

# U. S. Socialism Brought Up-To-Date

By BENJAMIN GLASSBERG

THE municipal campaign waged by the Socialist Party in the City of New York, in 1917, will long be remembered for the remarkable enthusiasm it aroused among the masses.

Stunned by the sudden shift in the Wilson policy which hurled America into the throes of the World War, large sections of the workers flocked to the standards of the Socialist Party, which practically alone among the organized political forces in the United States had declared against the war.

From many platforms thruout the city Socialist speakers emphasized the economic causes of all wars including the World War.

In spite of themselves the party speakers found themselves drifting away from the many immediate demands which cluttered up the municipal platform and brought a distinctly revolutionary message to the workers.

The astute campaign managers did their utmost to check this tendency and to keep the party in the narrow reformistic lines which they thought proper.

They plastered the city with cuts showing a milk bottle which Morris Hillquit would enable the people to buy at a very cheap price.

It almost seemed as if they sought to drown the revolutionary developments of the campaign in a sea of cheap milk.

## High Tide of Socialist Activity

Election day found that Hillquit had received the tremendous vote of 150,000, several times as large as any previous vote received by the Socialist Party in New York City.

In many respects the campaign of 1917 marked the high tide of Socialist activity. When the 1918 campaign arrived, the spirit and the enthusiasm so much in evidence the year before was manifestly lacking, for in the meantime the Socialist members of the Board of Aldermen had voted for the Liberty Loan. Many of the party's most active workers were noticeably absent from the platform where they had been found for years.

Soon after began the formation of the Left Wing section which led directly to the expulsion and suspension of the Communist elements.

## It's the Same Old Campaign

The Socialist Party of New York City has just engaged in another municipal campaign, the first since 1917. Outwardly everything is the same, that is, if one were to rely on the party mouthpiece, the New York Call.

The old familiar party candidates have faced us once more. Not a one is missing. Call the roll and they are all there: Panken, Oneal, Beckerman, Waldman, Solomon, Tuvim, Beardsley, Rosenberg, Vladeck, Berenberg, Shiplacoff, Block, Lee, Karlin, etc., etc. No matter how rapidly the rank and file

may desert the Socialist Party because of its betrayal of the principles of revolutionary Socialism, the leaders never will. No branch is too small to nominate them for office.

A review of the character of the propaganda disseminated by the Socialist Party should be sufficient to convince the worker that, judged by this campaign, in which the best "brains" of the party are actively engaged, the Socialist Party has long ceased to represent any kind of Socialism, or to speak in the name of the class-conscious workers of America.

## He Eases the Shocks of Capitalism

The standard bearer of the party is the perennial Jacob Panken. Two years ago, the New York Call, in describing the work of Panken as a municipal court justice, said in a headline, "Panken Eases the Shocks of the Capitalist System." That sentence, better than anything else, characterizes the 1921 municipal campaign of the Socialist Party.

Its platform and the speeches of its candidates and propagandists are all smeared with the same tar, all bear the same taint of reformism.

The one message of the Socialist Party is to prove to the workers that its program can better "ease the shocks of the capitalist system" than the Republican or Democratic parties.

One may search in vain thru the many columns of the Call which daily recount the sayings of the great and the near great in the Socialist campaign for some indication of what Socialism is supposed to be, of any intention or desire to overthrow the capitalist system and to substitute the rule of the workers in place of the dictatorship of the capitalist class.

## Panken Believes in "The Press"

The chief issues of the campaign, Panken tells us, are the high cost of living, unemployment, traction, housing, taxation, civil service and the schools. My election—Panken assures the workers—will mean better schools, cheaper bread, less unemployment, etc., etc.

He challenges Hylan and Curran to debate the issues of the campaign on the steps of the City Hall, and is convinced that the public-spirited press (sic) would help spread the various points of view.

It would be interesting to know just what Panken has in mind as constituting the public-spirited press.

The fact that because of such a thing as a debt limit the city could not undertake what Panken urges, does not seem to trouble him.

The fact, further, that even if the city were to carry out the whole Panken program, capitalism would be just as healthy and vigorous as before, seems to be entirely overlooked by the Judge.

No opportunity is allowed to pass without re-

affirming the great faith which the Socialist Party has in democracy.

Commenting on the refusal of the Board of Aldermen to seat Lee and Cassidy, who had been duly elected by the voters to seats in the Board of Aldermen, Panken allowed this striking commentary to be blazoned forth in the columns of the Call:

## He's for "Democratic" Government

"The matter involves the very fundamentals of our system of democratic government."

