

## **Berger Victory Heralds New Political Era (November 10, 1910)**

The election of [Victor L.] Berger, of Wisconsin, and the near election of five other Socialists to Congress and 35 representatives to state legislatures means the dawn of a new era in American politics.<sup>1</sup> For the first time the working class will have a representative in the American Congress, elected on the working class platform of a working class party pledged to working class emancipation. From now on in every succeeding election the Socialist Party, the political expression of the rising working class, will increase the number of representatives in Congress and in all state legislatures until it has a majority, and then it will wrest the powers of government from the capitalist class and establish an industrial democracy. All the forces that are now playing upon society are operating to this inevitable end.

In proportion as the capitalist system is outgrown and breaking down, the political parties representing that system are breaking up. The Republican and Democratic parties are both torn into warring factions and never can be harmonized again on any progressive national basis. More and more will their impotency to deal with the great new vital issue of the day become manifest to the people, while upon the other hand the rising Socialist Party, born of the travail of capitalism and steadily developing the vigor and virility of a new-born movement, historically destined to grapple with the wage slave power as the Republican Party grappled with the chattel slave power half a century ago, will in due time sweep into power and reorganize society upon a basis of collective ownership of the social utilities and the means of life and usher in a higher civilization than mankind has yet known.

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<sup>1</sup> Debs's former close political associate Victor L. Berger, largely estranged since the formation of the Industrial Workers of the World in 1905, was elected to Congress from the 5th district of Wisconsin on November 8, 1910. Victory was not declared until 3 am on the following day, with Berger emerging victorious with a narrow plurality of about 2,800 votes. It

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is unclear which five other Socialist congressional candidates were involved in races that could be accurately characterized as “near election.”