

The Reverend Norman Thomas Apostolic Successor of Debs

By BERTRAM D. WOLFE.

The socialist party has nominated the one-time pastor of the fashionable "Brick Presbyterian Church on Fifth Avenue" as its candidate for president. He is a fitting symbol of what the socialist party has become.

"There were no sudden movements in my life," he told a reporter. "I became a socialist gradually."

He believes there are no sudden movements in society, either. If there are, he's against them.

No Revolution for Thomas.

"Today we cannot risk world convulsions," he told the convention when nominated. "Our kids would cry for milk if there is a general upheaval and we would be apt to hear their cries. Our task is to bring a better world into being without revolutionary and catastrophic woe. It is just as easy to reach our goal walking as in a jump."

No revolutions for Norman Thomas. And if imperialist war should come and make "our kids cry for milk?" The good reverend doesn't want to see that either.

But if it should come, would he lead the masses in a revolutionary struggle against it? Or even follow them? Not he. If he cannot end imperialist war without a revolutionary struggle against imperialism, that's bad news to him. "That would be the counsel of despair," says Norman Thomas.

"When the world looks black with the menace of war, and the militarists itch for 'glory' in carnage and desolation, Norman Thomas counsels peace!" writes the New Leader. When the need of the working class is to arm itself for war against imperialist war and capitalism, "peace" is the counsel to labor offered by Norman Thomas.

No Class Struggle for Him.

The socialist party has cut out

the recognition of the class struggle from its membership application. No class struggle, either, for Norman Thomas.

The Brick Church pastor with a summer home on Shinnecock Bay on Long Island, who abhors struggle

and violence and revolution, who wants peace and socialism in the world without fighting for them, the clean, nice, gentle philistine who is in no hurry and believes "it is just as easy for us to reach our goal by walking as in a jump," the pacifist

who strengthens capitalism by telling the workers not to prepare for open struggle against imperialist war, the smug hypocrite who takes up the soiled standard of Abe Cahan, Morris Hillquit and Victor Berger, of Sigman, Schlesinger and Kaufman, of Beckerman and Shiplacoff, of class collaboration and union-smashing and betrayal—is, to use his own words, the "apostolic successor" of Gene Debs. A fitting symbol of the degeneration of the socialist party into a party of petty-bourgeois pacifism and labor betrayal.

Al Smith is the symbol of the "New Tammany" with the high hat and respectability. Louis Waldman in nominating Norman Thomas for president, declared: "I don't know of any man who will be better able to match the 'New Tammany' with the 'new socialism'." For the first time since 1917, I am compelled to agree with Louis Waldman.

Money Masters, Hear!

My cell is filled with emptiness;

No air; no sun; no friend; no book.

The hours tightly entwine their ghoulish hands

With horrible deliberation

About the neck of my mind.

My mouth burns—

Hot sands of a foul stench rubbed mercilessly on it.

My mind roars to the four corners of the globe

A hymn of hate to you.

Tombs Prison, Cell 611. April 6, 1928.