

EDITORIAL

A PATH-FINDING MICHIGANDER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AT the State convention of the Michigan “Social Democratic,” alias “Socialist,” for short “Multi-Coca,” picturesquely known as “Pandemonium Socialist” party, held at Flint on the 28th of last month, a rare genius arose, and as geniuses generally, sat not down again until he had made his mark. The genius in question hailed from the town of Dreyden, which he represented in the convention. His name is C.J. Lamb.

It is a mark of genius that it treads not beaten paths: it finds, or carves them out. Modern society is “in the woods.” A social system is in force that pours its blessings and its curses on man in adverse ratio to his deserts: on the idler it lavishes bounties, on the toiler increase of hardships; and, while the bounties rise to dizzying heights with an ever decreasing base, the hardships sink deeper in intensity with an ever broadening area. Under such conditions social unrest must be, and is general. The cracking and the sagging of the edifice on all sides breeds uneasiness; frequently despair. Mankind is clamoring for deliverance. It is crises as this in the history of the race that give birth to the GENIUS. The present crisis in the affairs of man has not been behindhand with its precursors. It also has, at last, produced its genius. He has disclosed himself. It is the great Michigander.

Newton hit upon his great law of gravitation by the process of dropping the line of calculation he had hitherto been following unsuccessfully, and taking up a contrary one, which speedily led to success. Mergenthaler hit upon his linotype invention by stopping short on the path he had long been fruitlessly experimenting, and reversing the process with almost instantaneous success. There is probably no great discovery or invention, pregnant with the welfare of man, that has not been hit upon via this identical plan: the dropping of a line, long and unsuccessfully plodded along, and the taking up of the opposite course. And so has done the great Michigander.

Hitherto, since the reign of capitalism began to be thoroughly understood, the experiments to find for humanity the path “out of the woods” have been conducted along a certain line,—that marked out by the Socialist Labor Party. The S.L.P. reasoned that the ills that pressed the people were but the natural distemperaments that bodies social, like bodies physical, experience at all acute stages of a great evolutionary process; it reasoned that, in the evolutionary process of society, the capitalist had supplanted the feudal system, about a hundred years ago in this country, and that, to-day, the evolutionary process led to the supplanting of the capitalist with the Socialist system. The S.L.P. reasoning along that line, showed that, at each such acute evolutionary epoch, the class whose material interests were promoted by the social system next in order, was the only determining factor in finding the “path out of the woods,” and that that path lay strictly, solely and to the exclusion of all others, along the line marked out by such class interests: in this instance, the class interests of the Working Class. It followed from the S.L.P. premises that one road, and one road only, led man to Socialism. Long had the nation’s Working Class—the natural leader in this instance of the people—plodded and experimented along the Socialist Labor Party line of reasoning. Fully twelve years have they been engaged at this problem, upon that line. It must be admitted that success did not—at least not yet—crown the S.L.P. efforts. It is at this juncture that the great Michigander steps up and forth, and, Newton-like, Mergenthaler-like, in short, genius-like, calls a halt along the old line of reasoning, and—reverses the process. He said:

“If Socialism is evolutionary, it does not make much difference what we do in this convention: ALL ROADS LEAD TO SOCIALISM.”

There are those who will poke fun at Mr. C.J. Lamb’s party! There will be men impertinent enough to ask him why, if “all roads lead to Socialism,” he took the trouble of travelling the road to Flint, and did not travel the stay at home road in his own metropolis of Dreyden! There will be men wickedly inquisitive enough to inquire of him whether, seeing that “all roads lead to Socialism,” he means to suggest the primrose path of Republican and Democratic party fat political jobs! But passing by such viciously inclined folks, a grateful race will recognize the genius that furnished, as all geniuses do, an easy solution to a hitherto perplexing problem,

and hail the PATH-FINDING MICHIGANDER.

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

Uploaded September 2006