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EDITORIAL

A MILWAUKEE FLASHLIGHT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AMONG the good things the Milwaukee Idea has accomplished with its victory, there is a service it has rendered to the Movement that can not be overestimated, to wit, the service of turning the flashlight upon the noisy incubatees of the New York Socialist party Yiddish organ *Vorwaerts*.

The *Vorwaertser*, between fits, exults: "What a victory won by Socialism!" When asked: "How can *you* say 'won by Socialism'? Were not *you* only yesterday denouncing Berger as a 'hooligan'? Were not *you* only yesterday sneering at the 'Milwaukee Idea' as 'utterly contemptible,' as being an exaggeration even of 'Bernsteinism'? Were not *you* only yesterday suggesting the throwing out of Berger, and did you not do all that to the accompaniment of shrieks for the 'Revolution'? How can *you* now all of a sudden claim Milwaukee's victory as a victory won by Socialism?" And, again between fits, comes the answer: "Yes—but see that vote, that victorious vote!" The answer ranks with the foremost of involuntary confessions. It amounts to saying that "Votes are Socialism," consequently, seeing the *Vorwaertser* has none but a vanishing vote, he has neither votes nor Socialism.

Opportunists have a right to cheer over Milwaukee. We believe their cheers are premature; nevertheless, seeing the good that such a victory, named "Socialist," undoubtedly does, is certain to counterbalance all the evil that is in it and that the Movement will certainly overcome, one may not begrudge the Opportunist his gladness; one almost feels like joining. With him the hope is not unjustifiable that, with time, he will learn; with him the hope is not unjustifiable that he may prove himself material of sufficient solidity to build upon. Quite "differently and otherwise" with the *Vorwaertser*. He is sawdust and shavings: with no more weight than either: the sport of every breath, however opposite the quarter it blows from: easy to take fire, as quickly extinguished: treacherous material to build upon:—in

short, the product of “Vorwaertsian” training, which begins and ends with, Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!

The victory of the Milwaukee Idea—one would hardly have believed it—has rendered to the Movement the service of focussing the light upon the New York *Vorwaerts* as a specimen of the worst mental training imaginable: it incubates gibbering monkeys

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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