

The 1928 Elections¹

By JAY LOVESTONE

When we deal with American capitalist politics of today, we deal with billions insofar as the policies of the financiers and manufacturers are concerned. And when we deal with the election of a president, we are confronting a problem of selecting an individual who has more power than any czar, king, or monarch ever had. When Mr. Hoover goes into the White House as the symbol of the executive power of the American ruling class, he will have the power of appointing sixty thousand government officials, drawing an annual salary of one hundred twenty seven and a half million dollars. This is a little kingdom in itself. The class relations in the United States now make imperative the maintenance of such a huge government bureaucracy and such an uncrowned monarch as Mr. Hoover will be.

Though the details of the election campaign are not yet available, the broad lines, the fundamental trends, can already be seen. In considering the results of the 1928 elections, we should look upon them not from the angle of an event of a few months, but rather in the light of the events of the entire period, from 1896 to 1928.

I take 1896 because that was the beginning of American imperialism in full bloom. I take 1928 because it marks a forward stride in American imperialism to powers far in excess of those ever wielded by any of the other imperialist countries, such as France, Germany, Italy or England. From McKinley to Hoover, we have a very good picture of imperialist growth, aggression, brutality and domination. And when we analyse the methods of American capitalist politics, when we analyze the characteristics of American bourgeois political behaviour, we should keep one factor in mind. What is that? A pioneer of American imperialist politics, a pioneer of Wall Streets' political strategy, was a gentleman known as Marcus "Aurelius" Hanna. He was the "noblest Roman of them all." His maxim was: "If you want anything in politics, go out and buy it." This was the keynote of the American employing-class election campaign, just ended.

¹This article consists of excerpts from the speech delivered by Jay Lovestone at the opening of the Workers School Forum on November 11. Lack of space prohibits printing the speech in full.

THE MEANING OF THE CAPITALIST NOMINATIONS

The nominations of Mr. Hoover and Mr. Smith in themselves have tremendous significance. What is the meaning for the working class of the nomination of Hoover? The last republican convention, with its nomination of Hoover, was an index of the prowess, of the supremacy of finance capital in the United States.

Hoover is the outspoken, unhesitatingly ruthless champion of finance capital. He is the best trained, the most capable, the most experienced chairman of the executive committee of the American capitalist class that this class has had. Coolidge? He was a shadow beside Hoover. Wilson? He was a schoolmaster who could take lessons from Mr. Hoover in the art and science of the politics of imperialism. When there was a dirty job to perform in China, Mr. Hoover was there to do it. If there was a bloody piece of work to do in Hungary, Mr. Hoover was there to do that. And if a daring, underhanded effort was to be made to destroy the proletarian Russian Revolution, Mr. Hoover was there to try it. In other words, wherever the hand of American imperialism was extended for aggression, covered of course with fake humanitarianism—"saving Belgium," even trying to "save the Russian people"—there went Mr. Hoover as symbol of the power of finance capital in the U. S.

Concretely, the meaning of Hoover's nomination is the following: First of all it indicates a growth of the executive power of the American government. Never before had anyone been nominated for the presidency by the bourgeoisie, who had not previously held any public elective office.

Second, it indicates the further tremendous merging of big business with the highest governmental machinery.

Third, Hoover is a symbol of capitalist rationalization, of the speed-up, of American efficiency and mass production. Hoover is the president of capitalist rationalization.

Mr. Hoover thinks in kilowatts and horse power. For the first time in the history of "this greatest democracy on earth" the United States will have an engineer instead of a lawyer as president. Significant enough for the *Magazine of Wall Street* (November 17, 1928) to comment upon as follows:

"A business nation at last has a business chief. . . No wonder the stock market thrilled to the news of his election and met sympathetic responses from all the bourses of Europe! *No hard-boiled business directorate could have chosen more sagaciously.* . .² Political and business leadership are united in the chief executive of the nation."

²Of course, it was a hard-boiled business directorate that really made Hoover president.

Insofar as Hoover is a crass example of an "irregular" party man of the bourgeoisie, it indicates the fact that the bourgeoisie was never so powerful and has never felt as secure as it does today, to be able so easily to discard the formalities of party allegiance.

Capitalist party lines are disappearing. The very basis for the two-party system—one of the cornerstones of America's fraudulent democracy—is being rudely shaken.

Now let us examine Mr. Smith. He is a Catholic. It is the first time a Catholic has been nominated for the presidency. The nomination of Mr. Smith is significant in the following ways:

It is an indication of the extent to which the assimilation process has been going on in the country. "Al" Smith is commonly associated with the last wave of pre-war immigration, largely Catholic, which has now been largely assimilated. Before the war, in 1904, 1912 or 1916, neither big capitalist party would have nominated a Catholic. But now Tammany, spokesman for this last wave of immigration, feels safe in naming a Catholic as its candidate.

The nomination of Mr. Smith was the attempt of a new force to assume the leadership of and to reconstruct the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party leadership in the past was based mainly on the southern plantation owners. It has been in a crisis. Since the Civil War, it has had only four presidential victories.

These southern plantation owners have, practically speaking, been driven out of the leadership of the Democratic Party. What Bryan and Wilson failed to do has been done by the new Tammany forces whose spokesman is Mr. Smith.

