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FIRST EDITORIAL

Down Went McCullagh.

By DANIEL DE LEON

The New York Chief of Police, who presumed to interfere with the freedom of action of a political party—the S.L.P.—, as known to our readers, is no more. In the language of the resolutions adopted at the Cooper Union on Monday, the 16th instant, he was morally and intellectually unfit, as well as menace to the peace of the city and the freedom of the people. Last Saturday he was removed.

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This incident is worth closer contemplation. It was a relative of this identical McCullagh, an uncle of his, we believe, who some fifteen years ago distinguished himself by a savage performance of Socialist clubbing. The act was applauded. Such deeds served at that time as means for promotion, at least for becoming solid, and certainly as a cure for and cover of official malfeasance. The Cooper Union meeting may be thought by some to have been excessive in its denunciation of McCullagh as “intellectually unfit.” His conduct proved the justice of the charge. His intellect is of such a low grade that he does not know, and, consequently, did not take into account, the changes that have taken place since his uncle’s performance. The nephew argued, “My uncle profited fifteen years ago by outraging the Socialists; I am just now in hot water; if I now outrage the Socialists again, I also shall profit.” And he did do the outrage,—with the result that he is now dumped. With the mental weakness, characteristic of all such people, he did not consider that, since his uncle’s prowess, the Socialists have developed into a recognized political party in this State, and that, what could be done with total impunity fifteen years ago, becomes to-day an infinitely more difficult and more dangerous affair. McCullagh has found out that.

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Of course, we form no illusions on the score of his successor. We are well aware that, notwithstanding the declaration of the Mayor, on the day of McCullagh’s removal, that he would “tolerate no infringement of the rights of the citizens,” evidently alluding to high-handed proceedings against the S.L.P., from the Mayor down, there is no capitalist politician who would not be ready to infringe any and all

the rights of the working class, provided he thinks he can do so with impunity, and his class interests require it. But this stands out: Right, without might to enforce it, is less powerful than the virgin in the night. McCullagh's punishment might not have come but for whatever power the S.L.P. now enjoys; but neither is the S.L.P. after "punishments," nor, and much less, after such "punishments" that throw down one evil by setting up one quite as capable of the same crime. Its aim is the overthrow of a Social Wrong by the setting up of a Social Right; the overthrow of the Capitalist Class and the enthronement of the Working Class. To accomplish this Might is needed.

Agitate, educate, organize, to the end that McCullagh's fate be a symbol and forerunner of that of the whole Capitalist Class!

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

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