Norman Thomas Here; Talks Tonight at 8:15

"Race, Religion, and Fraternity,"
Is Subject of Prominent Socialist's Speech

Norman Thomas will speak tonight in Commencement Hall at 8:15 on "Race, Religion, and Fraternity." He has been brought to Bucknell by the Women’s Student Government Association. The meeting this evening, for which there will be no admission charge, is sponsored by the Sociological Society.

In this week’s New Yorker, Manhattan smartchat, there appears an informative and timely sketch of the famed Socialist leader’s life by Henry F. Pringle, Gotham author. In view of Thomas’ appearances here tonight, a summary of this article may prove of interest to Bucknellian readers.

"Had the Reverend Welling Evan Thomas, Presbyterian pastor of Marion, Ohio, been an obnoxious fundamentalist,” says the New Yorker, “the career of his oldest son might have been far different. On the contrary, he was a gentle and decent person who believed in a literal hell but had never seen anyone so depraved as to merit damnation. Norman Thomas grew up in an atmosphere of religious formalism which aroused little opposition because it was so passive. He went to church far too much. He knew poverty as the son of a minister with six children is certain to know it.

Was Newsboy for Harding

"He delivered copies of the Marion Star for an editor named Warren G. Harding. Yet he drifted through adolescence without rebellion, either toward revealed religion or toward poverty. Arriving at Princeton through the generosity of relatives, he proved an excellent student with a flair for debating. He studied under Woodrow Wilson, became interested in government and politics, and evolved long arguments with which to refute certain Socialist doctrines advanced by radical classmates.

"Throughout his undergraduate career he knew, without either eloquence or deep resentment, that he would carry on the work of his father and grandfather by entering the ministry. There had been a tacit understanding at home.

"Within a year or so after graduation from Princeton in 1905, he was well on the path toward the role of a fashionable young minister in a prosperous parish. His hair, now thin in front and almost white, was then brown. Early photographs show a faint trace of smugness in his face.

Assisted Henry Van Dyke

"Tall, and with the excellent carriage which he retains at the age of forty-five, he must have been an effective figure in the pulpit of the Brick Presbyterian Church where, by 1910, he was assistant to the Reverend Dr. Henry Van Dyke. Meanwhile he had been studying at the Union Theological Seminary and there, it is likely, the seeds of revolt were sown in him. He was graduated in 1911 and attracted some attention because he applied for a license after giving notice that he could not accept the Virgin Birth. The New York Presbytery took a chance and gave him his credentials despite this heresy.

"Even during the war, Norman Thomas demonstrated that he was a reasonable person. He preached pacifism before we entered, and peace by negotiation after we were in. He had courage to defend conscientious objectors. Yet he was sane enough to realize that nothing would be gained, once the country had plunged, by opposing prosecution of the war. All this was, of course, obscured by the passion of the struggle. The gentle Norman Thomas became, in the words of high officials of his Alma Mater, "the blackest blot on Princeton’s escutcheon." It was declared that never again would he be permitted to speak on the campus.

"His heresies no longer alarm Princetonians. He now finds, on the occasions when he returns, that he is tolerated, even welcomed. Classmates and members of the faculty are rather eager to be seen with him. They derive therefrom a pleasant glow of self-satisfaction, a conviction that they are truly broad-minded.

Socialist Nominee

Norman M. Thomas, of New York City, received the Socialist nomination for the presidency of the United States at the party convention in New York city. Thomas, a New York clergyman and one-time Socialist candidate for governor of the state, was nominated by acclamation.

FORMER LEWISBURG BOY FOR PRESIDENT

The following reference is to a young man who formerly resided in Lewisburg, and is a son of the late Dr. Thomas, pastor of the Presbyterian church.

"Philadelphia Socialists may draft Dr. J. Norman Thomas, of New York, as their candidate for the presidency, according to speakers at a dinner in his honor at the Stephen Girard Hotel last night. Dr. Thomas, in his speech, said that he did not want the Socialist nomination, but outlined his position on national and party issues."

NORMAN THOMAS

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