

Daniel De Leon

Editorial: The Mass Meeting

The monster mass meeting of Labor, held at the Madison Square Garden last Tuesday night, may justly be said to mark an epoch in the Labor Movement in this city.

Apart from the earnest tone of the speakers who championed without gloves the cause of the wealth producers, and the equally earnest tone of that mammoth audience in the reception accorded to the utterances that demanded the redress of a glaring social maladjustment, the meeting spoke volumes in other important respects.

It is not long ago when the sharpest trick of the capitalist press consisted in uttering the word "Socialism!" The effect was uniformly {sic} to frighten people away. Since the very first meeting of the Conference on the Unemployed at 26 Delancey street, the capitalist press scented mischief to themselves and in one accord shouted "Socialism!" From meeting to meeting of the Conference the shout was kept up in all manner of keys, with all manner of suggestions of falsehood and suppressions of truth. Those who attended the Conference felt cheered at the evidence that the alarum cries from the press were having a very different effect from the one intended{,} but these evidences were comparatively hidden. The mass meeting last Tuesday made these evidences public. The efforts that had been put forth to destroy the Conference were redoubled to prevent the meeting in Madison Square Garden from being a success. But the alarum cries from the boodle press had only the effect {of} recommending instead of discrediting the occasion. The mass of the workers that

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assembled there proved that the Labor Movement in this city had passed the point when it could be scared; that Socialism had ceased to be a bugaboo and had become a word to conjure by; that the masses have lost faith in their deceivers of old, and are instinctively turning to their friends with a confidence that has been well earned. The masses of the workers at the Garden were a slap in the face of capitalist boodledom. He who had eyes could reach the handwriting on the wall: “Ye have done your best to kill this meeting, oh, ye literary press prostitutes, ye have failed; ye are back numbers: the people have deserted you.”

Another very significant evidence of the meeting was the fact that the “pure and simple” leaders have no followers in the city. The insolent fellows, who themselves can not gather a meeting, had tried to bluff the Committee on Arrangements with the threat that they would “boycott” the meeting. Yet their typical speakers were either hooted down and publicly chastised, like Weissmann, or were so thoroughly cowed that they did not dare to take the platform. The mass meeting brought out into public view and into high relief the fact that the fakirs are what everybody informed on the New York Labor Movement knew before—Bluff and Wind.

Whatever the result of the meeting may be in other respects, it has been most effective in laying “ghost stories.”

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