What new forces does Smith represent? Smith's ascendency to the leadership of the Democratic Party is a symbol of the supremacy of finance capital in the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party used to have and still has differences with the Republican Party, but these differences are shrinking constantly. This was especially evident in the last election. For instance the domination of the Democratic Party by finance capital is reflected clearly in the selection of John J. Raskob, chairman of the Finance Committee of General Motors Company (today the biggest automobile corporation in the world, operating on an international scale, particularly after its purchase of the gigantic Opel Motor Works in Germany) as the national chairman of the Democratic Party. Thus one of Wall Street's most authoritative journals characterizes the two big bourgeois parties as symbolized by their candidates:

"It is not an exaggeration to say that he (Hoover) has considered himself and has actually been the director-general of American business. Never before, here or anywhere else, has a government been so

completely fused with business. He respects big business and admires big business men. . . There can be no doubt that Hoover as president would be without precedent. He would be a dynamic business president, even as Coolidge has been a static business president. He would be the first business, as distinguished from political, president the country has had. . .

"Al Smith's record in politics is the best possible pledge that he will make a successful administrator of the biggest business of all. . . that of managing the political business organization of the United States. But how about the Smith policies? They are just the reverse of Hoover in relation to business. Hoover emphasized economics; Smith politics. *Hoover would serve the public by serving business; Smith would serve business by serving the public.*"

The Socialist Party which had long since dropped all pretense of being a revolutionary Marxian party made a very sharp turn still further to the right in its convention last April. In this campaign, the Socialist Party has broken completely with every vestige of working-class traditions and all working-class policy and interests. It is true that the manager of the Socialist Party campaign was not Mr. Raskob. But today the Socialist Party is the party of small business men and professionals, liberal lawyers, doctors, and preachers, etc.—the smaller capitalists. Since the campaign ended, the Socialist Party has been appealing frantically for the organization of an all-inclusive Liberal Party.

ISSUES IN THE CAMPAIGN

What were the issues in the election campaign?

1. *Prosperity.* The first issue was "prosperity." The American bourgeoisie succeeded to a considerable extent in getting out of the period of depression in which the country was at the close of last year. There still remain certain very serious symptoms of *crises*: in credit, in mass production. At the same time, we still have with us very serious manifestations of unemployment. Certain industries are still in a critical condition. But the recent depression *in its worst form* has gone for the present. American politics and economics are not separable as the bourgeoisie would have the workers believe, but are very much one and the same, interwoven and enmeshed.

Within this "prosperity" issue there was hidden the issue of *the war danger*. Mr. Hoover repeatedly said in his campaign speeches substantially: "We must have prosperity and if we cannot get prosperity at home, we must go out and fight for it in the markets of the world." Thus *the war danger, unemployment, speed-up, the right to strike, and injunctions were sharply and deeply involved in this issue.* Prosperity, this fine beautiful sun with

its dazzling brilliance for the capitalists, was blinding enough for the masses, to hide a multitude of pitfalls and difficulties.

Many may have seen in recent weeks a picture entitled "The Three Titans of Distributed Contentment." This picture was circulated widely in the election campaign, a picture of three gentlemen, Mr. Coolidge in the middle, Hoover on the right and Mellon on the left. At the bottom of this picture runs the following legend: "If you had these three men working for you, would you fire them?" This is a very instructive little picture. It is very appealing. Take the worker who gets ten or fifteen dollars a week. He looks at it and says to himself: "*Look who is working for me! Coolidge, the president of today! Hoover, the president of tomorrow! Mellon, the fellow who has the most whiskey and the most money in the country! What else can anybody ask?*" Thus did the bourgeoisie appeal to the patriotism of the American worker.

They appealed to his pride as a citizen of "the greatest democracy on God's green earth," whatever that is. They appealed to his "business ideals." And very few Americans today are not poisoned, in varying degrees, by these "business ideals."

Hoover works very quickly. He doesn't assume the presidency until next March but he has already left to visit nine Latin-American countries as president-elect—really as emperor of two continents. He has not yet been inaugurated. But his head is already uneasy in anticipation of the crown, working on plans for increasing the domination of American imperialism in Central and South America. Hoover has already made his inaugural address, in fact, if not officially. Let me cite a section of this speech. It shows the key to the issue of capitalist prosperity and the challenge which particularly the revolutionary workers must answer. Speaking in Boston, the place where the police strike was broken by his predecessor, President Coolidge, Hoover declared:

"We in America are nearer to the final triumph over poverty than ever before in the history of any land. The poorhouse is vanishing from among us. We have not yet reached the goal but given a chance to go forward with the policies of the last eight years, we shall soon, with the help of God, be in sight of the day when poverty will be banished from this nation. There is no guarantee against poverty equal to a job for every man. That is the primary purpose of the economic policies we advocate."

Why did Hoover lose Massachusetts after he made this speech? Why did he lose Rhode Island? The potency of the prosperity issue is brought forth here in bold relief. *Hoover lost these states because*

there was no possibility for the Republican Party to put over the fake prosperity propaganda successfully enough in these states. He lost them especially because of the crisis in the textile industry and not merely because there are many Catholics there. A hungry Catholic will vote against a Catholic who is in office and a pot-bellied Catholic or a full-gasoline tank Catholic skilled worker will vote for Hoover rather than for the Catholic Smith. One cannot eat a cross even when it is made of gold. Catholicism was a secondary factor in the contest. Thus Mr. Hoover lost and Mr. Smith carried New Bedford, the scene of the long, bitter strike of more than a score of thousands of textile workers.

