
The Party Referendum

by E.E. Carr

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The general referendum for the election of the National Secretary and the National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party is near at hand. And while there is not so much need of discussing the matter this year, we believe that a freer and more general comment in all our papers concerning the fitness of candidates would be decidedly helpful to the party, and it is the only way to prevent dangerous cliques. Some who oppose an open discussion of these matters are the very ones who are most incessant at star-chamber scheming — and open discussions are likely to upset their secret plans!

There is no reasonable doubt concerning the re-election of J. Mahlon Barnes as National Secretary. He has been faithful, fair, and efficient in that office, so far as we can see, and the same may be said of all the members of the National Executive Committee. We would be satisfied to have every one of them returned.

Victor L. Berger so preeminently represents a most important phase of American Socialism, commonly called “the Wisconsin Idea,” though it did not originate in Wisconsin, and is by no means confined to that state, that he ought by all means be re-elected. He is undoubtedly one of the very strongest men in the party, and, in spite of his natural pugnacity, one of the very fairest. It would be a misfortune to the party if he failed of re-election.

Carl D. Thompson has served with credit for one term, and deserves re-election not only

because of his loyalty and ability, but because of his valuable experience in the legislature, where he learned how to bring things to pass and because of his special study of European and American literature about the Practical Program of Socialism. And though Thompson is as pronounced in his personal belief in Christianity as Berger is in his agnosticism, the one is as loyal and fair-minded as the other. And we would earnestly advise the re-election of Thompson.

New York has so many able comrades who are willing to be members of the National Executive Committee that it would be exceedingly hard to choose one from among them were it not that J.G. Phelps-Stokes has served with such ability and fairness to all concerned for one term, and it would be foolish from the viewpoint of the party’s interest and unfair to him personally not to extend him the endorsement of re-election. The devotion of Comrade Stokes to the Socialist movement is so deep and sincere, and his spirit is so unselfish, so kindly, so humbly anxious to know and do what is best for the cause, and so impartial, that he ought to be on the Executive Committee. We say this all the more frankly because the many good men among candidates from New York tend to cause such a scattered vote from the metropolis as to endanger the election of any of the best from there.

Of course, [Morris] Hillquit and [Algie] Simons will be re-elected, and most likely [A.H.] Floaten and [John] Work, as they are all so well known in the movement, especially in their re-

spective sections of the country, where they poll a large vote. But we especially recommend the election of Work (of whose personal religious views we know nothing whatever), because his long experience and fairness on the committee, and his long service as National Organizer for the party, in which he has travelled extensively from branch to branch, so that he thoroughly knows the entire movement, have peculiarly qualified him for this important position.

The editor of *The Christian Socialist* [Carr] has declined the nomination for membership on the National Executive Committee, though his vote last year was double what it was the year before, and though he was nominated this year by more than double the number of branches which named him before. He wishes heartily to thank all who favored his nomination and election, and earnestly advises them to vote at least for Thompson, Stokes, and Work, and urge others to do so.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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