care of its people. Now, where does the care of the people begin? With the care of the mothers of the new generation, with the care of the children before they are born. If I am elected Mayor, I shall undertake to provide city care of poor mothers before and after the birth of children by supplying medical attention and, when necessary, material aid to them.”
The writer was and still is under the impression that Socialism and Socialists were primarily occupied with a study of capitalist conditions, for the main purpose of ascertaining the causes of the workers' misery and abolishing them. Since, however, delving diligently through the above and noting the importance attached to a "Socialist conception of a city" (run on the basis of capitalist production, mind you), my staunch conviction, that the source of all social misery in society today is but a logical product of the forces underlying capitalist production, has been somewhat shaken. It seems that the absence of municipal subways, hospitals, nurseries and beaches has a great deal more to do with this problem than the appropriation of surplus value from the workers by the capitalists. Because, if the Marxian doctrine of surplus value, etc., were sound, why does a prominent Socialist, and a candidate for mayor at that, persist in placing the palliation of effects in the limelight, and totally overlook to advocate the abolition of the cause? In order to get out of this uncomfortable dilemma, the writer begs to put ten questions to Morris Hillquit, soliciting the courtesy of an adequate and early reply:

**The People or the Workers?**

1. In what principle and form is the Socialist conception of a city, predicated upon the capitalist mode of production like New York is and would have continued to be also under your administration, different from the current Socialist conception of capitalist institutions or Capitalism in general?

2. Will you refer me to one recognized work of Socialist Economics or Philosophy wherein is advocated that "the principal business of the city is to take care of its people," or that it is the duty of a Socialist official to supply material aid to the poor, i.e., to dispense charity?

Has it not always been the contention of Socialists, that as long as the capitalist mode of production exists,
the government—national, state or municipal—will continue to remain the obedient servant or agent of the capitalist class; and that, therefore, the political struggle of the workers must at all times be utilized to affirm and propagate the class interests not of the so-called "people", but of the working class?

State Capitalism or Socialism?

3. Do you consider the propagation of municipal ownership, i.e. State Capitalism, in accord with advancing the specific class interests of the proletariat?

Is it not a fact that State Capitalism has absolutely no relations to Socialism whatsoever, and that so-called State Socialism is a term fully at fisticuffs with facts, and which can only be used at the expense of scientific clarity or accuracy? Furthermore, will you deny that State Capitalism is a more intensive and cruel form of exploitation than the individual or corporate form of capitalist ownership?

In what form will State Capitalism, and municipal ownership is only a phase of the same, benefit the workers employed in the industries affected by this change? Do not actual examples, which are plentifully on hand, conclusively prove that the status of these wage slaves is not raised but lowered thereby?

4. Permit me to place the following versions and conceptions of State Capitalism before you:

"And the modern State, again, is only the organization that bourgeois society takes on in order to support the external conditions of the capitalist mode of production against the encroachments, as well of the workers as of individual capitalists. The modern State, no matter what its form (under-scoring mine), is essentially a capitalist machine, the state of the capitalists, the ideal personification of the total national capital. The more it proceeds to the taking over of
productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers—proletarians. The capitalist relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head. But, brought to a head, it topples over.” (Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, Frederick Engels, page 123.)

“But of late, since Bismarck went in for State-ownership of industrial establishments, a kind of spurious Socialism has arisen, degenerating, now and again, into something of flunkeyism, that without more ado declares all State-ownership, even of the Bismarckian sort, to be socialistic.* Certainly, if the taking over by the State of the tobacco industry is socialistic, then Napoleon and Metternich must be numbered among the founders of Socialism. If the Belgian State, for quite political and financial reasons, itself constructed its chief railway lines; if Bismarck, not under any economic compulsion, took over for the State the chief Prussian lines, simply to be better able to have them in hand in case of war, to bring up the railway employees as voting cattle for the Government (underscoring mine), and especially to create for himself a new source of income independent of parliamentary votes—this was in no sense, a socialistic measure, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously. Otherwise, the Royal Maritime Company, the Royal porcelain manufacture, and even the regimental tailor of the army would also be socialistic institutions, or even, as was seriously proposed by a sly dog in Frederick William III’s reign, the taking over by the State of the brothels.” (Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, Frederick Engels, pages 121-122.)