But while capitalists speak of prosperity, we find that there are five million workers in the United States whose income is less than one thousand dollars a year. And there are several million farmers in this country who aren't worth, financially, the dirt they tread on. At least forty million people in the United States are below the income level of decency, according to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. We need only mention the coal, steel, oil and textile towns. Last year twenty-five thousand workers were killed and four hundred thousand wounded in the manufacturing industries alone. Of such prosperity Mr. Hoover said not a word. It was a different prosperity which elected Mr. Hoover and of which he has been boasting—the prosperity of the ruling class.

2. *The Tariff.* The traditional difference between the Republican and Democratic Parties has been on the tariff issue. But this year, in this election, Mr. Smith threw overboard completely the old traditional democratic stand. He didn't say he wants a tariff lower than that which is now in force. He said he wants a "scientific" tariff. His complaint against the present Fordney-McCumber tariff law was only based on what he called its "unscientific character." This is only another reflex of the changed economic basis of the new, the Smith leadership of the Democratic Party.

3. *Prohibition.* Prohibition was not a fake issue. Prohibition divided very seriously the biggest capitalist leaders. Let us examine two capitalist viewpoints, one of a powerful industrial magnate supporting Hoover, the other of a powerful manufacturing mogul supporting Smith. These capitalists happen to be fighting each other today in the most concentrated, most highly developed industry in America—the automobile industry. It is a question as to who is the bigger, but they are both among the biggest of America's growing millionaire multitude.

"If the Volstead law were changed, we would have to shut up our plants. Everything in the United States is keyed up to a new pace which started with prohibition. The speed at which we run

our motor cars, operate our intricate machinery and generally live, would be impossible with liquor. No, there is no chance of even modification."

Thus spoke Henry Ford, an ardent, generous supporter of Hoover. Said Mr. Raskob, multi-millionaire manager of Smith's campaign: "We must get rid of the damnable infliction of prohibition." And some of the strongest opposition to Smith coming from the new industrial states of the south, is reflected in the following from the *Manufacturers' Record* (Baltimore) comment on Smith's defeat:

"America in a referendum on the liquor question . . . stands by its experience in the noblest experiment ever attempted by any government on earth for the advancement of humanity."

One group of capitalists thinks that prohibition is necessary as a disciplining force for the workers, as an insurance of efficiency, to make the workers more easily adaptable to the speed-up system, to the huge, highly organized factories. The other group says prohibition might be good, but cannot be enforced. A government which has a law on the books which it cannot enforce is only promoting a deep-going disrespect and disregard for the law as such. Sooner or later this will serve as a lever, they say, to discredit and undermine the whole present system of government.

Let none underestimate the fact that there is a growing hatred of government, that there is a growing disrespect for the "law" because of the prohibition act and its attempted enforcement. In certain respects both groups are correct. Ford is right in his plea for prohibition as an aid to efficiency. Raskob is right in his complaint against prohibition.

4. *Agriculture.* Neither big bourgeois party has a solution for the farmers. In its acutest form the American agricultural crisis is ended. There is no serious crisis in agricultural production today, but there is still a serious crisis for the great bulk of the agricultural masses. The crisis in agricultural production has been relieved temporarily—but only at the expense of several millions of farmers who have been driven off the land.

In general this was a pretty hot election campaign. *But the real, the basic issues, were not put before the masses. The bourgeoisie did everything to hide such real, pressing issues confronting the workers, as the war danger, unemployment, the Negro question, the right to strike, to organize, etc.*

SOME SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE ELECTION

Undoubtedly the bourgeoisie succeeded in arousing a keener interest in the present election campaign than in any previous campaign. The political machines of the capitalist parties succeeded in mobilizing a larger percentage of the voters; more than fifty-five per cent of the total eligible voters, or about thirty-nine millions, participated,—ten million more than in the 1924 elections. This means greater illusions, more widespread belief in fake democracy.

The second feature of the election campaign is the impetus given to the rapid progress and huge merging of the big capitalist parties' machinery with that of the big trusts. For example, the campaign manager for finance in the Republican Party was Major General James J. Harbord; president of the Radio Corporation of America. During the campaign, he officially resigned his business job, but the morning after election day, he took it back. The chairman of the Democratic Party campaign for finances was Mr. Raskob, of General Motors. He resigned his business job. He will soon get a bigger and better one. Especially this year the management of many gigantic factories literally became campaign committees for the Republican or the Democratic Parties.

The *Magazine of Wall Street* (Oct. 6, 1928, p. 1081) says editorially:

"This election will be more like a corporation meeting than any of its forty-four predecessors. Outside of land ownership, the United States is now controlled by corporations."

The big bourgeoisie has certainly made the methods of highest industrial technique its own. The radio for example, was used with deadly effectiveness to mislead millions of workers. The American bourgeoisie exploits the most modern devices for increasing its paralyzing hold on the minds of the masses.

