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EDITORIAL

THE ELECTION OF WILSON.

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WHILE the gathering army of Socialism marches unperturbed under the missiles hurled at one another by the warring factions of the hosts of Capitalism, it is legitimate to keep tab upon these. According as the battle goes with them, the signs of the socio-political weather are outlined upon the socio-political atmosphere. From these signs the militant Socialist gathers encouragement or admonition.

What does the Socialist militant gather from the election of Woodrow Wilson—admonition, or encouragement?

The anatomy of the present capitalist political bodies was dissected in detail, and laid bare in the “The Socialist Labor Party’s Appeal,” made by the Party’s standard bearer, Arthur Elmer Reimer, in the symposium of the appeals by all the other presidential candidates, published in the *New York Independent* of last October 24. The anatomy of President-elect Wilson’s party was summed up in these words:

“In the literal sense of the word ‘absurdity’—such answer as comes from the deaf—the program of Woodrow Wilson is absurd—it is not responsive to the huge socio-political interrogation mark of our age, particularly our own country. At best it is a ‘pious wish,’ or a ‘motion to defer action.’”

Although the election figures are still far from being in with the fullness that is required for a complete size-up of the situation, nevertheless, the outlines of the totals are bold enough to justify the conclusion that not since Lincoln’s second campaign has interest in the issues spread so widely, besides reaching so deep as it did this year. The conclusion seems warranted that not since 1864 did such a large percentage of the electorate meet and clash at the hustings. The exceptionally Nationwide fair weather on Election Day surely contributed its share to reduce the percentage of “stay-at-homes.” That notwithstanding, the electorate’s pulse beat so

high on November 5 that, fair weather or foul, even the present totals give unmistakable signs of the Nation's having been stirred to the depth.

What, under such conditions, is the militant Socialist to gather from a net result that places at the head of the polls a candidate whose program can be summed up in the parliamentary term of a "motion to defer action," in other words, a motion to lay on the table for a term of four years the several motions that were "before the house," and each of which demanded action?

The Socialist Labor Party knows that Socialist electoral triumph would spell massacre for the Working Class, unless the triumph is accompanied by working class enlightenment, and that the enlightenment can be manifested only by the simultaneous appearance of an integrally and class-consciously industrial organization of the useful occupations in the land. The S.L.P. furthermore is aware of the fact that such an industrial organization does not exist to-day, and is just struggling to get on its feet. Accordingly, the S.L.P. program, while it demanded and continues to demand action, is well aware that its demand is still essentially educational, hence, that the action demanded is not yet a possibility.

It was otherwise with the demand for action on the part of the two factions of the dominant party of capitalism. the Republican, now split into Taftism and Rooseveltism. Their demand was for immediate action. It was for the introduction of Absolutism—Taft for Oligarchy, Roosevelt for Monarchy—and that action is of possible immediate enforcement. What the victory of either carried in its fold will be later considered anew by the light of the complete returns. Suffice it here to say that either's victory would have been a national calamity.

To defer action, when proper action is possible, is to play the ostrich act. Such act society plays only at its own peril.

To defer action, when the possible action is improper, may be, usually is, the part of wisdom.

The Woodrow Wilson motion to defer action having carried would, without further scrutiny, justify the militant Socialist to gather unqualified encouragement. Closer scrutiny qualifies, checks, his gladness.

Even if the Woodrow Wilson motion were to have carried with a vote larger than the combined Absolutist vote, the size of the latter looks ominous. So far as

present returns justify a conclusion, it is that the combined Absolutist vote was larger than that by which the Wilson motion carried.

Under these circumstances, the encouragement that the militant Socialist might otherwise gather is modified. It turns to admonition—the admonition that Socialist propaganda, education and organization make haste, though careful not to be hurried, to unite the proletariat and all other usefully engaged elements of the land, before the threatened storm of Absolutism gather its destructive forces and break loose over the head of the Nation.

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