

Daniel De Leon

Editorial: The Vote in New York

We publish on the 3rd page the tabulated official returns of the Socialist vote in this State. That table is an official confirmation of the most palpable fraud so far committed upon the suffrage of the worker; nevertheless, even so the Socialist Labor Party alone comes out of the contest with tangible growth.

While, when compared with last year's poll, the "victorious" Republicans fell off 10 per cent., the Democrats 20 per cent., the Prohibitionists 10 per cent., and while the Populists gained only a paltry 620 votes, i.e., a little over 3 per cent., the Socialists rose to 20,034, i.e., they scored a positive increase of 2,078 votes, or over 11 per cent. more than was polled last year for their presidential ticket.

When examined, this vote is found to be distributed in a most promiseful proportion. Its bulk is cast outside of New York City. Here it amounts to 7,975; outside of the city it is 12,059. New York City being the metropolis, where the wage-slaves are found most numerous and concentrated; casts a vote in the proper ratio, while the rest of the State, covering less thickly populated centers, and yet containing the bulk of our total population, rolls up a vote of 5,000 in excess of that of the metropolis. Such a vote is, in the matter of its distribution, truly representative, it reflects the actual, economic complexion of the State; it is a spontaneous, not an artificially produced manifestation.

There is another reflection that the vote suggests. The Populist party set up its ticket in this State for the first time last year; the Socialist Labor party had been in the field two

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years earlier and had by that time risen to 14,561; that move of Populism in this State seemed in opposition and hostility to the Socialists; it seemed out of keeping with the protestations of men, who invoked harmony, and who asserted their sympathy with Socialism, that, instead of solidifying the ranks of a party, unquestionably of the workers, and already in existence, they should set up another. The explanation, if not the excuse, given for this was, "It is easier to reach the masses on the 'People's' party platform than on that of 'Socialism': you cannot get people to listen to you if you talk 'Socialism' by that name, but they will listen to 'Socialism' under another name; progress will be too slow under the avowed name of 'Socialism'; it will be rapid under the more palatable name of 'People's' party." In vain it was to argue against this position that a great historic and revolutionary movement, like the one that was now ploughing through society, cannot progress under false colors; that the forces it needs for success must be vigorous and self-respecting, while those it caught with molasses would surely lack these necessary characteristics; that it was necessary to present to the masses a full and correct programme, while an imperfect and incorrect one could never draw; and finally that, to stand upon any but the outspoken platform of Socialism was to disconnect the Movement in America from the Movement throughout civilization and thereby to hamstring it. These arguments were of no avail. Our Populist friends in New York stuck to their belief that quicker success would crown the labors expended on their line, and they sailed into the campaign.

Experience should be a teacher to which all should hearken; and figures have a sort of unquestionable eloquence about them. With all the noise that Populism was making in the West, last year's Populist ticket in this State was only 16,429, while the Socialist vote was 17,956, or 1,527 more. Nor was that an accident; history repeated itself this year with greater emphasis. The Populist vote was 17,049, while the Socialists rolled up 20,084, i.e., 2,985 more!

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It is to be hoped that those among our New York Populist friends, who sincerely believed they could move faster under the Populist name, and whose affiliations are with that wing of Populism in the West that is now seceding from the People's party, that is dropping the silver craze and is holding Socialist language, as Gov. Lewelling of Kansas, may soon put an end to the unseemly sight of divided Socialist forces in this State, and, joining hands with us, give the Movement the aid of their ability, and push it on irresistibly to victory.

The People, Vol. III, No. 39. Sunday, December 24, 1893

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*A De Leon editorial transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the
Official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.*

Uploaded October 2002