The party lines were broken this year more than ever before. One can cite list after list of leading figures of the capitalist class who only last year were republicans and this year staunch democrats, or vice versa. Among these are, just to mention a few; from the Republican to the Democratic Party, Rudolph Spreckels, sugar baron; John J. Raskob and Pierre S. Dupont, Samuel M. Rea, former president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, Edward S. Harkness, of New York, William H. Woodin, president of the American Car & Foundry Company, Arthur Curtis James, the largest railroad security owner in the United States, Charles H. Sabin, head of the Guarantee Trust Company, and Jerome D. Green, close associate of Rockefeller.

From the Democratic Party to the Republican Party: Carl Vrooman, Assistant Secretary of Agriculture under Wilson, Vance McCormick, former Democratic National Chairman, Henry C. Breckinridge, Assistant Secretary of War under Wilson, Senators Simmons of North Carolina and Heflin of Alabama. These are only a few amongst the pace-setters of the mugwumps. Here we have further evidence of the growing disintegration of the two-party system.

Since the Civil War, the great bulk of the Negro votes, insofar as they have been counted, have been tallied for the Republican Party. Of course, in the south practically no Negro votes are counted. The most ruthless terroristic means are employed to intimidate the Negro masses and to disfranchise them. In certain sections of Mississippi, cannons have been fired on election day as reminders to the Negroes as to what would happen to them if they dared go to the polling places. But this year an extraordinary increase of voters amongst the Negroes is to be noted for the Democratic Party. The traditional hold of the Republican Party on the Negro masses has been weakened considerably. The great migration of the Negro masses to the industrial centers of the north is serving as a force to undermine the old and temporarily to foster new illusions. Thus so influential a Negro paper as *The Chicago Defender*, came out four-square for Smith's election.

Is the Democratic Party dead? Far from it. Mr. Smith had about fifteen million votes. Fifteen million votes are not to be sneezed at in American politics. It is the biggest vote a defeated American presidential candidate ever got. If these votes had been distributed a little differently in certain states, Mr. Smith would have come very close to being elected. Davis, his predecessor on the Democratic ticket, polled the smallest percentage of popular votes of any Democratic candidate since the Civil War. But even taking into account the absolute increase in the number of voters this year from 1924, the tremendous increase in the popular vote for Smith means that the Democratic Party has in the last four years gained considerable support.

This election also sheds some welcome light on the fakery of American democracy. Smith received about fifteen million votes, but in the Electoral College which really counts in the election of the president, he has only 87 against 440 votes. All of which goes to show that the American bourgeoisie has many checks and balances and numerous barriers against the so-called "will of the people."

For the first time in the history of the country, both major capitalist parties nominated their candidates in their party conventions on the first ballot. The republicans for the first time in the history of their party selected a vice-president from a state west of the

Mississippi. The democrats for the first time in many decades selected a vice-presidential candidate from a state below the Mason-Dixon line. For the first time since the Civil War, the Democratic Party found it necessary to wage a campaign in the south.

Finally, this election showed the greatest participation of the government, of the whole state apparatus itself, in the campaign. We have heard a lot about bigotry as an issue by the democrats. However, Smith was using bigotry just as much as Hoover. There is no place on earth where there is more bigotry than in the south and particularly in those southern states which Smith carried. Arkansas, which has just voted to ban the teaching of evolution, voted for the "liberal" candidate Al Smith. Protestants, Baptists, Congregationalists, and other bible-pounders are all as bigoted as the Catholics. Only the superficial observer can see differences among them in this respect. Religious superstition is an organic part of the capitalist state organization used against the workers. This year the contest for power in the camp of the bourgeoisie was so sharp, and their differences on issues so slight, that it became necessary to resort more than previously to the fake issue of bigotry vs. tolerance, bringing into play more than in any previous campaign, those agencies of the capitalist state, the churches and religious societies.

Another side of this same picture. How is it that Hoover carried Florida, the southernmost state? Florida was carried largely because the Republican Party gave away so much patronage, particularly to some of the new voters who had moved from the industrial north into Florida in the recent land boom. There were so many job-holders there, that the Republican Party had a real machine built up which could challenge and crack the age-worn democratic machine.

SOME SIGNIFICANT RESULTS

1. *A Sweeping Victory for Finance Capital.* The election was a sweeping victory for finance capital. So authoritative an organ of the biggest financial interests as the *Forbes Magazine*, frankly proclaimed: "*Finance is satisfied that the republican administration will be continued*—and is satisfied, moreover, that it will be continued in a way not injurious to business."

Listen to this frank boasting by that energetic organ of finance capital, the *Magazine of Wall Street* (Nov. 17, 1928, p. 101), in its comment on the Hoover victory:

"Hoover will be the first president of all parties and all sections since Monroe. For the first time since the Civil War, a nominee of the Republican Party has shattered the Solid South. The sweep through Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Florida and Texas is far more than a dramatic episode of a great contest; it is symbolic of the advent of a new age. The mighty republic has found and chosen a leader who reflects the unity of the national spirit and the

national thought. . . There is nothing like it elsewhere in the world."

