

EDITORIAL

## DID THE S.L.P. MIGRATE TO OKLAHOMA?

By DANIEL DE LEON

**E**LSEWHERE in this issue will be found two interesting “documents for history.”<sup>1</sup> They bear that caption. The two documents, both furnished almost simultaneously by the Socialist party, seem made to order, to the order of the Socialist Labor Party. So exquisitely do they lighten each other, so perfect is the picture they jointly throw upon the canvas that comment is unnecessary, and he who can fail to appreciate the picture must be devoid of the sense of humor.

For all that comment is unnecessary, and none will be made, the first of the two documents contains a passage that makes a startling political suggestion. The passage runs thus: {“}The vast majority of the former members and voters of the Socialist Labor Party have transferred their allegiance and support to the Socialist party.” The political suggestion that this passage throws out is: “Did the S.L.P. migrate to Oklahoma?”

In 1904, the S.L.P. polled 34,172 votes; in 1908 it polled 14,237—a loss of 19,935 votes.

The S.P. in the same years polled, in 1904, a total of 408,204 votes; in 1908 its vote, beginning with New York, Chicago and St. Louis, etc., dropped in almost all the industrial centers of the land—the only places where the S.L.P. has any organization, or support. In Chicago the S.P. drop was, from 47,743 votes in 1904, to 18,042 in 1908; in St. Louis the drop was, from 5,168 in 1904, to 2,986 this year; while in New York the S.P. vote fell off over 1,300. The only place where the S.P. made any “startling gains” was in the non-industrial and new State of Oklahoma. Hitherto everybody has been looking upon the Oklahoma “gains” in the light that startling flashes-in-the-pan are looked at. This seems to be a mistaken view. The

---

<sup>1</sup> [To be appended at a later date.—R.B.]

Oklahoma “gains” seem to be solid—no less solid than S.L.P. support and membership. The gains must have come, according to the passage quoted above, from “the majority of the former members and voters of the Socialist Labor Party.” There is no other conclusion to be arrived at:—

Subtracting the 17,336 S.P. gains in Oklahoma, from the total S.P. poll in 1908, we have 401,171 votes left, or a total drop, mainly in the industrial centers, of 7,033 votes since 1904. The loss was made up by the 17,336 gains in Oklahoma. The figures fit almost miraculously. Why, those 17,336 votes gained in Oklahoma, are not a flash-in-the-pan vote at all—those 17,336 votes gained are exactly that “vast majority of the former members and voters of the Socialist Labor Party” which, according to the quoted passage, “transferred their allegiance and support to the Socialist party—” those 17,336 votes are (now we know it, at last!) the vast majority of the 19,935 votes that the S.L.P. lost.

Now, ye 17,336 “members and voters” of the S.L.P., who just saved the face of the S.P. by helping it to conceal the fact of its decline since 1904 in the industrial North, and who thought you lived in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, in short, in the industrial centers of the land,—ye were off! Ye migrated to Oklahoma.

N.B.—What on earth became of the other 2,599? Did they lose their way en route to Oklahoma?

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

Uploaded by Donna Bills, September 2010

[socialists@slp.org](mailto:socialists@slp.org)