

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 9, NO. 26.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JULY 26, 1908.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

NOT SENTIMENTALISM, SENSE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THAT is happening to the Preston presidential ticket that happened to Socialism itself, and that Socialism had to combat—the popular impression that it is a sentimental proposition.

It is not opposition but misplaced sympathy that a serious movement has really to combat against. Downright opposition invigorates; misplaced sympathy harms.

The notion, at one time prevalent, that Socialism was a sort of angelically millennial aspiration did much towards shutting the popular ear against it. Man's common sense renders him impatient towards all that is merely sentimental. The millennium is desirable, very desirable, but millennialists are moon-calves, and their sentimentalism is not hearkened. Against this false, though not hostile impression, Socialism had to beat its way. Not until the fact got a footing that Socialism, however objectionable to some, was a matter of hard reasoning, did or could Socialism gain a hearing. From that moment on it progressed.

It is so with Preston's nomination.

The circumstance that he is a young man, the circumstance that he is wrongfully imprisoned, the circumstance that his alleged crime consisted in an intrepid stand against a murderous assault, will these circumstances, together with others of kindred import, combine to impart to the act of the Socialist Labor Party, in nominating Preston for President, the aspect of a purely sentimental move.

Nothing was further removed from the mind of the S.L.P. convention than sentimentalism. It was not Preston, the VICTIM, it was Preston the intrepid PICKETMAN that the S.L.P. took and set up. In so doing the S.L.P. took and set a cardinal principle of Socialism and Socialist tactics.

The act of the S.L.P. was a logical sequence of the Party's principles. Without the economic organization of Labor, sufficiently ready to "move in" and seize the

reins of rule, the day of the political victory of Socialism would be the day of its defeat. A social crash would happen out of which something closely akin to Ignatius Donnelly's brutal Caesar would emerge. The economic organization of Labor, the Union, for short, is the embryo of Socialist society. It is the Union, and not the political organization of Labor that is the root which the Co-operative Commonwealth of the future is casting, in the soil of capitalist society. It follows that the Union must be the prime thought of the Socialist, especially in a country like America, where nothing but capitalism confronts Socialism. Anything that endangers the Union places Socialism in jeopardy.

In the person of M.R. Preston, imprisoned, the Union is threatened. In the person of M.R. Preston, in prison, aggressive Unionism is represented.

No sentimentalism but sound reason directed the Socialist Labor Party convention in picking out for its presidential standard-bearer the man who, being on picket duty for his Union, was murderously assaulted by the picketed employer, shot him dead, and was "convicted" by a drum-corps jury.

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

Uploaded March 2010

slpns@slp.org