American imperialism is approaching its Victorian day. Thus the same investors' mouthpiece goes on to say proudly: "As Rome had its Augustinian age and Britain its Victorian age, so we are about to enter upon an epoch of affluence and magnificence, of peace and prosperity, that history may well record as the Hooverian age." Translate "we" into Wall Street and the truth is here.

Never before were the big bourgeois parties in such close agreement in the fundamental economic issues. Never before did so large a proportion of the electorate vote for the big bourgeois parties. Nineteen twenty-four had its petit-bourgeois LaFollette vote of five million, as against both big bourgeois parties. The Wilson of 1912 was not the Wilson of 1918. The Socialist Party of fifteen years ago was very different than it is today. With Debs as its leader it polled a million votes in opposition to the big bourgeois parties. Nineteen twenty-eight registered the smallest total vote, in years, of the electorate for the parties that were either frankly revolutionary, like the Workers (Communist) Party, or did not boast loudly about their petit-bourgeois character, like the Socialist Party. The coming cabinet will reflect this domination of finance capital beyond a shadow of a doubt. Dwight W. Morrow, a partner of J. P. Morgan, will probably be Secretary of State; "Blackjack" John J. Pershing, one of the most vicious enemies of the working class, will probably be Secretary of War, the notorious Mellon may continue as guardian of the finances, even a powerful ultra-reactionary southern manufacturer may be Secretary of Commerce.

2. *The Birth of a New South.* The solid south is cracked wide open. The solid south today is vastly different from what it was only a decade ago. It is true, cotton is still king in the south. But the most modern textile factories, the most up-to-date steel plants, the richest coal pits, splendid iron fields, some of the most magnificently developed water-power resources, are to be found in the south. Natural resources of every description are being exploited intensely. The country is being rapidly industrialized. Estimating this situation, the influential southern bi-weekly, the *Manufacturers' Record* (Nov. 15, 1928, p. 65) says:

"Viewed purely from the material standpoint, the breaking of the solid south politically in the present election campaign, will be of enormous value to this section. It will give increased confidence to the business people of other sections of the country, for the very solidarity of the south in politics, has to some extent retarded southern development, great as it has been. This development can be and will be, far greater than in the past."

The solid south before the election of 1896, consisted of fourteen

states. The solid south became smaller and less "solid" as wider areas were industrialized. Maryland and Kentucky deserted Bryan in 1896. It was reduced to twelve states by 1904. Then Missouri went to Roosevelt. Only eleven states were left. But in 1920 Harding "smiled" at Tennessee and the solid south shrank further. More industrialization, at an accelerated pace. In 1924, Coolidge kept up the pace in the southern cities. Of the eleven states in the solid south on the eve of the 1928 election, Hoover carried five and Smith six. Did this happen because Smith is a Catholic? That helped somewhat. But this fact was only a weapon in the hands of the big bourgeoisie developing in the south, whose interests are now more and more at one with the interests of the big bourgeoisie controlling the north. The textile barons of New England are investing capital in the rapidly developing textile industry of the south.

I have said that Smith represents the domination of finance capital in the Democratic Party. At the same time I indicated that the finance capitalists of the south are today against Smith. What is the explanation of this apparent contradiction? First of all, the south does not yet have *its own* finance capitalists, as an independent group. The capitalists of the south are still largely the by-products of the most powerful capitalists of the north who dominate the Republican Party. The religious and prohibition issues also played havoc in ruining support for Smith amongst the southern business men.

Then we have still another complicating factor. As capitalism develops in the south, it brings on a certain new kind of tyranny against the workers. These workers become more and more discontented. They then begin to be "agin the government." And to be "agin the government" in the south is to be against the Democratic Party, which has been the undisputed ruling party on a state scale. So those very workers, in order to express their discontent with new big capitalist rule were voting in this election for the party of the new, wealthy, industrial and financial bosses responsible for the new oppression. Thus, the Democratic Party lost on the right and on the left. The solid south was cracked.

No one can overestimate the importance of the industrialization of the south for the United States. It means, for instance, a further tremendous proletarianization of hitherto rural and semi-rural masses. It means a further proletarianization of additional great masses of the Negroes.

3. *Rebuilding the Democratic Party.* What is the future of the Democratic Party? Since 1924 there has been much confusion and little cohesion. At the Houston convention, there was still much confusion in its midst. On the first ballot, the democrats had no clear platform. Walter Lippmann, in the *Yale Review* for October, has correctly said:

“What he (Smith) received at Houston was the leadership of two warring factions bound together by no common ideas. It has been and is his task to recreate the Democratic Party. That task will not end on election day in November. Win or lose, this campaign is only the beginning of the long and difficult task of restoring the vitality of the two-party system by remaking the Democratic Party.”

This confusion in the Democratic Party was reflected in its campaign strategy. The democrats appointed Raskob and Young to run their campaign. But toward the end, they saw that it was hard sledding to lure Wall Street away from the Republican Party; so the Democratic Party, in the closing days of the election, became more “popular” and more “liberal.” At the beginning of the campaign, Smith was talking like an arch reactionary; at the end, like a fake petit-bourgeois progressive. He thought he had already won the reaction and could pick up the so-called progressives on the way.

