

# The Public

A National Journal of Fundamental Democracy &  
A Weekly Narrative of History in the Making

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## EDITORIAL

### The Socialist Triumph in Los Angeles.

We mean precisely that—a Socialist *triumph*. Socialists think of it as a triumph, and they are right. With 52,000 votes for their ticket, they may well smile at all the nervous outcries which call the election an anti-Socialist “landslide.” Those outcries sound very much like whistling up the wind. That the Socialists—with a record of only 11,000 votes at the previous election (less than 18% of the total); in the face of the startling and confusing McNamara episode; with all the business interests and “respectable” organizations fused against them, including every political group but their own; with no money themselves, but plenty on the other side; with all the newspapers but one opposing them—that this party under these circumstances should poll 52,000 votes (over 38% of the entire vote cast), is no laughing matter for the side that “won” by getting into office once more.

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### Woman Suffrage in Los Angeles.

A readjustment of the lines of opposition to woman suffrage is in order in the light of the revelations of the women's vote at Los Angeles last week. For one thing, the argument of the “anti's” that only a few women would vote has been smashed to smithereens. With 90 per cent of the women voters voting, in contrast with barely 60 per cent of the men, the argument that women wouldn't vote ceases to be an argument against

woman suffrage. Its correlative would be an argument for disfranchising men, if there were any vital principle in the argument at all. Then the liquor question! "Wets" and "drys" must change places on woman suffrage if franchise rights are to depend upon how the enfranchised will vote; for it was the votes of women that defeated prohibition in Los Angeles. Persons of democratic inclinations may be justly irritated at hearing woman suffragists plead in proof of its righteousness the fact that a great majority of the women of Los Angeles "voted right" in voting against Socialism; but this irritation is allayed by the superior attitude of Socialists who declare that their demands for woman suffrage have been for democratic reasons and are not affected by the fact that a majority of the women have voted against their cause.

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### The McNamara Case.

It is still too early to venture definite opinions on the sensational termination of the McNamara cases. Thick-and-thin partisans on either side may make the venture, for they care more for their own side than for the truth. Hired lawyers and detectives may do it, for this among other things is what they are hired for. But fair-minded and law-abiding citizens are still baffled by a sense of mystery.

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That those two men in San Quentin prison should have done what they have pleaded guilty of doing, is not yet very satisfactorily explained. That they should have done it so incautiously, with such reckless indifference to discovery as would appear, is at least curious. Why they were arrested and extradited with utter disregard of due legal process, if they were as manifestly guilty as even their own attorneys (unless Harriman be excepted) now assert, is puzzling. The willingness of some of the Big Business men of Los Angeles to impose upon Lincoln Steffens by taking advantage of his ideals of Christian Christianity is easily accounted for, of course; they had an election to win, an election involving rich business spoils. But what influence was strong enough to bring forth those pleas of guilty from men who if innocent should rather have gone bravely to the scaffold than disgracefully to prison, and who if guilty have by their queerly timed appeal for mercy committed what is the offense unpardonable in the estimation of all revolutionary conspirators since such conspiracies have been known. This disloyalty to criminal associates is loyalty to the State, but by what powerful influence were these

two conspirators brought to see it—just in the nick of time to influence an election involving financial interests far up in the millions?

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And what was it that influenced the Judge in imposing sentence? He professed to act in accordance with legal obligations, yet he sentenced a confessed murderer to life imprisonment when it was his legal obligation to sentence him to capital execution. Why did he impose the lighter sentence? From scruples against capital punishment? He gives no indication of it. From considerations of mercy? He found no grounds for that, and said so. Because the plea of guilty saved the expense of a trial? Apart from its repulsive sordidness, this course would probably be unexampled in the history of capital cases. Because the crime lacked homicidal intent and enormity? The Judge himself denounced it as viciously murderous; and in point of enormity twenty-one human lives were destroyed by it. Yet this Judge imposed the minor sentence. If he was not party to a bargain, what could his reason for mercy have been? If he *was* party to a bargain, what was the bargain?

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The District Attorney was clearly party to a bargain. What bargain did *he* make? The attorneys for the defense protest that their participation in the bargain was inspired alone by their clients' best interest. This is widely questioned, though not as yet by us. But what was the bargain they made? If they made none, why did they think a plea of guilty of murder in the first degree would conserve their clients' interests? How did they come to guess that it would appeal so effectively to the Judge as to save their clients' lives?

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The whole case hangs mysterious in the air, and it will hover there until more of the facts leak out. Meanwhile we commend a thoughtful reading of the address by labor leaders to the public, which we print in full in our News Narrative this week. In candor, poise, common sense, fairness of spirit, strength of argument, legitimacy of appeal, and all else that goes to distinguish good citizenship from bad in such a controversy, it contrasts most satisfactorily with the editorial screams from newspapers that have suppressed or emasculated it, and misrepresented its tenor. It should put the spokesmen for business as opposed to labor interests, to shame. One challenge in it, "blue penciled out" by more than one news editor in the United States, should not pass unnoticed. We