

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 1, NO. 175.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1900.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## S.L.P. VOTE IN THE NATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he Socialist Labor Party vote, as finally ascertained and announced in these columns, is 34,191. These figures are about 2,000 below the mark reached at the previous Presidential contest,—the only contest by which the national strength of the Party can be gauged. Comparing these naked figures in a superficial way, there would seem to be a loss registered. Upon broader inspection, the figures register progress.

Anyone familiar with the comparison of figures knows how misleading such comparisons are if limited to a short period. Such limited comparisons are a favorite device of capitalist jugglers with statistics. The law that underlies figures is in that way frequently turned into a caricature. This notably happens with the statistical computations by the aid of which official economists try to conceal the law of values. Socialists know that, in order to ascertain this law, the comparison must extend through a period long enough to take in and to neutralize perturbing influences. The same principle applies to inquiries intended to establish the law of motion that underlies a political party of Revolution. To ascertain whether the Presidential vote of the Socialist Labor Party this year registers progress or decline, a period covering more than four years is needed. Indeed, no correct conclusion can be reached without extending the period for comparison back eight years. Only by doing that, can the effect of recurrently perturbing influences be measured, and thereby enable an opinion regarding the Party's law of motion to be formed.

In 1892 and in 1900 the Socialist Labor Party encountered in its course a perturbing force that did not exist in 1896, and that marks out those two Presidential years as the real epochs for comparison.

In '92 the Populist Movement surged up. It is well-known that its immediate effect was to sweep out of existence a number of the Socialist Labor Party organizations. They proved themselves just so much rubbish. The Populist Movement claimed to be Socialistic, if not Socialist. Many an individual in the Party

had joined without being grounded in Socialism; and the sentimentality that had prompted their conduct kept them from learning, after they were in. To all these, Populism was sympathetic; it attracted them by natural affinity; and over they went, the exodus being greatly aided by the breezes that rose from the Democratic press, which, justly scenting in Populism danger to the Republican party, proclaimed Populism as the "Socialism of America." Under these adverse, doubly adverse conditions, the Party came out of the Presidential fray of '92 with 21,157 votes.

In all essential particulars the conditions that confronted the Party this year were the same as those of '92, with this important difference that, in 1900, the difficulties of '92 reappeared in an immensely aggravated form. It lies in the nature of things that the more likely a lie sounds the greater are its chances of success. It is the same as with false coin. The counterfeit received from a stranger may be scrutinized, while that received from a reputed friend has all the chances of being accepted without examination. The political lie about Populism being Socialism could fetch only the least guarded; this year's political lie, however, about the Social Democracy being Socialism was infinitely more insidious: it proceeded from sources whose previous connection with the Socialist Labor Party gave it a color of truth; when thereto was added the preposterous Kangaroo lie of the "Socialists being united" under the Debs hat, and the never paralleled support given to the lie by the Republican press, a conception may be formed of the greatly increased vehemence of the '92 gale, encountered in 1900. All this notwithstanding, the Party polled this year 34,191 votes, or a clear gain of over 13,000!

At all points there is a close parallel between social and biological phenomena. In biology, there is no growth except at the cost of infinite tests of strength. At this season, overhead, there shines in the midnight sky the brilliant constellation of Orion. In its three-gemmed Belt a fierce conflict is in progress. Meteors of great body are whirling around it. The attractive force of these are disintegrating from the Belt all the elements of less adhesive qualities. But the meteors themselves are undergoing their test. They, too, are losing and yielding to the Belt whatever is of less affinity with themselves and of greater affinity with the stars. This exchange presents the aspect of a shower of fire. And the turmoil will continue until the stronger, because more logical, of the two has wholly disintegrated the weaker. The victory is assured to Orion's Belt: the meteors are dissolving.

What the Belt of Orion is to-day in the biologic evolution of the starry host, the

Socialist Labor Party is in the sociologic evolution of politics in the land. Political meteors of varying power are periodically rushing within its radius of attraction, meaning its destruction, testing its strength, absorbing elements from, yet adding power to it, while themselves disintegrating. One such fierce meteor whirled around the Socialist Labor Party in '92, and went to pieces; another is now circling the Party's path, and already crumbling, obedient to the law that has but death for the incohesive in principle as in matter.

In the midst of this hurly in the nation's political formations, readily yielding all that is alien and quickly absorbing all that is kindred, the political constellation of the Socialist Labor Party moves onward on its track, ever sounder, ever stronger, ever fitter to achieve the man's work of its mission.

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

**Uploaded October 2005**