

IN THE CAMP OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

The Socialist Party of America — a Party of Professors and Millionaires.

By John Pepper.

There is a "renaissance" of the Socialist Party of America.

We have to believe it, because no less an authority than **McAllister Coleman**, Socialist candidate for United States Senator from New York, so announces, when he writes:

"For Frederick Vanderbilt Field, descendant of one of the world's richest men, joined the Socialist Party a week ago and in the manner with which he is pitching in, there

is something of the old capitalist's and financier's swift-paced organising ability."

There is a real renaissance of the Socialist Party. Workers are getting very scarce around the headquarters of the honourable and respectable followers of the Second International, but what does that matter? The single fact that a "descendant of one of the world's richest men" joined the Socialist Party will make up for the running away of thousands of workers from the worthy fold.

The Socialist Party is a lucky bunch. Mr. Coleman tells us, terror-stricken, of the narrow escape the Socialist Party had with the young Vanderbilt Field. The young man studied in Great Britain, and did not make up his mind until the last minute whether to join the Democratic or the Socialist Party. To quote Mr. Coloman's own words:

"But as the Democratic workers whom he met did not strike him as being one whit more 'liberal' than their Republican fellow-workers he went home and slept over the matter and the next morning awoke."

And so he became a Socialist!

And Mr. Coleman assures us further that "going in and out of headquarters, not only in New York, but in Kansas City, Chicago and Los Angeles as well, are youngsters who think and act very much like young Field".

But our fairness compels us to tell the workers of the steel mills, textile towns, and coal mines that, despite the fact that the Socialist Party is fast becoming a party of young millionaires, there is still real democracy in the Socialist Party. The inimitable Mr. Coleman relates in his narrative:

"Today he carries the red card of membership in the Socialist Party, which he joined last week, pays his fifty cents monthly dues, and is addressed as 'comrade' by needle-workers, house painters and machinists."

Certainly there is no other party in this country which can offer such an attraction to prick-fingered needle workers, paint-besmeared house painters, and greasy machinists as that of buying for fifty cents monthly dues the privilege of addressing a Vanderbilt (mind you, a genuine, living, gilt-edged Vanderbilt) as "comrade",

Young Vanderbilt Field is the first result of the urgent appeal of Mr. Thomas and his fellow Socialist leaders for the support of the young generation of millionaires. We do not know how much financial aid that support will mean to the Socialist Party, but certainly young Vanderbilt Field will not be stingy. He knows very well that the Socialist Party is today the best, most effective weapon of capitalism against the working class, against the Communists, against the organisation of the unorganised millions, against a militant class struggle. It pays young Vanderbilt Field and the other rich young idlers to support the Socialist Party as the most clever defender of their capitalist property. But young Vanderbilt Field brings along with him also the best traditions of the late William Vanderbilt.

It is a spectacle for the gods — the Socialist Party as the heir of the best robber traditions of the most notorious financier and railroad magnate in the history of American capitalism!

There is a true renaissance of the Socialist Party. Not only millionaires but professors — entirely respectable, law-abiding, God-fearing, regular professors — are beginning to realise that their place is in the Socialist Party. The millionaires are attracted by the fact that there are very few workers in the Socialist organisation, and there is not a very big danger that many needle-trade workers and house-painters and machinists will address them as "comrades". The professors, on the other hand, are attracted by the fact that the Socialist Party has abandoned the very last remnants of revolutionary Marxism.

A Chicago professor, Paul H. Douglas, has contributed an article to the October 24th issue of the New Republic, in which he explains "Why I Am For Thomas". The main reason he gives is the stripping off of Marxism from the theory and practice of the Socialist Party.

Professor Douglas is a well-known liberal. He is a professor of political economy; therefore, an expert ex-officio on economic theories. He has his own economic theories of vulgar truisms, and there is no reason to disbelieve him when he says that the present Socialist Party has nothing at all in common with Marxism, which he calls with the brazen pretensions of a capitalist professor "economic theology".

And Professor Douglas is not an isolated phenomenon. In the Nation's straw vote no less than 2,542 prosperous intellectuals and small businessmen expressed their endorsement of Thomas as against 2,526 for Hoover and 6,317 for Al Smith.

Mr. W. E. Woodward, the well-known novelist and cheap "humaniser" of George Washington and General Grant, confesses that he is "a Socialist of the deepest dye", despite the fact that "my books are read in the most respectable homes". Mr. Woodward, who is not only a writer but a very well-to-do ex-businessman, gives his own reasons for supporting Thomas, characterising him in the following way:

"'Proletariat' and 'bourgeoisie' are words that rarely appear in his speeches. He has somehow got hold of the idea that farmers in Iowa, and workers in Detroit factories, are a bit uneasy when they are addressed as 'the oppressed masses'... He refuses to talk to them about their troubles in the manner of Marx preparing *Das Kapital* in the British Museum in 1867."

This statement by Mr. W. E. Woodward appeared in the official campaign book of the Socialist Party.

And if there are still "doubting Thomases" who don't believe that the Socialist Party is facing a veritable renaissance, they ought to be convinced by the fact that Charles Edward Russell has rejoined the Socialist Party. Yes, the same Charles Edward Russell who left the Socialist Party during the war, because the Socialist Party at that time did not serve the imperialist masters obediently enough. Yes, the same Mr. Russell who served as a member of the infamous special mission which President Wilson sent to Russia in 1917 in an attempt to keep Russia in the camp of the Allies. Russell, the Wilsonian jingo, considers the Socialist Party as it is today jingoistic enough for him to re-enter its ranks. Russell has not changed, but the Socialist Party has undergone a fundamental transformation. From a working-class party it has become a party of small businessmen and prosperous intellectuals.

Millionaires, professors, prosperous writers, notorious servants of imperialism are joining the Socialist Party. The Socialist Party is becoming so very respectable that even in the Twenty-third Annual Convention of the Daughters of the American Revolution (that notorious organisation of counter-revolutionary enemies of every revolutionary movement) it found defenders.

The Socialist Party of today is an acknowledged institution of American capitalism, is rather the party of millionaires, professors, well-to-do professional men, and blue-blooded aristocrats of counter-revolutionary organisations than a party of the working class. There is only one party of the working class in this country, and that is the Workers (Communist) Party of America. Millionaires are our deadly enemies. Well-known professors ridicule and combat our fundamental theory of Marxism-Leninism. The "Witches" of the American Revolution are yelling for the prosecuting attorney against the Communists. Communist leaders are jailed everywhere. Election campaign meetings of the Communist Party are broken up everywhere.

The Socialist Party may receive a large vote on Election Day, but that will not be an expression of the support of the working class. But every vote the Communist Party receives on November 6th will be a vote for the proletarian class struggle, against Negro oppression, against imperialist war, and for the overthrow of capitalism.