“The socialists do not claim any credit for the present-day institutions of government ownership, nor have they any illu-

* A similar conception was and still is prevalent amongst quite a few Socialists of to-day. To illustrate: When, due to military exigencies, various governments in the belligerent countries nationalized and municipalized certain indispensable basic industries; when they, actuated by the most primitive instinct of self-preservation, centralized and organized these economic resources of the country, in order to be able to battle more effectively against the enemy and to thus conclude the war victoriously, quite a few Socialists and Socialist publications celebrated this move as an advent of Socialism—as a vindication, realization (in part) and endorsement of our aims.
sions as to their significance and benefits. Government ownership under the present regime does not represent an advanced phase of industrial development or the climax of industrial concentration** (underscoring mine). It is in no sense an installment of the socialist cooperative republic.

“National ownership of railroads, telegraphs and telephones has been in most cases introduced by the governments for reasons of military expediency or for the sake of revenue. In other cases it was brought about as a concession to the interests of the middle classes.

“Similarly (sic), municipal ownership, where not brought about by a socialist administration, is as a rule but a device for municipal revenue. Government ownership, both national and municipal, has some very decided advantages over private ownership, and on the whole, it assures better service to the public and better treatment of the employees. But these advantages are to a large extent offset by the fact that government ownership tends to strengthen the powers of the modern class state, and to curtail the freedom of combination and coalition on the part of the employees. (Socialism in Theory and Practice, Morris Hillquit, page 286.)

Will you kindly enumerate and specify some of the very decided advantages which government ownership has for the working class? In the face of the abominable conditions amongst the government employees all

** In the opinion of the writer, an opinion that is supported by recognized Socialist writers, government ownership does represent an advanced phase of industrial development or the climax of capitalist industrial concentration. However, this advanced phase in capitalist production is only a consequence of economic growth (development), and does not produce a corresponding improvement of the workers' conditions, but just the contrary, it has the tendency to widen the gulf between the producers and exploiters.

Writing upon the nature and effects of State-ownership, Frederick Engels sums up: “The capitalist relation is not done away. It is rather brought to a head, it topples over. State-ownership is not the solution of the conflict, but concealed within it are the technical conditions that form the elements of that solution.” (Socialism, Utopian and Scientific, pages 123-124.)
over the world, of which Germany and Austria-Hungary furnish a classical example; in the face of the docile and reactionary spirit which these conditions have given birth to; and in the face of the report of the delegates from the postal employees to the recent convention of the A. F. of L., I am fully convinced that the advantages of government ownership, if there be any, are more than outweighed by the innumerable disadvantages.

Furthermore, how can the employees receive better treatment at the hands of a "strengthened modern class state," when this state, according to your own admission, and when viewed from the premise of the class struggle rightly so, endeavors to and does curtail their most elementary liberties of combination and coalition?

5. Will you explain the material difference between a Socialist municipal administration based on capitalist production and a so-called capitalist administration? In what form does the municipal-capitalist ownership introduced by Socialists differ from the customary municipal ownership?

6. If, according to your own contention quoted above, government ownership does not represent an advance in industrial development; if it is in no sense an installment of the Socialist republic; if it is in most cases introduced for the sake of revenue or to throw a sop to the middle class, why did you make municipal ownership one of your paramount issues in the last campaign, why did you advocate the introduction of this "reactionary institution?"

How can a Socialist political administration, pledged to a program of industrial emancipation, follow any other policy, but one of destruction and hope to remain a Socialist administration?
In the estimation of the writer, a Socialist administration's introduction of any form of government ownership or, as Engels defines it, State-ownership is on par with a man, pledged to and staunchly advocating prohibition, opening a chain of drinking emporiums.

**Charity or the Full Product?**

7. Will you define and present to me the basic causes responsible for the present misery amongst the workers? Are the workers of to-day living in dire poverty and abject misery, because they have no municipal nurseries, kitchens, parks and baths?; or are they impoverished and physically and intellectually at the bottom of the social scale, because they are daily robbed of the major part of their product and unable to enjoy the legitimate returns or fruits of their industry?

