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# What Socialists Can Do in Office

by **John C. Chase**

Former Socialist Mayor of Haverhill, Mass.

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If the workers of Chicago could be made to understand how many things a small number of Socialist aldermen could do in the city council for the working class, there would be a good number of Socialists elected on the 5th of April [1910].

The average workingman says that it is no use to vote for Socialist candidates because they cannot be elected, or because they cannot do anything if elected. As a matter of fact and of history, it has been clearly proven in several sections of this country that when Socialists are elected to city councils or state legislatures they always succeed in forcing through many ordinances and laws that better the condition of the workers.

Ten years ago the Socialists elected mayors, aldermen, and members of the state legislature in Massachusetts. What did these Socialist officials do to better the conditions of the workers of the state?

In the city of Haverhill, where a Socialist mayor, six members of the city council, and two members of the state legislature were elected, although in a hopeless minority, [these officials] forced through more measures in the interests of the workers than had been secured in any ten year period in the history of the state.

Let me enumerate a few of the things accomplished and some of the things advocated.

The Haverhill Socialists fought for and secured an increase of 50 cents per day in wages for all city laborers, an increase which they have enjoyed all these ten years because of the energy and persistency of the Socialists.

A fight was started in the Haverhill City Council for an 8-hour workday for all city laborers, which was carried to the state legislature by the two Socialist members and carried to a successful finish.

A law was passed which gave the citizens the privilege of voting on the question of an 8-hour day, and in every city where the question was submitted it was overwhelmingly carried. For ten years... thousands of laborers have worked eight hours per day instead of nine and ten. One lone Socialist in the Haverhill City Council started the fight and two Socialist members of the legislature finished and won it.

The Socialist mayor and his colleagues fought the Haverhill Gas Company to reduce its price to 80 cents per thousand feet, and the mayor had previously forced the company to reduce the price from \$1.30 to \$1.00 per thousand. Through the activity of a Socialist mayor, Haverhill was the first city in New England and, in fact, of the whole country, to secure such an order. This victory alone meant to the people of that city of 38,000 a savings of \$32,000 annually and that much loss to the company.

In the state legislature the two Socialist members secured the passage in their branch of the government of many measures for the benefit of the workers in the state, among which may be mentioned the following:

Bill to establish the right of picketing during strikes.

Bill providing that when persons are advertised for, or solicited to take the place of strikers, a statement of the existence of a strike must be included in the advertisement or solicitation.

Bill to increase the number of brakemen on trains to not less than three.

Among scores of other bills introduced, some of which passed and some of which were defeated, I may briefly enumerate the following: Bill giving cities and towns the right to establish municipal coal and wood yards; bill for municipal ownership of gas and electric light plants; bill to improve the employers' liability law; bill to provide employment for the unemployed; bill to prevent blacklisting of working men and women; bill to prevent railroads from charging over two cents per mile; bill to reduce hours of labor of firemen in certain cities and towns; bill to reduce hours of labor of nurses and attendants at public hospitals and asylums; bill giving working men and women under injunction the right of trial by jury.

Also fought for bill to compel railroads to provide air brakes and automatic couplers on all cars; bill for the abolition of child labor and

raising the age of employment of children from 14 to 16 years, and a bill to give the people the right to introduce proposed laws and have same submitted to a popular vote.

The present article will not permit of further enumeration of the many measures secured or advocated by the Socialists in Massachusetts.

I have names a sufficient number to show that Socialists can and will do things for the working class when elected. Give me two Socialists only in the City Council of Chicago and I will show you for the first time in the history of the city that measures will be passed in the interest of those who make up the great working class of this western metropolis.

The workingmen of Chicago have too long depended upon the false promises of scheming and grafting political tricksters — have too long divided their power between two corrupt political machines. On April 5 [1910] every voting workingman in Chicago will have a chance to say whether he wants men in the city council to fight off the enactment of such laws as have been secured by Socialists wherever they have been elected or whether he wants the same old corrupt machines in power to legislate against him.

A vote for a Socialist candidate for alderman is a vote for such measures as have been mentioned here; a vote for any other candidate is a vote against them.

Workingmen of Chicago, what will you do on April 5?

*Edited by Tim Davenport*

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