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# A Matter of Vital Importance

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Published in *St. Louis Labor*, whole no. 466 (Jan. 8, 1910), pg. 3.

A dangerous attempt is being made to capture the Socialist Party for the impossibilists. This effort first started from outside the party. And the fact that it originated on the outside makes this attempt very suspicious.

Such an attack from without, however, will do little harm. But now comes the *Appeal to Reason* and joins the fight.



The *Appeal* admits that the "party is in a more healthy and active condition than ever before in its history." Yet it urges the comrades to vote against those who have done more than any others to make it so.

The only reason for this given by the *Appeal* is that there ought to be "rotation in office."

Now "rotation in office" is no part of the Socialist ideas. It is not an International Socialist principle. The Socialists of Germany have kept such comrades as [August] Bebel, [Paul] Singer, and [Hermann] Molkenbuhr at the head of

their movement for 20 years. And they are there yet. [Emile] Vandervelde has been the chosen leader of the Belgian Socialists for many years. Victor Adler for a long term of years has guided the Austrian Social Democracy and has led it to victory.

The European Socialists believe that able, faithful, and experienced leaders should be kept in positions of trust. Consequently they

have succeeded in building up a stable, permanent, efficient organization, which neither kaiser, king, nor capitalist can break down.

The European Socialists do *not* believe in “rotation in office.”

Some of our American Socialists are too apt to go chasing after new fads. Just now the fad is “rotation in office.” It is contrary to the practice of our comrades all over the world.

And besides this it is a distinctively capitalist practice.

In the capitalistic parties the “outs” are always clamoring to get “in.” They want “rotation” because they want to get to the “pie counter.” Their only idea of a party is to give offices to all the “faithful.”

But the Socialist Party does not exist for the purpose of giving every man an office. It is a militant party. Its purpose is to fight for Socialism. When we have found certain comrades to be tried and true and especially capable and efficient, we ought to keep them where they can serve us. It would be foolish to dismiss such men just for the childish idea of giving somebody else a chance to experiment and learn at the expense of the party — these in turn to be dismissed, as soon as they have learned, for other greenhorns.

And besides the only result of following the *Appeal's* advice in this case would be to assist the scheme of the impossibilists who are just now trying to capture the National Executive Committee.

No! Let us keep on the committee the men who have done the work so well in the past.

Comrade Berger has labored untiringly and with the utmost self-sacrifice to build up the Socialist Party in America. Comrades [Robert] Hunter, [A.M.] Simons, [Morris] Hillquit, and [John] Spargo have proven themselves valuable men. Comrade [Carl D.] Thompson did good service for one term on the National Executive Committee, and since Comrade [A.H.] Floaten resigned, can be put in his place without crowding off any of the present members.

Comrades, this is no time to experiment with the party. We want tried and true veterans at the helm, in the present crisis. Preserve the Socialist Party!

*Milwaukee, Wis, Dec. 31, 1909.*

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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