But there has been developing in the Democratic Party a new situation and a new leadership. This party is being reborn. The plantation owner of the south, as leader of the Democratic Party, is through. Bryan, as a “liberal,” as a “progressive,” challenged that leadership, and failed. Wilson’s first regime was an expression of the last gasp of American liberalism finally working in the harness of the biggest bourgeoisie of the east.

Today, there is developing in the Democratic Party a leadership “just as good” from Wall Street’s viewpoint, as the Republican Party leadership. Let me call upon Mayor Walker of New York City, to testify to this fact in an address he delivered on the Sesqui-centennial Celebration of the American Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia:

“If Bill Vare, Fred Kendrick, and Charlie Hall (notorious local Republican politicians—J. L.), lived in New York, they’d be Tammany leaders, and if John McCooey, Judge Olvaney and Jim Egan (Tammany leaders—J. L.), lived in Philadelphia, they’d be making up the Republican slate. We’re all God’s children and I don’t believe in taking party politics too seriously.”

This is the new Tammany,—purified. This is the new leadership of the Democratic Party. Never before were there so many big businessmen on the side of the Democratic candidate as in 1928. Never before did the Democratic Party have such a big treasury. Never before did the Democratic Party have such large support from Wall Street. That is why the Democratic campaign book boasted that “this most liberal governor has nevertheless the confidence of big conservative businessmen—a confidence such as they seldom give to anybody except their own associates and political servants.”

The votes cast for Smith were therefore not votes cast against the reactionary capitalist party, but for a reactionary capitalist party trying its damndest to be at once ultra-reactionary and at the same time, pretending to be liberal. The votes cast for Governor Smith are therefore not an index of the radicalization of the masses, as some would say, but are an index of the still great political backwardness of the American working masses and of the still continuing domination of the industries and life of the country by reactionary finance capital.

The Democratic Party is not in very good shape today. But the Democratic Party has a future in capitalist society. It will be reorganized completely. It may not win the next election, but it has vitality. It polled about forty per cent of the total popular vote. It obtained a great proportion of the La Follette vote—especially in the industrial centers. Seventy-five per cent of its strength is today outside of the hitherto solid south. And Smith is not through. Of course, it is possible that the newly elected Governor of New York, Franklin D. Roosevelt, may come forward as the leader of the Democratic Party.

4. *Paralyzing the "Progressive" Coterie.* The poor "progressives" got nowhere in this campaign—rather, they lost ground, through the division of their support between the two reactionary candidates. Their role in Congress as a bloc holding the balance of power, has been destroyed. The republican representation in the House is the biggest that either party has had since 1855, except in the sixty-third Congress, when the democrats had two hundred and ninety and in the sixty-seventh Congress, when the republicans had three hundred.

Likewise, the American Federation of Labor bureaucracy was in a very unfortunate position this year. "Business" was so bad for them, that they couldn't even sell their endorsement to either big bourgeois party.

The Socialist Party lost a considerable number of votes, particularly in the working-class districts. Debs, symbol of what was once revolutionary in the Socialist Party, was taboo in the Socialist Party campaign literature and agitation. Thus the socialist candidate for United States Senator in New York, McAllister Coleman, betrays his party's real attitude towards the Coolidge government and the whole ruling class:

"Brigadier-General William E. Gillmore, head of the Material Division of the United States Air Corps, in charge of the Wright Field, has already written his name large in American flying history. He is served by a group of alert-minded young airmen who make ridiculous the talk of 'bureaucracy' in our government affairs. I defy anyone to go through the plant at Dayton, without acquiring

a tremendous respect for the clean-cut job that our government is doing there. . . . Someone asked about the possibility of organizing the workers in this latest of our industries, into trade unions. Enthusiastic as I happen to be for unionism, I must admit that the chances for organizing these workers are remote at the present. In most of the factories that I have visited, the rate of pay is higher than that which union men were receiving. . . . And I don't know whether you can find a more appealing group of American industrialists than these pioneering men and women who give wings to America."

A whole-hearted endorsement of imperialist preparedness! A slap in the face at the efforts to organize the workers! An enthusiastic commendation of the strike-breaking machinery of the government!

This is American "socialism" in practice! If one reads any of the typical endorsements given to the Socialist Party by its dominant following, the *non-working class elements*, he will find that such endorsements are given strictly on the basis of the Socialist Party having repudiated Marxian "dogma and theology." Says Professor Douglas:

"Many liberals have in the past been deterred from supporting it (the Socialist Party) because in so doing they were required to support a dogmatic Marxism, which, so far as the labor theory of value was concerned, had no more to do with the basic principles of socialism than the tenets of the fundamentalists have with the message of Christianity. *The present platform, however, wisely dispenses with all this economic theology and bases its program solely upon realities.* It calls not only for the public ownership of power, as does Governor Smith, but also for its distribution by the public, which Smith does not advocate, and the absence of which would largely prevent the economies of the super-power system from penetrating to the ultimate consumer."

Of course, it is not theology and dogma that the petit-bourgeoisie are really against. It is scientific revolutionary socialism, *Marxism*; it is *Leninism* that these petit-bourgeois liberals dread and despise. That's why the "liberals" love the Socialist Party and hate the Workers (Communist) Party.

