

Liberalism Series - Abstract

Socialist Views of the Coming Election

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(Socialist Candidate for Governor of Vermont)

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In most elections a great many issues play a part; so many, in fact, that when the excitement is all over, the winners are doubtful which issues won for them. The present election, however, is concerned with only a few such as the breaking of party lines and the arising of anti-administration Democrats. The main point of divergence over which the parties are struggling and which will be decisive is the New Deal. The others are mostly localized. The great panic broke out in 1929 and we are still suffering the ill effects and trying to grope our way out from its shadow. The usual course of recovery is deflation. Another course is expansion. But there is no possibility of the country's expanding any more, and another system than deflation has become necessary.

The Republicans are divided in two parts. They are confused and don't know where they stand. Their efforts to bring out Ogden Mills and set him up as their leader have failed and now they have no one to hold them together. They are exponents of the "laissez-faire" theory and support the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. Therefore, they must believe in the business cycle but this doesn't coincide with business policy now. The purpose of the R. F. C. is to preserve the social structure. It won't cure anything but is to prevent things from getting worse.

The Democrats have a leader in the president. Those who support him and those who support the New Deal are in the same class. But Roosevelt has no definite course that he is following out and has wavered to the right and to the left, but mostly to the right. The NRA aims to preserve profits and so the

minimum wage has been very small. The general trend of the New Deal has been toward preserving the present system and preventing deflation, and the chief difficulty of the Democrats is to decide who will carry out the course and what method shall be used.

There are also the Communist and Socialist parties taking part in the election. These are for a new system and each has a hope. The Communists are not out to get many votes, nor are they trying to get power. Their tactics are propaganda, education, and advertising, and beyond these they are willing to wait for results. It was only a few years ago that their leaders came into consideration at all as possible candidates in a state election. This year the only communist is running for the office of governor.

The last on the ballot are the Socialists, whose outstanding object is to abolish the profit system. They want a radical change in the common habits of thought and action. In this purpose a plan of economy is implied. For instance, the taking over by the government of certain key industries such as communication, transportation, banking, and public utilities. This will not be done by confiscation, so there are three methods of buying left open: by paying the price asked, a fair price, or an annuity. In the first case the amount would dwindle away through income and inheritance taxes, in the second case, some of the utilities would require a very large amount, and so the annuity would probably turn out the most practical. The Socialists say that surveys of the people and of the natural resources of the country will have to be made and a great many other things done first.

Farming is not a job but a way of life. It should be socialized by the formation of cooperatives, as in some places Out West where groups of farmers

have already gathered together to systematize their methods and to learn and to work for the good of the community. Socialism settles the question of the ownership of land on the basis of use and occupancy. The man who tills the field or who has his house on it is the one to whom it should belong. The "back to the farm" idea is all wrong. There are much too many farmers as it is, and unemployment would result. A large number now are only just making a living or else are not quite able to make ends meet. If their land were bought up for forestation it would lead to a higher standard of living, with greater economic security and more leisure time. Economic security is the chief worry of the average American. According to this plan each worker would receive a certain amount due him from birth in return for so many years of work. People often raise the objection that more leisure would be misused. The Socialists appreciate this difficulty and admit that trained workers would be necessary as teachers, but they believe that people have interests and that the realization of the plan is not impossible. In fact they hope for great things from it and have a strong belief in better times to come through the adoption of their plans.

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