

The Real Makers of Socialism in America

*"For Those Who Consider the Growth of Socialism a National Peril We Counsel a Fair Study of Election Statistics."
"Historical Truth is That the Men Whom Socialists Have to Thank More Than Any Others for the Americanization and Spread of Propaganda are Mark Hanna in Politics and John D. Rockefeller and J. Pierpont Morgan in Business."*

When the passage of the years to come has provided perspective for proper view of the happenings between 1890 and 1910, one of the jokes of history will be the fact that thousands of supposedly sane Americans sincerely assailed the advocates of economic and political progress and reform as socialists.

It is not our purpose to enter upon an endless dispute by undertaking to define the manifold varieties of socialism, nor to censure or approve any of its phases, from the militant atheistic, Marxian apostles of "direct action" to the mild Fabianism of the American Christian socialists.

We purpose simply to expose in plain figures the preposterous absurdity of accusing the progressive leaders in both the republican and democratic parties of being promoters, not of evolution, but of the revolution which the socialist creed demands in that plank of the national platform which declares that "no amount of government regulation or of publicity or of restrictive legislation will arrest the natural course of modern industrial development."

For example, we find in the editorial columns of the New York newspapers which for months have been virulently denouncing Theodore Roosevelt as "the man who would be king," the denunciation of him for having "built up the party of Debs" and the news that "after Mr. Roosevelt's avowal of socialistic doctrines the socialist vote is nearly doubled."

The historical truth is that the men whom the socialists have to thank more than any others for the Americanization and spread of their propaganda are Mark Hanna in politics, and John D. Rockefeller and J. Pierpont Morgan in business.

Only fifteen years ago socialism was a negligible, ill-understood, alien doctrine. Only a small minority of the best-informed students of world thought differentiated the doctrines expounded by a handful of foreign-born men from the bomb-throwing anarchy of Herr Most and his frowsy disciples.

In 1896 the entire vote of the socialists in the nation was only 36,274.

Then followed the period of the unrestricted rule of wealth, of the vast illegal flotations, of complete domination of industry by trusts that set themselves above the law—the reign of the triumvirate of Hanna, Rockefeller and Morgan.

The American people began to despair of American institutions. They saw the wrongs. They suffered. But they lacked leaders. And they lost hope. No other chance to cast off the tyranny of concentrated Big Business being proffered, they hearkened readily to the theory of the socialists that all present forms of government must be overthrown in order to abolish the wage system; that free government and individual opportunity could be regained only by destroying capitalism as feudalism was destroyed.

It was the harvest time for the socialist leaders of real ability, the scientific Marxians of the type of Hillquitt and Berger and Ben Hanford. Men as keen minded as these knew their friends. They realized fully that the trust makers and their political agents were not only fostering the growth of socialism among the people, but were creating the machinery, into possession of which the socialists could enter as soon as sufficiently prolonged and aggravated oppression had roused the nation to accept desperate remedies for a desperate disease.

The result was the increase of the national socialist vote from 36,274 in 1896 to 127,553 in 1900.

During Roosevelt's first three years in the White House there was but scant indication of espousal of progressive theories by the party in complete power. Consequently, the socialist propaganda continued to thrive. And in 1904 the country was startled by the count of 426,376 socialist ballots.

But in the next four years came the awakening of the public conscience; came the leadership that instilled the long-deferred hope; came the birth and growth as national policies of regulation and restriction of corporations,

equitable liability in industrial accidents, arbitration of labor disputes, conservation of the nation's possessions for the general good and the demand that a fairer burden of taxation be borne by wealth.

There could not be the immediate perfection in legislation of these policies in the face of the mighty opposition of organized privilege. But the American people understood that, apart from revolutionary socialism, there was a possible means of establishing the rights of humanity as superior to those of property.

There always had been much that was good and true and desirable in the socialist creed. There is much truth in their indignant complaints that progressive republicans and democrats turned their own weapons against them by appropriating a few of the good socialistic governmental theories.

But when 1908 came around none in any party dreamed of the check to socialistic advance that those previous four years had wrought. The socialists confidently predicted a vote of 1,250,000 in the nation. Conservative estimates conceded them at least 750,000. But when the vote was counted it was found that the vote for Debs was only 448,453.

Small wonder that Roosevelt, denounced by the forces of privilege as socialistic, is hated by the socialists as their arch-enemy.

But after that four years' standstill of socialism there have followed twenty months of reaction, of Cannonism and Aldrichism and administration subservience to Wall Street and Big Business, identical with the old Hannaism. And while final figures are not yet obtainable, the socialist leaders assert that less than two years of Taft gave them on election day 700,000 votes in the nation.

