

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 12, NO. 269.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, MARCH 25, 1912.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

CAUSE AND EFFECT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE municipal platform of the Public Ownership party, the official name of the Minnesota organization of the Socialist party, now being used at that party's municipal campaign in St. Paul, contains this plank:

“We sympathize with the labor unions in their efforts to better the conditions of the workingman, but against the combined power of Capital their efforts are but little. The Union man must learn that only by political action as represented by the Socialist movement can he hope to fully SOLVE the labor problem.”

Of course, by “political action as represented by the Socialist movement” is meant the pure and simple political policy of the Socialist party.

Marx was not infallible. Being a human, he was liable to error. Nevertheless when an organization that flies the Socialist colors, differs from the founder of Socialism; differs from him upon so important a subject as the mission of Unionism; and expresses on Unionism views so diametrically opposed to those of Marx, as the platform plank quoted above indicates;—the least that should be expected from such a Socialist body, is the refutation of the Marxian principle, before uttering itself to the contrary.

The platform-plank, quoted above, not only does not refute the Marxian principle, it ignores, treats it with contempt, and sets up another.

Marx said: “Only the Trades Union is capable of setting on foot a true political party of Labor, and thus raise a bulwark against the power of capital.” The economic body to which alone Marx attributes the historic function of setting up the true political party of the revolution, and in which he, furthermore, sees the attribute of raising a bulwark for itself against the power of the capitalist class,—such an economic body is something quite different from the pitiable thing upon which the

St. Paul Socialist party bestows the cold shoulder of its “sympathy”; it is something quite different from the impotent thing which the St. Paul S.P. declares can do but little against the combined power of capital; it certainly is a totally different article from that which the St. Paul S.P. lectures on the necessity of its learning that only by political action can it hope to solve the Labor problem.

The reasons why the Marxian position is the correct one have been repeatedly treated in these columns; the demonstration of the fundamental error in the S.P., which the St. Paul organization echoes, has likewise been repeatedly made in these columns, showing that the S.P. is trying to hold the American Movement down to the level of the Movement in countries, where, different from this country, in which Capitalism and Socialism actually face each other, Feudal rule is not yet wholly wiped out. The St. Paul S.P. platform, issued at this season, offers the opportunity to illustrate the ill effects that flow from such harmful causes as are imbedded in the St. Paul platform.

At this very season there is at least one motion before the Socialist party for the recall of William D. Haywood from the National Executive Committee into which he was elected barely three months ago. In condensed shape the reason for the motion is that Haywood is an Anarchist. That Haywood is that, there can now be no doubt. “Direct Action” is a denial of Political Action. Not only does Haywood, with Anarchistic inconsistency and quibbling preach “Direct Action,” his recent conduct at Paine’s Memorial Hall in Boston, where, a courteous question having been courteously addressed to him, the instantaneous answer was a kick in the chest of the questioner, betrays the beastly viciousness of the monster Anarchy. This is not the Haywood of former days, when, with the dignity of a civilized man he presided over the constituent convention of the I.W.W. in 1905, which launched the body that, obedient to the Marxian principle quoted above, called upon the workers to unite on the political as well as the industrial field. It took time for the Haywood of 1905 to retro-volute into barbarism. What did the job?—the pure and simple politicianism of the S.P. as illustrated by its Bergers, its Hillquits, its Spargos, its Hunters, etc., etc., and now breathed by the St. Paul S.P. platform.

Wrong fatedly breeds the opposite wrong. There is no Vice that is not a Virtue carried to excess. The recognition of the necessity of Political Action for the over-

throw of Capitalism is a Virtue: to claim for Political Action ALONE the revolutionary agency is the Virtue carried to excess, and turned into Vice. The Vice fatedly does its work: it drives the Virtue of the recognition of the equal necessity of the Economic (Union) Action for the overthrow of Capitalism to the excess of DENYING the revolutionary agency of Political Action, and turns the latter Virtue into the Vice of "Direct Action" or Anarchy.

The Vice represented by the S.P. Officialdom turned the stomach of Haywood against the Virtue that pure-and-simple politicianism is the excess of, and twisted Haywood awry into the harmful Vice that he now incarnates.

The Socialist Labor Movement can not afford to squander its good material. The false S.P. posture regarding Unionism is the cause that a good man has been lost to the Movement.

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Uploaded March 2013

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