8. Is, therefore, the basic cause of the workers’ miserable position in society to be found in the absence of municipal subways, free recreation centres and beaches, etc., or in the absence of a proper system for the distribution of Labor’s product? In other words: is the worker living in proletarian misery, because he is not getting enough charity from the present class state?; or is he a proletarian, in consequence a legitimate child of misery, because the present class-state legalizes private property in the socially created and operated tools of production and thus upholds a form of economic life which daily robs the workers of everything they produce over and above their naked living?

**Can Palliation Be Effective?**

9. Would the introduction of your complete program of social reform as elucidated above, granting
for the sake of argument the impossible to be possible, bring about the slightest change for the better in the economic status of the wage-slave? Would the worker, in the face of all your palliatives, not remain the same commodity, subject to the same inexorable economic laws of value, supply and demand, etc., as before?

10. To sum up: How can you hope to even palliate a social disease effectively, if the causes and elements producing and intensifying the same, are not removed or even curatively influenced? And charitable institutions plus municipal “improvements” and ownership are absolutely no remedy for the purely economic ailment from which the proletariat is suffering. These so-called reforms are, to be more definite, absolutely no remedy against unemployment and intensive exploitation—the effects of capitalist production and the source of all social disease. Consequently, even as palliatives these reforms as advocated and propounded by you are ineffective, therefore, detrimental, because the only effective way the effects of wage slavery can be removed is by removing their cause—wage slavery itself.

War and Peace

The position of the late standard bearer of the Socialist Party on the vital question of Peace is on a par with his other declaration and interpretation of Socialist principles. In the aforementioned interview Morris Hillquit says:

“I am for peace on the basis proposed by the Russian republic—no annexations, no indemnities, disarmament and the federation of governments. I believe President Wilson today could effect such a peace, because of the economic position and the moral power of the United States, and I believe that 90 per cent. of the people of this city—if they could cast a secret ballot—would vote for such a peace. And some of the men who are doing the loudest talking for war would be among them.”
This declaration fails entirely to underscore the highly capitalistic or imperialistic character of the war, neither does it point out the class position a Socialist organization and the candidate of such an organization should occupy in such a discussion. Aside from a few bombastic and meaningless phrases like the demand for "a federation of governments," capitalist governments, of course, (i.e. the international capitalist oligarchy), this statement reflects nothing else but a persistent attempt to sidestep the burning issue of the day. Sentimental claptrap and pretentious phrasemongery are here brought upon the stage and employed to exploit the revolutionary impulse of the masses for pure and simple political Opportunism—an Opportunism that is as utopistic as it pretends to be realistic.

In this interview Morris Hillquit not only failed to affirm the Socialist Party's position on the war, as laid down in the St. Louis Resolution, but deliberately ignored or neglected to underscore the ever sharper class lines created by this gigantic holocaust of modern, greedy Imperialism and the inevitable consequences, consequences of immeasurable importance to the proletariat, flowing therefrom. In presenting the war issue, Morris Hillquit not only shrewdly avoided to formulate the class position of the Socialist movement; but he also avoided to emphasize the logical conception flowing from such a formulation, namely: that the Socialist workers of the world conduct a struggle against this war, by battling constantly against the forces responsible for or at the bottom of the same—the capitalists of the world. The Socialist struggle for peace and against war can, consequently, only be a struggle against the underlying forces and causes that have given birth to this monstrous orgy: the economic causes and social representatives of Capitalism.

Capitalist suggestions and propositions for a "lasting or durable" peace, for instance like a peace without annexations and indemnities, as inducive as they may seem when viewed from a sentimental premise, have, therefore, no place in a Socialist peace program. The Socialist movement, as already
emphasized, is the vanguard of a new civilization, and, as such, it must be ready to affirm its class interests courageously and independently and can not afford to compromise with the aspirations of a confused pacifism or the class-conscious and shrewd diplomacy of Imperialism. The Socialist demand for peace must be advanced incessantly and in unmistakable terms; it must be ratified and emphasized by an aggressive and fearless conduction of the class struggle throughout the civilized world. This demand for peace must be based on the prime demand for the abolition of Capitalism, and be reenforced by the proper proletarian industrial power, organized in the class-conscious Socialist industrial unions. Henceforth the slogan of the revolutionary proletariat must be: Peace based on the Universal Brotherhood of Man; a peace without wage-slavery and exploitation, without Capitalism—a Socialist peace. As long as Capitalism continues to dominate the life of society there can be no peace. The war of the nations must make room for the war of the classes. In failing to underscore these axiomatic fundamentals of Socialism, Morris Hillquit also dismally failed to fulfill his duty towards his class and the Socialist movement.

