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EDITORIAL

THE HAVERHILL CAMPAIGN.

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THE vote polled by Flanders, the mayoralty candidate in Haverhill, Mass., of the party there called “Socialist” and elsewhere “Social Democratic,” has given fresh opportunity for the spokesmen of that concern throughout the land to go into renewed ecstasy. Flanders came near being elected, polling over 2,000 votes, fully 1,000 more than his regular Democratic, and but a few less than his Republican, competitor. Whatever occurrence falls in line with the facts previously gathered and that are the premises of a theory, is welcome to the observer. In this sense the Flanders vote is a good subject to send also the Socialist Labor Party man into ecstasy. It reinforces the conclusions of the Socialist Labor Party when it pronounces its “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, adversary a bogus Socialist party, capable only of inviting disaster.

What were the methods employed in the Flanders campaign? Evidently furnished with an abundance of money—in itself cause for grave suspicion—the Haverhill “Socialist” campaign managers bought large advertising space in the *Gazette* of its town, and boomed Flanders in regular patent medicine style, both in point of the contents of the advertisement and in point of the size of the typography. One of these advertisements, spread across the paper in big type, was typical of the whole affair. It read this way:

“The election of Flanders is conceded,—MAKE IT A MAJORITY.”

Pause and contemplate:

There is a vast quantity of thoughtless voters. Some of them are men who look upon election as a looker-on at a race does at the races. Others of these are folks of no convictions, consequently, of weak moral stamina: these ever wish to be “on the winning side,” nothing sickens this class of people so much as to find themselves “on the losing

side.” The line of demarcation between the two is hard to draw. Certain it is that the two are types of an utterly unreliable element. In campaigns where the issue is, at best, a “reform” it matters little whether the candidate elected was boosted over the stile by the votes of such as these. In campaigns, however, where the issue is a revolution, a class revolution, it obviously does matter greatly by whose efforts the revolutionary candidate comes into power. Is he raised there on the shields of men who know what he stands for and want it, who mean he shall execute what they want, and who will know the reason why if he fail. If so, the revolution is safe. Is he, on the contrary, swept into power by thoughtless folks, who neither know nor care for what he represents, who will not hold him to his programme, who may even go back upon him and leave him in the lurch if he proceed to execute it? If so the revolution has shipwrecked. Obviously, none more anxiously than the bona fide Socialist will watch the element by whose efforts his candidate is supported: he will go the full length of abstaining from lures and stampede-producing methods, he will resist such methods. Obviously, again, the party that claims to be Socialist and deliberately indulges in such devices is either feather-brained or is run by scamps. It is either feather-brained in that it plays with fire and will bring on a conflagration that will consume it and its followers; or it is run by scamps in that they but seek promotion and care not on whose shoulders they step to get it. “The election of Flanders is conceded—make it a majority” was a campaign slogan in Haverhill that fully characterizes the party that used it as BOGUS SOCIALIST.

Whether honest or dishonest—that matters little in this connection—the Bogus Socialist party, alias Social Democracy, is to be avoided, and closely watched. Disaster is the only fruit possible from that tree. It would be disastrous if it is allowed, through its possible scampishness, to bury the fair name of Socialism under the stigma of a patent medicine swindle; it would be disastrous if it is allowed, through its possible well-meaning ignorance, to bury the Socialist Movement of the land in an American Pere Lachaise ditch.

The men to be attracted to Socialism must be attracted upon its merits. No patent medicine devices will stand. In the midst of the turmoil created by capitalist political methods, come the political methods of the Bogus Socialists, creating infinitely more confusion.

All the firmer, all the steadier, all the more spirited must be the posture of the Socialist Labor Party. All honor to the stalwart handful in Haverhill that were not carried off their feet but stuck firmly to the S.L.P. colors.

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