Their vote in New York was doubled. The first socialist congressman goes to Washington and thirteen socialists will sit in the legislature of a single state. Here in Pennsylvania a Reading socialist will share in making the laws at Harrisburg, and the total party vote will probably exceed that of the prohibitionists.

Chagrined and almost despairing in 1908, the socialists now are exulting in the thoughts thus expressed by Charles Edward Russell, their candidate for governor in New York

"Just contemplate the tremendous meaning of the nearly hundred per cent increase of our vote in New York state. Tabulation of the returns from seventeen other states shows that the percentage of increase in every one of them was approximately what it was here.

"The people's minds are being freed of ghosts and hobgoblins. They are becoming educated to the real meaning and potentiality of socialism. They are no longer associating it with the red flag and the bomb. It has taken years to give us a start, but that we are started no thoughtful man can doubt.

"The man would have been called a fool who, five years ago, would have predicted that we would roll up a vote of 700,000 in the nation this year, and that in the state of New York, one of the world's greatest citadels of capitalism, we would poll 65,000 votes."

Such exultation is natural. But for those who consider the growth of socialism a national peril we counsel a fair study of the election statistics we have cited before they stultify themselves by fixing the blame upon the men and the policies that have done most to check that spread.—Philadelphia North American, republican.

SOCIALISTS AND LABOR UNIONS

Rev. Charles Stelzle, the union labor clergyman, sent to the Omaha News, the following dispatch:

St. Louis, Mo., November 17.—The wildest kind of rumors of what the socialists were planning to do to President Gompers and to the convention as a whole, were the occasion of a caucus of the socialist wing of the federation last night, when it was decided to appoint a committee to draft a statement to be given to the public in three or four days, in which it will be distinctly declared that the socialists

will not attempt to secure office in the federation or to spring on the convention any kind of a resolution which would tend to give the appearance of trying to force the federation with the socialist party.

This statement will indicate that nothing of a political character will be introduced by the socialists. The usual socialist resolutions, which have always been the source of the bitterest controversy in previous conventions, will be omitted, so far as the leaders of the socialist party in the convention are concerned.

The time has gone by, the socialists say, when such tactics are necessary. The growing strength of socialism throughout the country, and in the labor movement, is bringing the party into sufficient prominence without spending time and strength in what seems rather a useless discussion in the convention of the American Federation of Labor. The recent election seems to justify this position. It is felt by the socialist leaders in the convention that the best place to do their propaganda work is through their regular educational channels, and that in the convention of the American Federation of Labor they will stand as bona fide trades unionists, although always championing their creed when necessary.

The presence of Congressman-elect Victor L. Berger of Milwaukee, as a delegate to the convention, has given rise to considerable speculation as to what he would do in advocating his well-known views; but Berger is also committed to the program adopted by the socialists' caucus. Unless something unlooked for occurs, Berger will remain silent on the question of socialism, insofar as any attempt to carry out his yearly policy of introducing socialist resolutions and trying to secure indorsement for the program of his party is concerned.

Max S. Hayes has been repeatedly nominated by the local newspapers in the name of the socialists to succeed Samuel Gompers, but Hayes will not permit his name to be used in opposition to Gompers, even though he may not favor his re-election. But this much is pretty certain: Gompers will undoubtedly be unanimously re-elected as president of the American Federation of Labor, and the socialists will pull together with the trades unionists in an opportunist program to better the condition of the toilers.

This is the so-called "Milwaukee program," and it is the basis upon which the present socialist administration in that city is being conducted.

CHARLES STELZLE.

THE STEADY GROWTH OF SOCIALISM

The name of the socialist party first appeared upon the ballot in the United States in 1888, when it polled 2,068 votes. In the twenty-one years which have since elapsed it has progressed steadily, showing these totals:

1890, 13,331; 1892, 21,157; 1894, 33,133; 1896, 36,564; 1898, 91,749; 1900, 98,417; 1902, 225,903; 1904, 403,338; 1906, over 500,000; 1908, over 600,000.

It will be some time before all the figures for 1910 are available, but it is known that the vote scored a large increase all over the country. In New York it grew from 33,000 to 65,000; in California, from 16,000 to over 60,000. It is probable that this year's total reached the million mark.

Milwaukee elected the first socialist congressman on November 8.

The thoroughgoing socialist boldly declares that the earth and the fullness thereof was intended, not for the making of dividends, but for the satisfaction of human needs. His program is frankly revolutionary, though he prefers the ballot to the bullet as a means to the end.

While the avowed advocates of socialism have worked with wonderful energy and persistency to promote the growth of their cause, they are by no means entitled to all the credit for what has been accomplished.

The socialist has a partner who is working overtime to convince the world that there is no hope, save in revolution.

The socialist's partner is no other than our old friend, the standpatriot—that is to say, the