One can almost feel Panken trembling for the safety of our glorious institutions as Taft did when, upon the passage of the recall measure in a Western state, he declared that it was laying the axe to the roots of the tree of Liberty.

Panken is also in favor of extending the blessings of democracy to Ireland, for he informs the Irish voters that "the position of the Socialist Party on the Irish question has always been definite—real freedom for Ireland as determined by the Irish People. Could any Socialist ask for something more definite?"

For fear that some might still mistake Panken for a revolutionist because he bears the Socialist label, he took care to inform an audience that he would never shoulder a gun; that he preferred to control the telephone from the White House to the prison in Atlanta.

## What Is Socialism?

This is a variation of the new Socialist theme, so well expressed in the latest masterly summary on "What is Socialism" brought to light by the Call. In this leaflet we are told, "The Socialist Party, while it is revolutionary in its final aim, is none the less distinctly **evolutionary and constructive in its method.** (Bold face ours.) But the main reason for our favoring such measures (immediate demands) is because, if logically carried out they offer the possibility of a peaceful, lawful and orderly transformation of society." (Bold face ours.)

Louis Waldman, late of Albany, evidently struck by Panken's neat way of putting the thought that Socialism is opposed to a proletarian dictatorship, and relies implicitly on the methods of American democracy in inaugurating a Socialist regime, makes use of the very same phrasing. "I do not want to shoulder a gun," he says. "I would rather have the keys to Atlanta than a musket at the warden's head." It may seem unkind to remind Waldman that in his testimony during the ouster proceedings, namely on February 25, 1920, in answer to a question as to whether he would fight against an invading enemy, he replied, that he would go out and shoulder a gun to repel the invader; not only that, but he would call upon all the workers to join him.

An interesting feature of the campaign was the effort on the part of the Socialists to break up meetings arranged by the Workers' League and to charge the Communists with working hand in glove with the Republican and Democratic parties.

## Voters Getting Disillusioned

Occasional items in the Call would declare (September 25) "Fusionists Aid Communists? Reports have it that the old parties are openly aiding the Communists. It was stated that the fusion candidate for alderman is attending the Communist meetings. Another statement (September 29) read, "A concerted attack by Republicans, Democrats, and Communists, apparently working in harmony with each other, was made upon a Socialist meeting in the 17th A. D. A group of Communists stood in a row close to the speaker's stand. Nearly every one of the men wore glasses, in anticipation of trouble."

Ninety-five per cent of the former members of the Socialist Party have already deserted the ranks of the party. There remains nothing but the shell of a once powerful organization. The great mass of those who have supported the Socialist Party in the past are not yet fully aware of the party's betrayal of its former principles. A few more campaigns such as that waged in New York this fall, 1921, will disillusion them as thoroly as the former party members were disillusioned during the last two years.

## JOIN NOW!

Now is the time to join the **WORKERS' COUNCIL** and get into the struggle it is making to unite all the elements that have seceded or been expelled from the Socialist Party during the last two years.

We also want all additional workers who have been awakened to the necessity of a real working class political organization. Organize a group in your town.

The Workers' Council of the United States is a temporary organization. It is planning to call a national conference in the near future, to help build nationally along the lines laid down in the manifesto on the inside two pages.

Read this manifesto for yourself and decide whether it states your stand. If it does then fill out the application blank below and mail it to the **WORKERS' COUNCIL**, 80 E. 11th St., New York City. The initiation fee is 25c., the dues 50c. per month. Here it is:

## Application for Membership in the Workers' Council OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

I recognize the class struggle between the working class and the capitalist class. I favor the abolition of this system of class division of society. I realize the necessity for the working class organizing independently, as a class, both politically and economically, to lead in the struggle for the acquisition of all power for the workers. This final aim, the abolition of all classes, will be achieved by the working class obtaining for such limited time as may be necessary all the power in the state and doing away with all economic inequality at present covered by the system of would-be political democracy and the capitalist state. Communism, the complete abolition of any and all exploitation and the inauguration of a free, human society of socially equal men and women, is the final aim of the workers' rule. For the purpose of aiding in the struggle toward this goal, I apply for membership in the **WORKERS' COUNCIL** and I agree to be guided by its Constitution, Declaration of Principles and Program.

Signature .....

Address .....