

EDITORIAL

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 10TH NAT'L CONVENTION OF THE S.L.P.

By DANIEL DE LEON

BEFORE us lies a neat 325-paged book—"Proceedings of the Tenth National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party, held in New York City, June 2 to June 6, 1900. Stenographically reported by B.F. Keinard"—just issued by the Party's literary agency, the Labor News Company. Even if the publication contained nothing more than strictly the stenographic minutes of that memorable convention, it would be of high value to the careful student of our political development. But the publication goes further. It contains an appendix, in which are inserted numerous documents of deep historic interest to the Party, with an eye particularly on the momentous events that were crowded into the narrow span of about a year and a half, and closing with the meeting of the Convention. By the light of these documents the transactions of the S.L.P. National Convention of 1900 become luminous.

But it is not alone upon the transactions of the Convention itself the report and appendix throw light. The publication explains not the past only; it explains the present also; it thereby foreshadows the future.

By the light of this important document, upon which subsequent events in turn throw light, the roots and rootlets can be traced of the present lusty tree of the S.L.P.; the shoots it dropped, and why it dropped them, stand out bare to the eye; the shoot it took, and why, stands out pronounced; the tree can now be classified without the risk of error, and thereby the fruit it will eventually bear may be safely foretold.

Particularly seasonable is the document at this time, when the Movement in Europe—too long run upon the primitive lines of fatuous trust in Fate—is now convulsed by the throes of travail of a genuine practical revolutionary organization, and

not merely a sentimental revolutionary mob; when the Movement in Europe—too long run upon the lines of lip-service—is now reforming upon lines of sincerity; when the Movement in Europe—too long run upon the lines of dogma—is now reconstructing upon scientific bases, thoroughly understood. What the Movement in Europe is experiencing and undergoing now, the Movement in America experienced and underwent in the course of 1899. The report of the National Convention of the Socialist Labor Party of America—as more than one historic American document has done all along in the Nation’s history—, serves to elucidate, not only an historic epoch in the Nation’s swiftly marching development, but the lagging historic epochs in the tardier march of European development.

The motto of the day is tersely uttered in this week’s citation at the head of this column:¹ No Socialist organization is worth the name of either “Socialist” or “organization” that is not animated by it. The volume containing the report of the proceedings of the S.L.P. convention of 1900, together with the appendix attached thereto, is a symphony to Balzac’s great text.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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¹ [“Tolerance corrodes the noblest hearts; it eats away their pride, destroys the active principle of great exploits and makes of mental cowardice a sacred thing. By exacting this pliability of conscience from everybody, certain people seek to obtain absolution for their own treachery and backsliding.”—Balzac.]