

Our First National Campaign: Interview  
with the Terre Haute *Sunday Tribune*  
(May 15, 1904)

No definite plans for the campaign have as yet been formulated and the National Executive Committee will not begin actual work until about the first of July. Then will follow the first real national campaign the Socialists have ever conducted. In the convention last week in Chicago every state was represented and every state now has an active party organization.

Since the national election four years ago there has been an unceasing propaganda of education in every part of the country and the party has now assumed national proportions, and will be recognized as the campaign proceeds as a factor in the politics of the country.

As to the plans and methods to be adopted, much will depend on the outcome of the Democratic convention at St. Louis.<sup>i</sup> It is conceded, of course, that Roosevelt will be the Republican nominee. Assuming that Parker<sup>ii</sup> will be nominated by the Democrats, I take it that there will be a decided defection on the part of the radical element of that party. The leaders of the Democratic Party are now attempting to harmonize the party organization, which, to me, appears to be an impossible task.

In the last two campaigns the radical element secured control and lost. It now seems to be clear that the conservative section will secure the upper hand and to effect as far as possible a reconciliation of the conflicting factions, a compromise candidate, or at least one who has not been prominently identified with either section, will likely be chosen in the person of Mr. Parker or Mr. McClellan.<sup>iii</sup> Allowing that this will be the outcome of the St. Louis convention, it seems quite probable that those who are demanding the nomination of Mr. Hearst will refuse to support the nominee, and that many of them will drift into the socialist movement. Then, in that case, the vote of the Socialist Party will be augmented in a degree that will prove a surprise to the country.

The St. Louis Globe-Democrat, in an editorial a few days ago, made substantially this forecast and issued notice to the politicians of both the old parties to keep their eyes on the Socialists.

Another factor of decided importance in the approaching campaign will be the decline in industrial activity. The state of industry is always a controlling influence in national politics. Four years ago industry was at high tide and the Socialist vote was comparatively small. This year the tide is running out, notwithstanding the efforts that are put forth to hold it in abeyance, and the party slogan, "Let well enough alone" will not have the effect it had four years ago, when labor generally was employed and workmen were measurably satisfied with their conditions.

Many of the large industrial enterprises, including the steel mills, the barometers of trade, are already compelled to curtail their working forces and reduce wages, the immediate effect of which will be to create discontent among the workers and this will find expression in a largely increased vote for the Socialist Party. Taking advantage of this, they will place thousands of speakers in the field.

It is always venturesome to guess in the game of politics, but I would not be at all surprised to see the vote of the Socialists run into seven figures. My personal plans are not yet arranged. I expect, however, to speak in all the important cities, closing the campaign in Terre Haute.

The candidate for the vice-presidency on our ticket is Mr. Ben Hanford, a printer in the employ of the New York Journal, and a man well enough known all over the country for his eloquence and effectiveness on the rostrum. He will make a thorough canvass.

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<sup>i</sup> The 1904 Democratic National Convention was held July 6 -10 at the coliseum housed in the old St. Louis Exposition and Music Hall. The gathering nominated Judge Alton B. Parker, a conservative, for president.

<sup>ii</sup> Alton B. Parker (1852-1926) was chief judge of the New York Court of Appeals.

<sup>iii</sup> George B. McClellan, Jr. (1865-1940), son of the famous Civil War general, was a former four term member of Congress and then currently mayor of New York City.