

# DAILY PEOPLE



VOL. 12, NO. 279.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, APRIL 4, 1912.

ONE CENT.

## EDITORIAL

### THE MILWAUKEE OVERTURN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**I**T is with no sense of glee, expressed or suppressed, it is with sorrow that we contemplate the overturn in Milwaukee—sorrow that what might have been, at least, an advertisement for the name of Socialism, has, in fact, furnished the capitalist with a subject for rejoicing at the expense of the prestige of Socialism.

The Milwaukee event of the 2nd of this month was no bolt from a clear sky. It has been casting its ever darker shadow ahead of it ever since within eight months of the Social Democratic triumph of two years ago.

Within eight months of the capture of the municipality of Milwaukee in 1910, Mr. Berger was elected to Congress. The fact of election concealed the more significant fact that the Social Democratic vote sank in the Milwaukee portion of the Congressional District, and that Mr. Berger would have fallen through but for the vote given him by the milk dealers of Waukesha county, who thus carried him over the stile with the small plurality of a couple of hundred votes.

Mr. Berger's election to Congress created a vacancy in the office of Alderman-at-large. The Social Democrat candidate fell through. He was defeated by a vote smaller than Mr. Berger was elected with not quite a year before.

The third symptom came when the Board of Education was elected. Again, although the total vote cast was less than in April, 1910, the capitalist ticket came out at the top of the polls.

And now, with a total increase of about 14,000 votes, the 27,608 votes, that Seidel was elected with two years ago, receive barely one-sixth of the increase, and he and his ticket are defeated, defeated in the increasingly industrial center of the Cream City,

There is a reason—

The campaign of 1910 was conducted to the tune of lower prices—an impossibility even for a national government to accomplish except through the Revolution—an

ignoble promise for revolutionary aspirants to municipal government to make. The failure to "make good" sank deep into the proletariat's soul.

The Social Democratic administration of Milwaukee denounced the assessors of taxes for shifting the burden of taxation upon "the property of the working class." People without grasp of economics may slip on the question of indirect taxation. They may announce that the "workingman pays the taxes," and those equally without grasp of the subject may be taken in. It is otherwise on the question of direct taxation. That question offers no difficulties. The shifting of taxes by assessors can be done only against property-holders. The workingman may be mixed up upon theories: he can not be mixed up upon a fact, that is painfully experienced to be a bitter fact by him. He knows he has no property. Hence, he knows he has nothing for the assessor to play upon. Hence he realized that it was not his interests but the interests of his worst exploiter, the middle class, whom the Social Democratic administration had at heart. He realized that he was being humbugged in regulation politician style.

A third cardinally distressful performance by the Social Democratic administration took place at the time that the Board of Education was elected. The Roman Catholic candidates triumphed. The Social Democratic administration, through its press, advanced the novel theory that these Roman Catholics were not entitled to political support because they were hostile to the existing system of education. If to be hostile to the existing system of education is a reason to bar Roman Catholic candidates from application for the office, then, for the same reason should Socialists be barred from candidating for any office whatever. No doubt the Roman Catholic political machine is hostile to the existing system of education, and would revolutionize that. At the same time Socialism is equally revolutionary, only in the progressive, the opposite direction strained after by the Roman Catholic political body. The enlightened citizen will campaign and vote against the Roman Catholic polity, but no enlightened citizen, surely not one over whose head waves the redemptionary banner of Socialism, will deny to another political party the rights that it claims, and justly claims, for his own. False reasoning, lame reasoning, backward reasoning, can only be a damper upon the revolutionary spirit: can only act as a boomerang.

The above are three typical misdemeanors, misdemeanors that mark the politician, and deny the militant revolutionist, committed by the Milwaukee Social De-

mocratic administration. Instances under these three heads could be multiplied indefinitely. We shall sum up all with a cluster of two more.

Within the last six months the Milwaukee Social Democracy launched its daily—*The Leader*. How was that daily launched? It was launched like a patent medicine. BEFORE its appearance it furnished the public press with advanced notices of how it was received—how the streets were crowded with impatient would-be readers, how cars were stopped by these crowds, etc., etc. And its external appearance, ever after it was launched, has been in keeping with the fraudulency of the reports concerning the reception that it received. It was “loud”—page-wide headlines in various colors, with letters an inch large, and these interlaced with other headlines of not much smaller size. Socialist agitation, education and organization resorts, only at its own peril, to the tricks of the patent medicine fakir, or to the methods of a painted harlot, hysterically calling attention to herself along the sidewalk.

’Tis pity; and ’tis true: and pity ’tis ’tis, true that the Milwaukee overturn was inevitable—and that the good name of Socialism can only suffer by the causes and its effect.

But Socialism will survive, strengthened, in the end, by the experience.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded May 2013

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)