5. *The Growth of the Communist Party.* This year the Workers (Communist) Party waged its first national presidential election campaign. In 1924, we were on the ballot in only fourteen states. This year, the Party succeeded in overcoming terrific capitalist legal and technical obstacles and in placing its candidates on the ballot in thirty-four states.

Never before did there appear in an election campaign in the United States a party so openly revolutionary, so thoroughly communist. Our 1924 election platform was in certain respects oppor-

tunism in its crassest form, compared with the platform upon which the American communists fought their campaign in this election.

And the reaction of the bourgeoisie showed this. Our meetings were broken up. Our speakers were arrested. The radio and the press, which played so prominent and decisive a role in the campaign of the Republican, Democratic and Socialist Parties, were, practically speaking, completely closed to us. We drew special fire from the capitalist reaction through our emphasis on complete social and political equality for the Negro masses. We aroused the particular ire of the capitalists through laying the greatest emphasis on the rising war danger.

The penetration of the solid south, though it was on a small scale, marks a new period in the life of our Party. Not only in the all-important task of winning the Negro masses for communism, but in the increasing significance that our work in the south must assume in view of its recent rapid industrialization.

The total communist vote is not yet available. It is already clear, however, that its increase will be several times the size of 1924. This is true, especially, for the most industrial sections of the country, like the iron and copper range in the central northwest, the soft-coal fields of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia and the hard-coal fields of eastern Pennsylvania, in Detroit, for instance, the greatest automobile center of the world, and in the solid south.

Yet it must be established that considering the tremendous activities our Party has engaged in within the last year, our vote does not apparently reflect our influence. Witness the big mass movements which the communists led in the heroic struggle of twenty-five thousand textile workers in New Bedford, of scores of thousands of coal miners in the central competitive fields, of many thousands of needle-trades workers in New York. It is not enough to say that the workers are ready to accept our leadership in strike struggles, but are not yet ready to accept our leadership in an election campaign. A fundamental examination of the Party's working and organization methods is necessary to disclose the more decisive reasons for the Party's not having as yet been able to capitalize all its influence in election campaigns.

6. *Tremendous Impetus Given Rationalization.* The election of Hoover, insofar as it means a still further merging of the apparatus of the governmental machinery with that of big business interests, will serve as an impetus to still more terrific rationalization in American capitalism. In his letter to Mr. Richard H. Edmonds, editor of the *Manufacturers' Record*, on the morning after he was elected president, Mr. Hoover spoke of "the great potentialities of

that section (the south). With one-third of the nation's land area, with about three-fifths of its sea frontage, with vast resources in soil, climate and minerals. . . . There are great water powers awaiting development. . . . There are great potentialities in the extension of the intercoastal canal system, etc. . . ."

The *Magazine of Wall Street* (Nov. 17, 1928) brings this home to us very clearly when it says:

"We must also expect some monumental undertakings in the way of national highways, perhaps one or two transcontinental highways that will surpass anything in the way of magnificent road building by the Caesars and Napoleon. The merchant marine is due for restoration, although not by governmental building, and air transport will be fostered. Public buildings will be reared throughout the country. Not less than a billion dollars will be spent on public works in the next four years. . . . The improvement of manufacturing and distribution presages the elimination of waste, the augmentation of efficiency, refinement of product—all of which have made such vast strides since Hoover undertook the leadership in those directions—will be further encouraged by the Hoover administration. . . ."

Special effort will also be made to intensify the rate of rationalization in such industries as textile, oil, copper and coal, which have been in a critical condition for some time.

FURTHER MERGING OF GOVERNMENT WITH BIG BUSINESS

Hoover will push forward the most intense cooperation between government and big business. In the eyes of the dominant forces in Wall Street, "Coolidge has been a conservator of business" and "Hoover will be a builder of business." Hoover will utilize his position aggressively to mould and direct the vast machine of the federal government as an agency for developing business.

7. *Increasing Imperialist Aggression.* But the most outstanding result of the election campaign is to be noted in the fact that the government is redoubling its effort and is increasing fivefold its pace of preparation for war. What else is the meaning of Hoover's "vacation" in Latin America? He is going to visit nine countries. He is going as a "messenger of peace" on the biggest battleship in the American navy. Hoover, a dove of peace, perching on the turrets of the battleship Maryland!

What is the meaning of this "gracious pilgrimage of friendship and good will"? The United States has a total commerce of about two billion dollars annually and an investment of about five billion dollars, in Latin America. *Hoover will appear as a salesman, a drummer, a booster of the products of American imperialism—*

ideological as well as material. This policy is very clearly stated by the *Magazine of Wall Street* (Nov. 17, 1928):

"The whole power of the government will be put behind the expansion of foreign trade. As Secretary of Commerce, Hoover has built up the greatest governmental organization for the promotion of foreign trade that any nation has ever had. With presidential initiative in his hands, it may be confidently expected that our foreign traders will find the government more than ever the leader in opening channels for American goods the world over."

Besides, in 1931, there will be another conference on the limitation of naval armaments in Washington. This is a continuation of the one Harding gave birth to in 1921. At this forthcoming conference there will be the sharpest clash between Great Britain and the United States over naval supremacy, over the mastery of the sea lanes.

