

EDITORIAL

THE HOMAGE THAT VICE PAYS TO VIRTUE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ON the 8th of this month a gathering took place in Omaha, Neb., that called itself a “State Convention of Socialists.” The element there convened was the Prof. Kharas “Socialist” Element, sufficiently known to readers of the DAILY PEOPLE. This element, one that could never have gained admission to the Socialist Labor Party by reason of its perverse ignorance and inveterate corruption, and which, as a matter of course, has ever denounced the S.L.P., gave on that occasion once more the lie to the claims of its whole set.

That element has ever claimed that they were as Socialist as the S.L.P.—but. They did not deny that the S.L.P. earnestly and honestly and unflaggingly aimed at promoting Socialism. Only the craziest or most drunk of the lot have ever presumed to deny that: But—Their “but” was to the effect that the “intolerance,” “narrowness,” “vindictiveness,” etc., etc., of the S.L.P. had rendered it so “repulsive to the masses” that the American people would none of it. It is in view of this theory and with this pretence that the Kangaroo Social Democracy set itself up. The said convention at Omaha was made up of the Nebraska contingent of this gentry.

What, in view of these premises, would one expect to have seen done at Omaha? That the conventionists should do all in their power to escape being taken for the S.L.P.? Well, that, indeed, would have been their conduct if they themselves believed what they claimed against the S.L.P., in short, if they were honest. Knowing themselves, however, for what they are, they took a different course. While fraternizing with the Worcester, Mass., and Hoboken, N.J., organizations of their party that allowed their members to run upon capitalist tickets, while full of love and affection for the organization of their party in Haverhill, Mass., that tolerated and approved the voting of appropriations for Armories; while bursting with admiration for the San Francisco, Cal., organization of their party that begged and accepted political jobs from capitalist politicians; while full of admiration for the New York organization of their party that repudiated the class struggle in the Paris

Congress; while approveful of their party confreres everywhere who whoop it up for the labor fakers in the nefarious work of acting as lieutenants of the capitalist class in the pure and simple Unions;—while thus animated and thus internally accentuating the broad, deep, and radical distinction between a bogus Socialist body and the Socialist Labor Party, the Omaha “Socialist” convention did all it could to assume the external appearance of the S.L.P.: it assumed as its emblem the well known emblem of the S.L.P.,—the ARM AND HAMMER!

Vice can never fail to render homage to Virtue. When it least expects to, it does the thing. The conduct of the Kangaroo Social Democrats in the Omaha convention demonstrates that they fully appreciate the respect enjoyed by the S.L.P. Of course, they also demonstrate their own stupidity when they thus forget the fate of the jackdaw that strutted in borrowed feathers, or of the donkey that donned a lion’s skin.

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

Uploaded June 2006