

# TRACTION VERSUS REALTY ARE TWO BIG ISSUES IN NEW YORK CAMPAIGN

By SAM DARCY. |

NEW YORK CITY—(By Mail.)—The first stage in the New York elections (that of choosing a democratic nominee) witnessed a struggle between the two dominating capitalist groups within that party,—namely, the traction group and the realty group.

The swift growth of industry which occurred everywhere in the United States within the last fifty years brought this city from a position of being a comparatively insignificant port engaging almost exclusively in commerce to that of being one of the largest manufacturing centers in the world. Parallel with this development and in the greatest measure resulting from it came the great real estate boom to accomodate the increasing number of factories which set up in the suburbs and also the land promotion schemes for housing the increasing population.

This gave rise to the great public service corporations operating under city franchises which gave them ex-

(Continued on page 5)

# Campaign Issues in New York

(Continued from page 1)

clusive monopolies—each in a particular branch of service but very often having interlocking directorates.

## Traction vs. Realty.

One of the contradictions inherent in capitalist development here arose. It was to the interest of the great traction trust that fares be increased so that their rate of profit rise. It was on the other hand of the greatest interest to the realty corporations that the fare be held at a low level so that they could continue fleecing the gullible with their land boom schemes from which they harvested millions. Thereby these two groups of capitalists were brought into active conflict.

The dominant party on the New York election scene is the democratic party. This city has not had a republican mayor since Seth Low who was a fusion candidate in 1902. It was therefore logical that the warring economic groups use their most energetic efforts that this party nominate a candidate for office who will favor the one or the other group. This was finally crystallized into the Hyman-Smith fight.

## Who is Smith?

Alfred E. Smith is a director of the Electric Transport company which has interlocking directorates with the Interborough Rapid Transit company (operating New York subway and elevated lines) thru Cornelius Vanderbilt and Horace M. Fisher, which in turn has interlocking directorates with the New York Central, the Biltmore hotel, Armour and company, etc., ad infinitum. He is also a director of the Morris Plan company which has been fleecing the workers in loan schemes and is also chief shareholder and chairman of the board of directors of the U. S. Trucking corporation. He therefore represents the traction group. He supports Walker as candidate who while on the agricultural committee to prepare food control bills accepted fees from the meat trust.

## Who is Hyman?

Hyman on the other hand is closely bound up with the realty interests. It is not permissible that while in office he himself should engage in business. However, the Sinnots, members of his family, are all owners of large insurance and realty corporations and we suspect that the mayor himself has more than just a sympathetic share in these enterprises. It is therefore logical that he should champion this great financial group against Smith.

Hyman's strength comes from Richmond, Queens and the rapidly growing sections of Brooklyn, because he used his office to build subways, bridges and to give the realty sharks every facility that the city could offer them. He got the endorsement of the Staten Island businessmen's league, a powerful organization consisting in a large measure of real estate men. He also got the support of the Five Cent Fare club, a temporary election organization which is being financed by the same group.

## Walker's Record.

Walker (Smith's puppy) gets his strength from the greater aggregates of capital—from the public service corporations and the meat trust—thru men like Arthur S. Somers who is a director of the Brooklyn-Manhattan subway system. Because of his recent victory in the democratic party Smith becomes the angel of the great trusts and will undoubtedly gain substantial financial assistance from them when the problem of nominating a presidential candidate in 1928 arises. Already during the campaign period he got a suite of rooms and meals free from the Biltmore which is owned by the meat

packers and the N. Y. Central which have interlocking directorates with the I. R. T. as has been shown above.

## Millionaire Waterman.

Waterman is the clearer symbol of Wall Street. He is no mere hired servant of Wall Street—he is one of the crowd. The party feels that they must do something to prove that they can serve big business better than the democrats can and this is their method. Their candidate can be counted on never to yield to popular pressure as even the most loyal of the professional politicians must sometimes do.

The average wage in his plant and offices is \$18 per week. He discriminates against Jewish employees hiring only enough to keep the charge of anti-Semitism from being flung at him. He was chosen because he can lose nothing by being defeated as he undoubtedly will be.

## Sky-Pilot Candidate.

The socialist party has this year completed its swing to the right. They chose Norman Thomas, a sky-pilot who has been using the socialist party as a splendid pulpit from which to preach to his lowly (in more respects than one) flock.

Several weeks ago a manifesto favoring Cal Coolidge's pet scheme, the world court, was published in New York newspapers and among the distinguished signers were Thomas W. Lamont of Morgan and company and Norman Thomas of the socialist party.

## Hillquit for League.

Morris Hillquit, another bourgeois who is boring from within the ranks of the workers for capitalism came back from the congress of the Second International (incidentally on a scab ship) in favor of a league of nations somewhat "democratized." The same league which the S. P. in 1919, when it still had some militant elements in it, called an organization of "blackguard reactionaries." The Burns Coal company whose leading lawyer and one of whose most influential politicians is our old friend Morris Hillquit, is importing coal from Wales to break the anthracite strike.

The successive betrayals that the socialists have committed in the past few years with an almost bewildering rapidity has so thoroughly discredited them in the eyes of the workers class, especially in view of the recent needle trades struggle, that their vote will fall to a negligible point and I dare say were it not for the support that the petty-bourgeois cockroach shop and store keepers are still giving them, their vote would be very close to zero.

## The Issues.

An extremely careful scrutiny of the program of the two major capitalist parties reveals not a single point which might differentiate one from the other.

They are conducting their campaigns on the purely personal basis that Walker can serve (Wall Street) better than can Waterman and vice versa.

The socialist party has taken the camouflage issue—the five cent fare—and is conducting their campaign on that basis. It is curious to note how close the socialist platform comes to Hyman's. The former advocates municipal ownership of the subways, the latter municipal control. If municipal ownership were accomplished it would have the effect of guaranteeing the profits of the present owners. Why? Because in order to take the subways over the city would have to float a bond issue and the same crew which owns them now would buy the bonds and get their profits anyway, in the form of interest on the bond loan.

The socialist party failed to make as its major issue the real problems confronting the workers, such as injunctions in strike, persecution of the foreign-born, the increase by 100% of the child laborers in the last three years alone, etc. Instead they show their confusionist character by fighting on the ridiculous camouflage issues proposed by the major capitalist parties.

## Communist Candidate.

That each of the candidates symbolizes the character of the party that nominated him can very well be seen from the above. The Workers (Communist) Party as is fit for its class character and vitality, has nominated Ben Gitlow whose "jail" record speaks for the fighting makeup of the party that he represents.

The party program has refused to take up the fake issues that the capitalist parties have set forth but have entered the campaign on a program which ought to rally large masses of the workers because it meets their everyday needs.

## Proposed Unity.

The Workers (Communist) Party has earlier in the campaign issued a call for a united labor ticket the organization of which was effectively blocked by the yellow socialists who have made it their special job to keep the workers from solidifying their ranks, even if only on particular issues. We now enter the campaign under our own banner, tho we continue our fight for a united labor ticket and a labor party. The enthusiasm displayed everywhere augurs well for the added success that we are sure to achieve during this struggle. We hope to be able to count many new members and much new support before this campaign is over.

(The complete program of the party will be printed in another issue.)

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