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EDITORIAL

## CARLISLE'S THEORY OF GOVERNMENT.

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**T**HE Greater New York Democracy, at its meeting in Cooper Union Tuesday night, roundly scored Tammany Hall, repudiated all its works, and claimed that the only genuine and Jefferson-Jackson-fearing Democrats were to be found outside of Tammany Hall, that is, outside the organized Democratic party of this city.

Tammany was pictured as being the one blot on this otherwise holy city. It was stigmatized as "a government of thieves, by thieves, for thieves." The Greater N.Y. Democracy showed how, in place of broken flags, decaying brick, worthless asphalt, rutted pavements, etc., there would spring up in a night a city paved with gold. But in order to get the most for your money, it was necessary to give the contract to some other body besides Tammany: Then the G.N.Y.D. put in a bid and a good word for the work that it was capable of turning out in the line of heavenly cities.

But there was one even that shouldered all other events aside. It stands out clear and distinct as the one utterance of the meeting that was not a farce and a burlesque. It was a little sentence in a letter written by ex-Secretary John G. Carlisle. He said: "It is no exaggeration to say that, taking all things into consideration, the administration of the National Government is of less importance to the citizens of New York than the administration of the local government."

New York surely cannot be an exception in cities, nor can a distinction be drawn between it and a town. If it is true that the local government here is more important to New Yorkers than is the National Government, then the government of each little municipality is of more importance to the people who live in it than is the National Government.

But this statement by an ex-Secretary has a deeper meaning than came out at Cooper Union. It is founded on the idea of "no politics in the city government." It is a legitimate offshoot of the attempt that is being made to disassociate those conflicts of interest incident to State and National campaigns. There Democrat and Republican are necessary. They act and interact in such a way that the workingman

voter, unless he stands firmly upon the understanding of his class rights and needs, is bewildered by them. Capitalism can not only afford to divide its army in two wings, but it finds such division necessary. The control of the State and the Nation by the working class seems far off, and to keep it still farther off, the workingmen must be duped into believing that they are concerned in the welfare of one or the other of the leading parties.

It is otherwise in the local government. The chances of a working class victory are greater. Industrial and social development makes it possible at any time for the working class, organized in the Socialist Labor Party, to sweep into power. Therefore, the local government, the control of which may be lost in one election, is of more importance than the National Government, the control of which is more difficult to obtain.

Although, during the National campaigns, the capitalist may cry aloud that it is necessary to "save the country," he does not seek to do it by breaking down party lines, or by a mere uniting on a "good man." He insists on party lines, and woe betide him were he to eliminate these lines. It is only in the preparatory skirmish of the municipal election that he can resort to the "non-partisan" method, and even then he does so simply because he fears that the people will scent the fraud of the methods used in State and National campaigns.

Reform, good government, low taxes, "no politics in local affairs," etc., whether they come from Greater New York Democrats, Social Democrats, Independents, or municipal ownershipites, are all indications of the fact that capitalism has instinctively centered its strength on the weak points. It has rushed to the local government to defend the National Government. In doing so it abandons its National defenses. It has violated the fundamental principles of the Constitution of the United States, and it seeks to turn the gigantic pyramid of government on its apex. The city is not superior to the State, any more than the State is superior to the Nation.

Carlisle's words, strictly construed, are treason. But, to the capitalist in defending his unsavory and criminal rule, nothing is treason that will grant him a longer lease of life.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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