

EDITORIAL

DID MCCABE LEARN?

By DANIEL DE LEON

AT the meeting of the American Federation of Massachusetts, held on the 11th instant, a resolution against Socialism was introduced and, of course, passed by a large vote—71 to 28. Immediately James McCabe, a “Socialist party” man of Brockton, rose in his seat, called upon “all Socialists to leave the convention,” and walked out—alone. Seeing twenty-eight votes cast against the resolution, and knowing several of his party associates to be among the delegates, McCabe confidently expected support in his demonstration against the crooks’ subserviency in turning themselves into speaking tubes for the master class. He erred. He was left in the lurch by his fellow “Socialists”. Did he profit by the lesson?

It may be said that the pasteboard nature of the resolutions was of a kind calculated rather to stir the derision than to kindle the indignation of McCabe’s fellow “Socialists.” But even making allowance for that theory, it does not explain, because it does not justify the conduct of McCabe’s fellow “Socialists”. The reason must be looked for deeper down.

The Socialist party, like all organization, is a structure. Like all structure, it is built upon a theory. In the instance of the Socialist party the theory is all the more marked seeing it was framed with the express purpose in view of contrasting sharply with another theory, that was the guiding principle with another structure—the structure of the Socialist Labor Party. The S.L.P. holds that Right without Might is but a rattle with which to please children and to furnish crooks a living: accordingly, the S.L.P. sets its face against all fly-paper methods of “gathering crowds” or “votes”, it sets its cap to the organizing of the Might that shall be able to enforce the Right, and, with that object in view, it turns its attention to the organization of the bona fide Union, that is, the class-conscious economic organization of the Working Class. As a consequence of the principles from which

the S.L.P. proceeds, principles that recognize the dominant political aspect of the Labor Movement, the S.L.P. hews close to the line that there can be no political party of Labor worthy of the name unless it is grounded on an economic organization that itself is soundly revolutionary. The S.P. denied all these principles. Its theory was just the reverse. "Votes!" was its slogan; fly-paperism was its method; "all things to all men" was its device. Accordingly, it reared its proselytes in the belief that the way to accomplish the revolution was to "bore from within" only, and, consequently, to put up with any and all affront to principle lest the chance to "bore from within" come to an end. It is not the purpose here to branch off into an exposure, of the suicidal effect of such policy and of its inevitable breeding of the political grafter. The purpose here is to show that nursed at the teat of such fallacies, the proselytes of the S.P., generally, have cared little what the Union did, and kept their eyes fixed upon that worst of will o' the wisps, the ballot for Socialism unbacked by the infantry, cavalry and artillery of the revolutionary Union. Their "intellectuals", most of them running privately owned papers, set up all sort of conveniently idiotic theories concerning the banefulness of "Socialist Unions", and their conduct has been trained upon that line. Upon that theory their structure has been built. Upon a small scale we see illustrated what that theory leads to when a McCabe, catching the higher inspiration, calls upon "the Socialists in the convention" to leave the hall with him, and is left in the lurch by them.

May McCabe learn, and, through McCabe, the Working Class of the land. The future is not determined by fatalism. The future is determined by men. Men, drilled to the principles that the "intellectuals" have reared the S.P. by, will, at the critical moment that is approaching for the people of this country, leave the revolution in the lurch, as McCabe was left.

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

Uploaded October 2008

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