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# The Lesson of Albany.

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There is much food for thought for all communists in not only the result of the investigation that took place at Albany, NY, but the actual testimony and statements made by the defendant socialists. In fact, we as Communist workers are far more interested in the attitude adopted by the defense at Albany than we need be in the result of the whole farce.

At this point, however, in view of the fact that this is a Presidential year, we must look the matter fairly in the face from a purely political angle also. We are vitally interested in the outcome of this legislative tangle, first, as showing the limits to which Capital is prepared to go to dominate the state, and second, as demonstrating conclusively the duplicity, depravity, and utter worthlessness of such "leaders" of Socialism as Hillquit, Stedman, et al.

There are very few of us, perhaps, who needed the developments at Albany to prove the Judas Iscariot nature of the Socialist Party to the workers as the party is represented by such men as Hillquit, Stedman, Waldman, and many others of their ilk. But to thousands of good and loyal Socialists who chose to remain with the old party rather than split away, such a lesson was absolutely essential to demonstrate the close affinity of such so-called Socialists to the Kerenskys Scheidemanns, Noskes, Eberts, and Thomases of Europe. Let us hope that the lesson was not lost on our honest comrades of the Socialist Party.

From a purely political angle, however, we are much more interested. It is a fact that the men who were expelled from the legislature at Albany were elected to office by the votes of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of those who at the time were members or sympathizers of the Socialist Party, but who are now Communists or Communist Labor in affiliation or sympathy. Where are we going to stand when the acid test is

put up to the electorate of these assembly districts again? That is what we must decide.

From all indications we are not going to be allowed to place a Communist Labor ticket in the field and through such a ticket exercise our right of franchise. If not, should we vote for the Socialists, whom we know will be about as valuable to the working class as Ebert in Germany or Kerensky in Russia? For myself, I most respectfully decline to waste my time voting for puppets of the bourgeoisie, but I am not sure that such is the attitude of all of us. Neither am I sure that to leave the fight open between the cohorts of Capital on the one hand and of middle class reformism as represented by the Socialists on the other hand, would be conducive to the best interests of the workers. In the long run, of course, the reaction will set in and we will logically take out places at the helm, but we should not stand aside and let the Socialists be crushed if by saving their skins we can prevent a great deal of suffering by the entire working class.

It is certain that in the event that the Socialist Party is wiped off the slate as well as ourselves, there will then be no liberal element capable of stemming the sweep of Capitalism gone mad with its own excesses. That means a long siege of White Terrorism for we must not blind ourselves to the fact that the workers of this country are far from being organized to take over control of industry, and yet too imbued with the idea that they are freemen to meekly submit to the Iron Heel. Hence, they will revolt, spasmodically and in small groups, and be as ruthlessly repressed as under the Tsar in Russia or Noske in Germany.

So, returning again to the point that there are many thousands of good, loyal Socialists who cannot as yet take the advanced stand that we do, and to whom must come the bitter experiences of the proletariat of

Russia and Germany under false Socialists, it is perhaps the better and less painful method to give every aid and assistance to the political aspirations of the Socialist Party that we are capable of giving. They will hang themselves in due course of time, but in the meantime we will have avoided the worst features of White Terrorism.

There is another method we might pursue which appeals to my sense of humor as well as strategy. In many states candidates are nominated by primaries. Let us enter these primaries and nominate Communists on the Socialists' ticket. If Hillquit, Stedman & Co. do not like the candidate we place on their tickets let them take the fight to the courts or nominate independent candidates of their own. In either case they proclaim their colors to the workers.

If Capital is as sure of its ground in this country as it now appears to be, it will have no hesitancy in ruthlessly suppressing even Socialist political activity, but the passage of time is against us, and we must stem the tide of repression until we are better enabled to teach the workers industrial solidarity, the lessons so disastrously neglected by the Socialist Party in their fear of hurting the tender feelings of Gompers' AF of L.

The leaven of industrialism is fast permeating Sammy's pet unions and it is only a question of time when the AF of L will officially drop its 19th Century attitude and take up its rightful place in 20th Century

unionism. But they, too, like their prototypes in the Socialist Party, must go through the fire of baptism before they will be purified and ready to enter the new society properly equipped to manage it.

As *Communist Labor* states in the issue of March 25th, we are rapidly adapting ourselves to the changing conditions under Capitalist Imperialism, and this is as true of the attitude we may from time to time be compelled to take with the Socialist Party and the AF of L as it is of our own organization methods.

This article is written more for purposes of argument and comment than for a decisive plan of action. We must all act according to the plans that seem best adapted to the needs of the moment in a given locality or district. But at the same time there should be a well defined general plan around and into which all minor action should fuse.

While the lesson of Albany is plain to all of us, it is particularly applicable to New York City, where all 5 of the defendants were elected. New York City Communists and Communist Laborites, therefore, must meet that particular situation as they think best. The rest of us will watch interestedly the developments.

But whatever the outcome of the Albany affair, one thing is assured. CAPITALIST IMPERIALISM has reached its zenith, and the workers of the United States are face to face with a foe that will neither ask nor give quarter.

How will the workers answer?

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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