
Editorial in Opposition to Paul Carpenter for County Court Judge

by Victor L. Berger

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Since the referendum of our party in Milwaukee (by a majority of 4 to 1) has decided that we are to put up no ticket for the judicial election this spring — therefore we take no part in it as a party — the judicial election has for us only a very slight interest. To be more exact, we are really interested in only one person and that in a negative way. Social Democrats of Milwaukee ought to vote for only one position, that is to say, against the present probate judge (County Court). Judge Paul Carpenter, present incumbent of this office, considered it necessary in Catholic societies (and particularly the Ancient Order of Hibernians) to make agitation speeches against Socialists and Socialism. Furthermore, during his whole term he has committed only one child to a public institution, and that occurred only recently, since he became candidate for re-election. All other children who came before him were turned over to church institutions and especially Catholic ones. We hold that no judge has the right to do this — no probate judge before Carpenter ever tried to do the like — no other judge is now doing it.

Judge Carpenter's action is in opposition, so far as we come into the question, to the demand of the Socialists of all countries to hold church and state rigidly apart. If parents or guardians desire to bring their children under the protection of Catholic or similar institutions then they can attend to that themselves; that is their private matter. According to our standard the judge has

not the right to act as an agent of religious associations. Formerly these commitments were a rich source of income for the religious associations in question, for the county paid \$2.50 per week for every child; but since the home for dependent children was built this income has stopped. But we repeat that the judge has not the right to act as soul catcher for any religious association whatever. And Judge Carpenter, who himself is a renegade — his father, Matthew Carpenter, the well known Senator of Wisconsin, was acknowledged to be a free thinker — has simply let himself be carried away by his religious over-zeal. In addition it is also asserted that under his regime the bills for printing and so forth which were presented by a firm which is closely connected with these black circles have been 10 times as large — the firm in question is now under indictment by the grand jury. We don't care to go into this matter any further, for Judge Carpenter had no responsibility for these bills. For us only the two principal points are to be considered. First, that Judge Carpenter has come out against our party and against Socialism; and, second, that he has used his judge's office so far as he can to delegate a certain power to the Roman Catholic priesthood, which belongs to the state. On these grounds we are against Judge Carpenter.

Against Judge Carpenter is running ex-Judge and ex-Mayor Emil Wallber — no Socialist, but always a liberal upright man, to whom it never

occurred to use his judge's chair to rejuvenate church and state. In his favor is the further fact that in 1886 as mayor of the city he opposed the entrance of the militia, and also that Jerry Rusk, then Governor, at the wish of the manufacturer, turned loose the militia upon the workers over Wallber's head. It was well known then that some Poles in Bayview were shot. Wallber was thereupon dropped by the big capitalists, yet with the support of the trade unions and the Socialists in 1888 he was elected municipal judge against the powerful Mallory. Wallber understands very little or nothing of the social question and always stood rather with the "blue Turners" than with the "red"; but he always possessed enough "fairness" and insight never to oppose the demands of the organized workers and the Social Democrats.

It is superfluous here to remark that the elections of judges in Milwaukee are now nonpartisan. And in consideration of the circumstance that the Social Democratic Party decided by a large majority to put up no ticket, every member is free to vote for the candidate who seems to him best. It is not now our task to help any one of the dozen judicial candidates to any one of the half dozen offices. On the other hand it must be our first effort to keep Mr. Carpenter out of office, and this can only occur if we vote for his opposing candidate, Wallber.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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