

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 2, NO. 130.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1901.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE EUROPEAN “ANARCHIST” AND THE AMERICAN KANGAROO.

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A STUDY of the initial election returns throws much light upon the “Kangaroo Social Democrat,” or “Kangaroo,” for short. By coupling this study with a study of the “Anarchist” on his European native heath, the two apparitions will be thoroughly understood. The importance of the study lies in that it points unerringly the tactics and the spirit that must guide the Socialist or Labor Movement in its struggle to abolish the Capitalist or Wages System of Slavery.

What the “Anarchist” is in Europe was well summed up in the passage recently quoted in these columns from the Illinois *Staats-zeitung*. That German capitalist paper, with its intimate knowledge of European matters, counseled the State to “rear the Anarchist insect in the nests of Socialism to devour the Socialist eggs.” The summary tells substantially the history of European “Anarchy.” “Anarchy” knows it cannot build up: constructive powers do not lie latent in a negation, least of all when the sole moving spring of the negation is hatred, malevolence and envy. The European “Anarchist,” accordingly, turns his whole effort towards destroying. But destroying what? The Capitalist System? No! Such destruction, being constructive in its nature, implies virility. Hatred, malevolence and envy are attributes of degeneracy. The degenerate never tackles the strong: he tackles the weak. Capitalist Society being powerful, he leaves it substantially alone: the camp of Socialism, having to be raised under the fire of the enemy, is exposed and substantially weak. The Anarchist, accordingly, turns his face against Socialism. The tactics he adopts flow inevitably from such premises; it is defamation. The dust of confusion, mistrust and hopelessness that he raises, checks the growth of Socialism; it has often nullified Socialist propaganda. Such is the species “Anarchist” as well known in Europe. If the initial election returns in this city are studied, together with the “agitation” conducted by the “Kangaroo,” the identity of

the European “Anarchist” and the American “Kangaroo” become obvious, strikingly so. The fact is brought out best by the figures and facts in the 16th Assembly District.

In that District, thanks to a lavish, deep and far-reaching agitation, carried on by the Socialist Labor Party, the straight Party vote rose in 1898 to 1,214. Nor was that all. That year the Party had drawn to itself a large sympathetic vote. Over 1,000 voters, not yet wholly divorced from the old habits of thought, still cast their vote for one or other of the capitalist candidates for Governor (the head of the ticket), fearing they would “lose their vote” if they voted for the S.L.P. candidacy, but gave their suffrage to the Party nominee for the Assembly, feeling that the chances of carrying that office were within reach. The 2,223 votes thus polled by the S.L.P. candidacy for Assembly was an unmistakable indication of the setting of a strong current towards Socialism. Within a year the “Kangaroo” made his appearance and initiated a virulent “agitation” against the Socialist Labor Party and in favor of a new party that he set up, the Social Democracy. To-day, after three years of its “agitation,” the election returns eloquently characterize the concern for what it is. The Socialist Labor Party vote of three years ago (1,214) has come down this year to a little over 600; the sympathetic vote, 1,009, has likewise been halved,—and, where did the difference go? Did that difference go to the “Kangaroo”? No! And this is the point. The same Hanford, who as the S.L.P. candidate for Governor in 1898, polled in the District, 1,214 votes, polled there this year, as the head of the Kangaroo ticket, barely 250 votes, even accepting as correct the *Volkszeitung* returns that experience has shown are habitually forged to keep up the courage of its dupes. In other words, the bulk of the difference, fully 350, dropped away; and the showing of the poll for the Assembly shows a still greater melting away. The “Kangaroo” is incapable of construction; he knows that; his “agitation” proves it; the word of mouth part is slander, the printed portion is a collection of lampoons. The insect American “Kangaroo” attests at all points his kinship with the European “Anarchist”: the one and the other are there for the exclusive purpose of destroying; their make-up is identical.

In view of this, the tactics and the spirit that must guide the S.L.P. are obvious. The Party must reckon with the ability of the capitalist class to raise the insect “Kangaroo” in the nests of Socialism in America, the same as that class raises the insect “Anarchist” in the nests of Socialism in Europe. The masses, disconcerted by the ribald noise raised by the “Kangaroo” are affected in only one way. They will

never take to the “Kangaroo”: they are too clear-sighted for that: they can see through the insect: they will give him a wide berth: but they will become confused: “the Socialists are divided,” they will cry, and will drop out altogether disheartened:—and the capitalist, through his “Kangaroo,” will have accomplished his purpose.

This feature of the returns in New York, coupled with such returns as those from Cleveland, O., where the “Kangaroo” was smashed, point out the course to pursue:—an unflinching posture of uncompromising agitation and education. Kangarooism has demonstrated, even to those who thought better of it, that it is capable only of destroying; it can never construct. Only an uncompromising agitation can finally succeed in imparting such thorough and general information as will tonic the masses against the insects that Capitalism will periodically rear and let loose against Socialism.

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

Uploaded July 2006