The Municipal Platform

In the entire program of Morris Hillquit, analyzed and extensively quoted from above, we fail to find one word of Socialism, or even a reference to the “ultimate aim” of the Socialist Party.

The Municipal Platform, adopted by the S. P., Local New York, in the last election is on par with the presentations of its standard bearer; or, to be more exact, the declaration of principles and issues, as formulated by Morris Hillquit for the recent municipal campaign, is but a true reflex of the Municipal Platform of the party. This document is composed of a veritable collection of reforms and palliatives, the greater part of which, when viewed from a standpoint of practical “social legislation,” are at best hopelessly “impractical” and tragically phantastic.
This Municipal Platform can be termed a ragout of all the hash houses of social reform that ever operated in the political arena. The tenor of this document is everything but Socialistic or class-conscious; it betrays the spirit actuated by an insatiable desire for political office (Capitalism remaining intact, of course), and denotes most conclusively the motives of a coterie of political adventurers falsely flying the flag of Socialism. In this document, outside of a few stereotype and essentially meaningless phrases, the economic basis of Socialism is completely ignored; fundamentals like the material foundation of the class struggle, the commodity status of the worker, the nature of his exploitation, the source of profit, etc., are conveniently ignored and substituted by a hazy terminology of "public service," the "municipal property," "public use," "municipalization of the drug business," "public universities," etc., of course entirely failing to explain the origin and nature of "public ownership and exploitation" (see Government Ownership, etc.).

As a whole the Municipal Platform of the S. P. of Greater New York is everything but a Socialist document. It may be classified and considered a formidable foundation for the Hillquit campaign, because in its demands it promises the workers relief and palliation for all the actual and imaginary ills of the present system—without, of course, even thinking or organizing properly to abolish the same. In this document, which would be highly amusing, if the effects of its circulation were not so tragic, the workers are promised everything conceivable and unconceivable under not the sun, but Capitalism, from municipal laundries, nurseries, drug depots, markets, maternity centres and employment bureaus to a pension for the unemployed. When setting aside, for the time being, all scientific facts and scruples, entirely ignoring the laws and conclusions of Socialist Economics and Sociology—laws and conclusions which stamp and condemn by far the major part of the demands in this platform as unscientific and highly utopian—and when approaching this docu-
ment with the naiveness and bliss of the uninitiated, average voter, we must conclude: that a realization of all the promises and demands contained in the Municipal Platform actually spells paradise for the workers—under Capitalism. With the inauguration of such an era in Greater New York, the organization of the Industrial Republic would, therefore, become unnecessary. Such a period of "Socialist reconstruction" of moribund Capitalism would be synonymous with the advent of a capitalist Eden, in which the toolless workers would be the political despots and the tool-owning capitalists the serfs. Highly original and desirable, is it not? In the humble opinion of the writer, the vision and expectation of such an ideal state of proletarian prosperity and social equilibrium, announcing its dawn with the election of Morris Hillquit, were responsible for the side-tracking or boycotting of Socialism in the Municipal Platform of the S. P. of Greater New York. Why work for the social revolution, the Industrial Republic, the abolition of wage-slavery, when you can live in bliss and paradise by merely introducing the municipal reforms of the S. P. in New York?

