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EDITORIAL

OUR THANKSGIVING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE affirmation by the United States Circuit Court of the sentence against Fred Warren, Socialist party man, has been promptly followed by Warren's nomination for President in 1912 by a Socialist party organization in Delaware.

This is well; it means progress on the part of the S.P.; it is cause for thanksgiving.

Two years ago the Socialist Labor Party, in national convention assembled, nominated for President Morrie Preston, then as now, in a Nevada penitentiary. The sentence was for alleged murder.

Preston, on picket duty for his Union, and assaulted with a deadly weapon by the employer against whose economic and civic crimes the Union was on strike, shot his assailant dead. If the killing of an employer, who brandishes a deadly weapon, by a picketman is murder, then picketing must be a criminal offense. If picketing is a criminal offense, then the strike itself must be criminal. If the strike is a criminal act, then Unionism is a rattle to entertain the fatuous, and the Cause of Labor's emancipation a scheme, against human Progress.

The S.L.P. nomination, accordingly, was not an endorsement of murder. Far otherwise, and to the contrary. It was an emphatic repudiation and condemnation of murder. It amounted to a verdict, eventually, probably soon to roll over this country in notes of thunder against the murder-abetting Court procedure that sentenced the MAN, and the civilization-throttling Court procedure that sentenced the PRINCIPLE of the Socialist or Industrial Republic.

This notwithstanding, the S.P. press, echoing the natural enough bourgeois outcry over the "nomination of a murderer for the seat once held by Washington," "tucked up its skirt" and "turned up its nose" at the S.L.P. presidential nominee;

“passed by on the other side”; and even went the lengths of causing at least one Socialist paper abroad to condemn the S.L.P. for “nominating a murderer.”

Only a little more than two years later we see a nomination for President issue from that identical S.P. camp in behalf of another “convict.”

Warren had circulated envelopes bearing in red letters a money offer for the capture of a bourgeois politician then under indictment for murder, and in hiding. Conviction for such an act is a perversion of the letter and the spirit of the Law. It is the raising of a principle that makes directly for the overthrow of a free press. Warren’s nomination for President is, accordingly, an echo of the S.L.P. presidential nomination of 1908.

True, the echo is faint. Between a sentence of a few months’ imprisonment, together with a thousand-and-odd dollar fine, for the alleged violation of a postal regulation, and a life-sentence for alleged murder, the difference is considerable. There may be those who may think the difference so considerable as to allow no parallel. Perhaps so. To indignate over a lesser wrong, involving a lesser principle, often is a manoeuvre whereby to escape the obligation to indignate over a greater wrong involving so great a principle that the indignation places a serious burden on the indignant. Nevertheless, proceeding from the principle that between “convict” and “convict” the difference is only shadowy, the suggestion of a “convict” by the of-capitalist-journalism-beloved S.P. for President is cause for applause. It is an act that may, perhaps, possibly, mature into that full Socialist virility which, regardless of appearances, regardless of bourgeois condemnation, takes its stand squarely upon proletarian interests.

For the evidence of the possibility of such progress that may yet bring the S.P. abreast of the S.L.P., and thereby disinfect the name of Socialism in America from the bourgeois microbe of Bourgeois Respectability, the S.L.P. this day gives thanks.

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