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EDITORIAL

THE LOS ANGELES CAMPAIGN.

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SHALL the Socialist rejoice to see Socialism and Victory coupled in the despatches that are flashing from Los Angeles, announcing the outcome of the municipal primaries? Or shall the Socialist grieve thereat, considering the actual facts in the case? Should the Socialist long for the completion of the Victory at the next December 5th final municipal elections, thereby expecting a strong boom for Socialism after these twenty years of labor? Or should the Socialist, weighing “profits and loss,” rather wish for the scuttling of the Victory?

The despatches announce with wondering applause that “there never was a better conducted campaign in Los Angeles” than this campaign of the Socialist party. No doubt. The mass of diversified literature issued by the S.P. headquarters in Los Angeles and samples of which this office has received, together with the systematic circulation of the same, and the large number of meetings held and speakers imported to address them, amply attests to a campaign exceptionally well conducted. Is not that cause for gladness?

Perhaps; perhaps not.

In order to conduct such a campaign moneys are needed, plenty of money. It is of the essence of the question whence the moneys came. The contents of most of the Los Angeles campaign literature suggest, aye, point to the answer.

The leading leaflet may be taken as typical. It is in behalf of the harbor of San Pedro and Wilmington. It is a technical leaflet revealing intimate knowledge of financiers’ manoeuvres. Not even remotely is a workingman’s interest touched upon. The interests that palpitate throughout are those of a set of money-investors and contractors whom other investors and contractors are crowding. This is the key note of most of the leaflets—the dead on-rush of the small bourgeois to keep their heads above water. Whence the moneys came for this leaflet and the numerous ones like

it, together with the meetings to promote them, goes without saying. The conclusion may be condensed in a few words—bourgeois finances financed the Los Angeles primary campaign of the Socialist party.

Still, it may be insisted: “What of it?” True, such a campaign is in the interest of the middle class of labor exploiters; true, it neither raises the income of the wage slaves, nor yet, and least of all, does it organize, or conduce to the organization of the wage slaves for ultimate emancipation. Nevertheless, seeing that moneys were necessary, and could be got from no other source, was it not worth the while to secure these funds, even at the price of having to do the bourgeois’ business, if, by so doing, a great and good end is attained, to wit, the coupling of “Socialism” with the word “Victory,” and thereby remove the popular impression that “Socialism” and “Defeat” are synonymous? Does not that, in the long run, and, therefore, in fact, promote the cause of Socialism by attuning the popular ear to listen, and by dieting the popular stomach to accepting the teachings of Socialism?

If this were “be all” and “end all” in the matter, the difficulty of demonstrating the fallacy of such appeals to “wider audiences” would be nigh to insuperable; being such, the attempt might be given up. But it is not the “be all” and “end all.”

The evil means do not end with their adoption. Once adopted they remain to work evil—and the brood thereof is endless—and the end of the song is the wages of sin, death. Socialism can not be promoted by corruption. Whatever is gained by such methods has to be paid for dearly. Like towns captured by fire—so won, so lost. The good is evanescent, the evil lasting, and it fastens itself upon the good, transforms the same to its own image, and breeds thereon, like the tuberculosis bacteria on the lungs that gave them shelter.

The Jesuit theory of the end justifying the means never yet wrought ought but evil. The Socialist Movement of the land has made the experience in Haverhill, Mass., where it has since been wiped out. It is making the same experience in Milwaukee and with Milwaukee’s “Old Pension Berger,” where it will likewise be wiped out. The Los Angeles campaign is casting the same shadows ahead.

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