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Municipal Politics and the Revolution.

While our Empire fights for its life in Flanders, our recruiters have been shouting for theirs from trolleys in front of the Town Hall, Johannesburg, and lately, singularly enough in times so critical, the burden of their speeches seems to have been the preservation, not of England from the Hun, but of the Horse Shoe from the War on Warite. Thus Bumble and Graft in spite of all will hold their revelry amid the carnage. Thus too, in spite of all protestations to the contrary, High Politics are introduced into the Johannesburg Town Council Election.

The I.S.L., into which the "War on Warites" (blessed word, rolling all sufficient for execration over the tongue) have long since merged, has picked up the gage thus thrown, and put forward its High Politics, and its candidates representing the same, for the consideration of the electors. Indeed, it welcomed this constitutional opportunity of so doing at a time when police and roughs in concert have been endeavouring to curtail its other lawful avenues of expression.

But the I.S.L., candidates have not attempted, least of all while the Great World seems in the melting pot, to compete in the hurly-burly bidding for parish place with the usual futile promises of reforms. Excepting fidelity to their principles if returned, they have promised no benefits to the electors; rather have they appealed to the electors to benefit themselves and to rely no more on the wearisome repetitions of pledges, identical from every party at every election—showing that they are not really the issue.

War or no war, the League aspires to stand solely for the Working Class Movement, undistorted, uncompromising, incorruptible. Which means, not the claim that a few "working class representatives" should help the others to run (or ruin) the Town; that can be as efficiently done by the capitalist nominees alone—and in practice the Labour leaven has hardly made any difference.

There is a great danger lest even a "Socialist" majority on a Town Council, pitted against all the counter-attacking power of capitalism around it, and fettered by all the capitalist machinery, personnel and tradition of the Town Hall system nominally 'taken over,' may be compelled after all to surrender to its Tammany environment, so that the last state of that Municipal house would be worse than the first,—and lest the sincerity, staunchness, and cohesion of working class members of those bodies may melt away before our eyes, so long as the working class itself remains unorganised, or even as defectively organised as it still is to-day; and in South Africa, owing especially to the ostracism of non-white workers by whites, more defectively than in any other industrial community. Once the necessity of being 'saved' from the capitalistic system has, through education and propaganda, come home to the workers, the question 'What are we going to do to be saved?" is unhesitatingly answered by the I.S.L. as follows: Organise, not in Trade Unions, each fighting for its own little group alone in competition with others, and indeed ignoring the 'unskilled' and lower paid (especially the blacks) altogether, but in Unions co-extensive with the respective industries, businesses, enterprises or concerns in which their members are employed,—Unions prepared, not merely to hold up the work of each industry, but, in the fullness of time, to carry it on, to administer it, to work its plant and machinery and output, in the interest of the whole community.

And note by the way that the Johannesburg Municipality is one such concern, employing thousands of workers: as a small part of the combined Labour movement of the world, the organisation of the whole of these workers, irrespective of craft, scale of pay, or colour, but rather, if subdivision is necessary, according to Department, will be a step forward, and will encourage similar effort in other concerns. Such a proposal seems modest, of small weight against the colossal forces of modern capitslism, supported as it is by troops, the Press, the Church, and most of the better 'educated' members of Society. But it is infinitely more to the point, if our philosophy of modern society is sound, than the proposals, modest indeed to utter futility, of the ordinary candidate, whether S.A.L.P., Citizens' Ticket, Social Service League, or what not; and it would be absurd indeed for an eleetor to whom this our election policy might seem like a drop in the ocean to reject it in favour of platforms so infinitely more ineffective still that they only distract attention altogether from the great issue.

The I.S.L. candidates are not asking for support because they hanker after the sweets of office. They ask for support both as a method of propaganda and as a means of getting an indication of the number of voters who so far have grasped the far reaching significance of the problem of Modern Society, with its incurable injustices, its poverty, its tyrannies, its wars; and who are coming to understand the Socialist solution of it, and to see the hollowness of the tinkering programmes which have hitherto absorbed their attention. To vote for the I.S.L. candidates is thus to contribute your mite to the power of the Oncoming Working Class Movement of the World.

S.P.B.

Violation of Belgian Neutrality!!

We want to ask a question or two of the Labour Party and the the Recruiting Committee (seeing that that body is very free with its questions just now): what do you think of Belgian neutrality now? We are not referring to Greece, so they need not be touchy.

The point we want to make to them is that Germany has shown a desire to evacuate Belgium and France. And the S.A.L.P. at its Special Conference passed a resolution moved by no less a personage than Major Creswell himself, that the Government must state terms of peace as soon as the Germans have evacuated these territories.

How have these overtures been met? The *Rand Daily Mail*, aping its London namesake, said the other day that there must be no slackening of the war even if the Germans do evacuate Belgium. An English M P. has even declared that there can be no peace while freight trains can get through from Berlin to Baghdad. And it was only this week that the cables said, in view of a probable retirement of the German forces to the Rhine, that this would not suit the strategic plans of the Allies.

Gradually the objects of the war is coming out of the mouths of the babes on the Recruiting Committee. One said the other day, (he had that shopkeeper look which indicates a seat in the Chamber of Commerce as the summit of life's ambition), said he, "we must send more troops to Flanders in order that 'we' (that is the Chamber of Commerce) may have a say in the settlement."

Will the Labour Party then and the Recruiting Committee, seeing that they are in as close collaboration as political vote catching will allow, now tell us distinctly what they want recruits for. The restoration of Belgium can be had for the asking, (the restoration of Greece may follow); "and liberty and justice and civilization" fill no hungry bellies.

Failing a quick reply the working class will take stock of the situation, and kick out both gangs of booty hunters.