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EDITORIAL

The Haverhill Incident.

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A party—carrying the word “Socialist” as part of its name, and with a platform taken substantially from that of the Socialist Labor party—, has recently sprung up in Haverhill, Mass., and virtually carried the city, electing its Mayor and several other municipal officers. A stranger, unacquainted with men and things in this country, would, if a capitalist, take alarm, and, if a Socialist, be filled with joy at the occurrence. Both would have been wrong in this particular instance: indeed, the capitalist class, through its press, has shown every thing but alarm; while the Socialists throughout the land have been filled with everything but joy.

The official name of the victorious Haverhill party, as well as its Socialist platform, is a piracy committed by a few political adventurers, who have for some time been trying to be wafted into notoriety and office. They used every “reform” movement that had come along, and finally appeared in the paint and feathers of Populism, preaching all the absurdities and indulging in all the tinsel of that movement. Success for their sordid ambition seemed certain, but the bubble burst, and adventurers were once more stranded.

Long before the tide of Populism had ebbed in the West, it dropped from its high promises in the East, Massachusetts particularly, and there remained above the waters the Socialist Labor party alone,—growing out of small beginnings, radiating in all directions, winning friends by its soundness and integrity, overthrowing foes by its vigor. The Haverhill coterie of political adventurers promptly changed coats. The word “Socialism,” thitherto sneered at as un-American, the Socialist platform, thitherto denounced as preposterous, had shown to have that in them that none of the movements that had come up seemed to possess. They adopted both its name and platform (although in Haverhill itself they go by two or three other and less offensive names) and, possessed of the necessary low cunning, they succeeded in drawing to themselves a sufficient following to gain both notoriety and office.

That the leaders of the misled Haverhill workingmen, who voted them into office,

are no Socialists; that they have only caught a few phrases with which they strut about like the Jackdaw in the fable with the stolen peacock feathers; that, indeed, they are of the common genus of "reform" adventurers,—all that is now made clear enough by their post-election utterances, and will be made still clearer in the near future to those who yet can not see. To those with eyes, however, the character of the Haverhill "Democratic Socialist," "Social Democratic," "Independent Citizens Reform," etc., etc., party have for some time been known. Three facts some time ago stamped it what they are.

In the first place, Mr. James F. Carey, one of the leaders, and elected last year Councilman, is, by the unanimous accord of his Democratic and Republican colleagues, forthwith made President of the body. Democrats and Republicans may not know much, but they surely have the instinct of all animals: they can tell whom to trust and who endangers their existence. They scented safety in Mr. Carey. A Socialist never could have accomplished the feat that Mr. Carey did; a Socialist never would have had distinction, and, thereby increased power bestowed upon him by the politicians of Capital.

The second fact attested to the unerringness of the scent of those capitalist politicians. Barely a few months in office, when a bill turned up for an appropriation of \$15,000 for an Armory, Mr. Carey voted for it, and his "Socialist organization" allowed the act to go by unreprieved, did not demand his prompt resignation for such treason to the working class!

The third fact preceded the second and was preparatory thereto: Mr. Carey withdrew from the Socialist Labor party, of which he was a member, and on whose platform he was elected, and thus freed his hands for the peculiar "reforms" that he had in mind.

In view of all this the mystery is explained of the joy of the capitalist press at the success of the Haverhill "Socialists": it is in the interest of capitalism, particularly at this season of sound Socialist growth, to seek either to smirch the name of Socialism or cause the American proletariat to be decoy-ducked away from the S.L.P. camp whither they are evidently tending. In the latter case, the lightning will be run into the ground, a successful bogus Socialist party would be a valuable political lightning-rod; in the former case, the workingmen may be so disgusted at the treason or incapability of "Socialist" officers as wholly to throw up the sponge of resistance.

But neither case will happen. The vigorous repudiation of the "Democratic Socialism" of Haverhill on the part of the S.L.P. will break the lightning in two, and will also free the S.L.P. of all responsibility for the pranks and the wrongs of the

Haverhill victorious candidates. Eventually, if not sooner, and starting with Haverhill itself, the proletariat will realize that its party must be a party, not of irresponsible political pirates, but the well-knit Socialist Labor party of the land.

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

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