

SOCIALIST PARTY IN U. S. GROWING FAST. Debs Tells of Advance of Socialist Party in U.S. in Spite of Persecution and Suppression of Press.

The Socialist Party is emerging from another struggle crowned with victory.

When the party declared its attitude toward war at the St. Louis convention it was fiercely attacked from within as well as without as an anti-patriotic, seditious, traitorous organization. The chairman of the committee that framed the war resolution was indicted and sentenced to the penitentiary for a term of five years. The national secretary was arrested upon one charge, indicted and tried upon another, and is still under bail pending further trial.

Hundreds of the party's speakers and organizers were arrested and jailed and hundreds of others forcibly prevented from speaking. Halls for meeting purposes were denied our lecturers, Secret Service agents clogged the heels of our comrades, while rowdies and strong-arm men, including not a few in the uniform of the United States soldiers and sailors, were incited to raid our local headquarters, sack our offices and break up our meetings. The party's papers were either suppressed outright or sorely hampered by the authorities.

Meanwhile, certain of our more prominent members, who were looked upon as party leaders, lined up with the capitalists and their hirelings, in the campaign of abuse and villification launched to discredit and destroy the party. Had these former comrades quit the party because they could not endorse its war policy, and been fair enough to give those who did, endorse it credit for being as honest as themselves, there would have been no loss of respect attached to their loss of membership. But some of them did not do this. On the contrary, the party that had honored them became anathema the moment they left it.

Of course, the capitalist press eagerly seized upon these outpourings and spread them broadcast over the country. This meant sure death for the Socialist Party and the capitalists chortled with glee over the prospect.

But alas! The attack upon the party by its former leading members in the service of its arch-enemies, the plutocrats and plunderbunders of the land whom these very leading members had for years denounced as criminals and corruptionists, reacted with amazing force and swiftness in favor of the party, and it at once began to grow and has been growing ever since at a rate unparalleled in its history.

At the time of these withdrawals and the vicious attacks of the deserters, I said that the time would come when they would be almost

willing to have their tongues cut out could they but have their vicious tirades blotted from the records.

Since that time, and especially since President Wilson's recent message virtually recognizing the Bolsheviks and proposing to accept their peace terms, there has been a marvellous change of sentiment toward Socialists and the Socialist Party. The capitalist press is today actually covering Lenine and Trotzky with fulsome praise in the vain attempt to square itself for the foul abuse it has poured upon their heads. The commanding part taken by Socialists in every move that is made in the prosecution of the war, as well as in the negotiations for peace can no longer be ignored and hence the somersault by press and pulpit and politicians in regard to the Socialist Party.

No more speakers are being arrested, and no more indictments are being found and it is a safe prediction that acquittal will follow the trials of those under indictment if the trials ever take place.

This is a great victory for the party, and the party is all the stronger and more aggressive and confident as the result of it. But victory for the Socialist Party simply means preparation for the next struggle and the next victory.

This is campaign year, and now is the time to prepare for battle. The municipal elections are first in order and we confidently expect these to develop lively activity on the part of Socialist locals and to show an increase in the Socialist vote that will fairly startle the profiteers and their political underlings.

Then will follow the Congressional contest. An entirely new popular branch of the Congress is to be elected.

How many Socialists shall respond to the new roll call when it is called? That depends entirely upon how well we do our work. The conditions are ripe, the people are ready, and it is up to us to prove our capacity to fight the winning political battle this year.

It has been intimated in the capitalist press that for "patriotic" reasons the Congressional election this year may be postponed, the Constitution to the contrary notwithstanding.

It has also been urged that the Republican and Democratic parties combine for similar "patriotic" reasons upon a single ticket to make sure the defeat of the Socialists. We earnestly hope this will be done. We can think of no surer way for these old camouflaging spoils-seekers to dig their own graves.

Locked in each other's arms, with their eyes rolling heavenward in their tearful plea for "patriotism," they will present a spectacle that may never be seen again.

But whether the Congressional election is postponed or not, whe-

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ther the two old capitalist vampires become one or not, in either case the Socialist Party is scheduled for a grand political victory this year. Victories, however, do not come of themselves. Victories, especially of this nature, have to be fought for.

The fight this year will be a more desperate one against Socialism than ever before. This very fact testifies to Socialism's growing power and increasing menace to plutocratic misrule.

For this fight we must be prepared. We need not only the soldiers of the revolution at the front, we need armament and munitions. We need shot and shell in the form of Socialist literature, whole broadsides to sweep the country. There are millions of voters, women now as well as men, to be reached and educated, and for this our National Executive Committee has issued a call for.

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