Tactics of Compromise

Another phase of this campaign, a phase which lucidly illustrates the compromising, therefore, unsocialistic attitude assumed by the S. P. in the same, was the open acceptance of endorsements from notorious capitalist politicians and acknowledged Non-Socialists. Not only was the endorsement of an Amos Pinchot, who frankly stated that he was not a Socialist and never expected to be one, accepted with jubilance; not only was the letter of a Dudley Field Malone, a notorious "reform" politician and supporter of the Wilson administration in "national affairs," endorsing and supporting the candidacy of Morris Hillquit on the principle "Tammany must be defeated," conspicuously reprinted in the N. Y. Call; but these men, self-confessed affirmers of Capitalism, mind you, were even permitted
to advocate the election of the Socialist candidate from the platform of the S. P., in terms and with arguments absolutely foreign to and at war with the Socialist conception of capitalist society. In other words: these capitalist politicians were permitted to solicit support for the party’s ticket with arguments not only typically capitalistic in character, but originating in every respect from an out and out capitalist version of the present economic and social system. By this act, the Socialist Party tolerated the delivery of speeches from its official platform that were a direct repudiation of Socialism. Numerous other endorsements of this character were tentatively accepted and utilized to exploit and attract the non-socialist element to the support of not Socialism (none of the capitalist endorsers intended or wished that), but of Hillquit. By these criminal methods the last vestiges of the Socialist Party’s class character were sacrificed upon the altar of—political charlatanism. The issue was not: “A vote for Hillquit is a vote for Socialism, but a vote for the Socialist Party is a vote for Hillquit.” The utilization of the capitalist press in the interest of the Socialist Party’s candidate, the spending of vast sums, whether of the campaign fund or by the so-called nominal “Hillquit leagues” does not play a role here, for advertisements in these acknowledged mouthpieces of the capitalist class; the placarding of the city with the so-called milk bottle and bread pasters, promising cheap milk and bread in case of a Hillquit victory; the acceptance and non-repudiation of these questionable and unscrupulous methods by the party was a fitting closing act to this drama of political buccaneering. The most regrettable and actually criminal aspect of these “opportunistic” tactics is, however, that the prestige of Socialism was dragged along into the mire—into the gutter of pure and simple politicianism; thereby spreading seemingly irremediable confusion amongst the workers, and making it nigh impossible for legitimate Socialism to get a hearing and gain adherents for some time to come.
Conclusion

The above outline furnishes a by no means complete presentation and analysis of the various and manifold phases of the last campaign of the S. P. in Greater New York. However, the principal and basic factors upon which this political struggle rested and from which it drew its strength have, we believe, been amply covered. From the facts submitted, the reader will now be in a position to determine the exact nature of the gigantic campaign conducted by the S. P. He will, furthermore, be compelled to conclude that it was a campaign of compromise based on irresponsible speculations and stimulated by fraudulent promises to the voters; in short: that it was a campaign of capitalist palliation, falsely flying the flag of Socialism, and not one of Socialist revolution. Consequently, it was not a Socialist campaign, and the approximately 142,000 votes cast for Morris Hillquit were not cast for Socialism, but for the program analyzed above. Such votes can, therefore, not even be considered a forceful protest against war, because they are not predicated upon a class-conscious conception of the causes underlying this conflict. As a sentimental protest against the continuance of this stupendous slaughter, these votes may be considered a factor; but, as is the case with all sentiment unsupported by scientific clarity, the actual power behind the same is nil.

The political success of the Socialist Party, and the so-called Socialist landslide celebrated in the papers and periodicals of the party can, therefore, taking the above facts and deductions as a criterion, not be classified as a Socialist victory, but a victory for reactionary palliation and reform. As such, this “victorious movement,” by its very impotence to effectively palliate the negative effects of Capitalism, will collapse as spontaneously as it was reared. However, it is now up to the Socialists, who have the cause of the Revolution and of the Industrial Republic at heart, to counteract this spurious propaganda. This can be done effectively through the dissemination of Marxian principles, i.e., through the spreading of Socialist Economics and the Socialist
conception of social development amongst the workers. Such a campaign of education, supplemented by an intensive and systematic propaganda for the constructive principles of Socialism, Socialist Industrial Unionism, will eventually crystallize into a proletarian movement properly organized, fully conscious of its purpose, interests and historic mission and, therefore, also capable to serve the dictate of evolution successfully.

Spread the Economics and Philosophy of Marxism; study the social significance and historical importance of Socialist Industrial Unionism; organize classes and lecture courses everywhere; learn to appreciate the difference between sound Socialist economic power, organized in a class-conscious Socialist union, and the political bombast of compromise and palliation, falsely labeling itself "Socialist activity," based on—quicksand; learn to differentiate between class-conscious political action, i. e., Socialist political action, and political action at fisticuffs with the class interests of the workers, i. e., non-socialist political action.

Down with reform, palliation and compromise! Up with the uncompromising political party of Socialism and the Socialist Industrial Union! Up with the class-conscious Proletariat! Up with the immediate demand of the international working-class: A peace based on the abolition of capitalist production and the inauguration of the Universal Brotherhood of Man—the Socialist Commonwealth!
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