If the Kellogg pact is to serve American imperialism as an instrument of imperialist aggression, adherence must be won for it in Latin America, where it has none today. Hoover's task will be to "sell" the Kellogg pact to the Latin-American countries. The League of Nations and British influence will have to be minimized; the Monroe Doctrine and American influence will have to be enhanced through the acceptance of the Kellogg pact. Hoover will engineer the job successfully, in all probability. Lloyd George has already well said: "*I am alarmed about the situation. The nations are sharpening their knives on the very stones of the Temple of Peace.*"

Nowadays, wars are increasingly wars of machinery and raw materials. The growing resistance to American imperialism in Latin America must be smashed to pave the way for further enslavement. We all know of the "Big Stick" policy of Roosevelt. When Hoover goes down for "peace and friendship," he is going down for exploitation and war. Wall Street is already thinking of active mobilization of all its resources against Latin America and against Europe. In Europe, it is meeting stronger and stronger competition. The screws must therefore be tightened in Latin America.

This brazen and monumental gall of the American imperialists, shown in the Hoover trip to Latin America, comes to a head in Coolidge's Armistice Day declaration, which was a threat and a sharp warning to the imperialist competitors of the United States. With lightning rapidity followed the declaration of policy of the United States Naval Board, and Baldwin's shrinking before the champion of Wall Street. Lord Allenby, speaking before the West Point Cadets, declared: "If America and Great Britain stand next to each other, no one in the world can touch them."

But what the Lord conqueror of Jerusalem forgot to say is, that America and Great Britain are "touching" each other, and here is where the conflict is sharpest. The present situation marks a new turn, a very sharp turn in the aggressive role of American imperialism. This is of world-wide significance.

8. *Bitter Attacks Against the Workers.* The big victory of finance capital cannot but translate itself into sharpening attacks against the workers. Rationalization of the coal industry means further oppression and further intense exploitation of the miners. Efficiency and speed-up methods in the textile industry will mean a harvest of worsened conditions for the textile workers. The further merging of the government apparatus with the big business apparatus can only mean a more frequent and more outrageous strike-breaking role to be played by the government throughout all its subdivisions. The huge vote given the big capitalist parties will be interpreted by the bourgeoisie as a mandate for sharpening their attack on the workers' living standards, conditions of work and rights along the whole front. In the name of efficiency, in the name of economic progress, in the name of the abolition of poverty, unions will be smashed, "injunction democracy" will be increased, the workers' rights will be trampled upon without the slightest hesitation.

PERSPECTIVES FOR THE STRUGGLE

But let no one fail to view this picture dynamically. *There are numerous deep contradictions fraught with mortal consequences for American capitalism, growing out of its very strength, its very imperialist prowess of today. By utilizing and exploiting every opportunity afforded by these contradictions of American imperialism, our Party can enhance its influence, develop itself into a mass Communist Party,—the leader of the working class.*

The victory for finance capital means of course, more aggressive imperialist foreign policy. Intensified competition of American with European imperialist powers, means greater aggrandisement by the Yankee imperialists in their drive for world supremacy. This will be resisted by the other imperialist powers. Thus the *very strength of American imperialism generates contradictions, conflicts and antagonisms in the bourgeois world.*

The conflicts resulting from these outer contradictions can only serve to sharpen the class war at home, intensifying the inner contradictions of American imperialism. *Sharper attacks against the workers at home mean, sooner rather than later, increasing mass resistance by the workers to the onslaught of the capitalists.*

But, as the masses move forward in their resistance to the bourgeoisie, the official trade-union bureaucracy will move still further

to the right and become an integral part, even more than heretofore, of the whole imperialist edifice. Note what transpired in the last convention of the American Federation of Labor. Examine the increasing friendship of the A. F. of L. for the fascist American Legion and its program of conscription of every worker for the impending imperialist war. Witness the whole-hearted endorsement given the big navy bill by the A. F. of L. metal trades department. In this process also, the Socialist Party is being rapidly shoved aside as a party even of the faintest pretenses of working-class character.

Herein lie splendid opportunities for our Party, for becoming a mass Communist Party, able to crush American imperialism which today appears to the superficial observer so invincible.

In the resistance to imperialist aggression, nothing can be expected from the petit-bourgeoisie. So eloquent a petit-bourgeois spokesman as Borah, has gone over lock, stock and barrel to the big bourgeoisie. Witness his endorsement of the big navy program of the General Naval Board.

The industrialization of the south, the further proletarianization of the Negro masses, the further expropriation of the farmers and of the rural masses, as a whole, and their further proletarianization, will serve to create a bigger and more class-conscious proletariat, developing new fields for struggle. Our Party must be wide awake to these significant deep-going changes. *We must not only respond but must aggressively lead.*

The outlook for a cataclysmic clash between imperialist powers—between the United States and Great Britain, or the serious danger of an attack by a group of imperialist powers against the Soviet Union, is ever more menacing. *American imperialism is still powerful but in this very heyday of its prowess, it is developing the germs of its own destruction. Sharpening class struggles are in sight. Increasing opportunities for development of our Communist Party into a mass Bolshevik party are at hand.*

The 1928 election campaign has taught us many valuable lessons. Our active participation in it has been of real value in our untiring effort to establish the Communist Party as the leader of the American working class.