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EDITORIAL

A WORD ON CINCINNATI.

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THE address of the Socialist party men of Cincinnati,¹ giving the reasons for their pulling out and for taking measures to join the Socialist Labor Party, is a document second in importance not even to the superb document issued by the New Jersey Unity Conference. The former supplements the latter. While the document of the New Jersey Unity Conference raised the granite piers for the superstructure of a bona fide party of Socialism, the Cincinnati document, besides covering that aspect of the subject, covers also another, hitherto neglected.

Broadly speaking, there are two forces in the Socialist Movement of the land today—one strives for Unity, the other strives for dis-Unity. At first blush just ONE issue seems to be involved—the issue of PRINCIPLE. There is another issue involved: it is not as clear: in a way, however, it is of even greater moment than even the issue of Principle itself—it is the issue of FORTITUDE. Principle may be relied upon to take care of itself. Truth, though crushed to earth, will rise again. Principle is imperishable. Nevertheless, imperishable though Principle is, its triumph ultimately depends upon Fortitude, upon the fortitude of the men who uphold it. In the last analysis Ideas, good or bad, rest upon human shoulders. It is upon this aspect of the question that the Cincinnati document sheds particular light by illuminating a page in the Movement's history which the forces of darkness have sought to hide, but which the Movement can overlook only at its own peril.

The Cincinnati document reviews the methods resorted to in that city by the forces of dis-Unity—"malicious attacks" upon the advocates of Unity; "campaign of misrepresentation"; "personal abuse"; underground tactics; calumny; etc.; etc.; in short, dodging the issue and "resorting to personalities in order to bolster up a

¹ [Not included here.—R.B.]

position that can not be sustained by reason". The experience made by the forces of Unity in Cincinnati was the experience made by the Socialist Labor Party and the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance in 1899. Defeated on the question of Taxation, routed on the question of Unionism, exposed on the question of press-ownership, confuted on the question of Party discipline, convicted on the question of character and decency as requisite to a Revolutionary Movement—in short, beaten horse, foot and dragoons, the Volkszeitung Corporation of this city, seconded by its pickets in other cities, North, West and South, constituting the Kangaroo element, dropped argument and took up vilification, quitted the field of open warfare and started the campaign of underground intrigue. Circumstances temporarily aided the obscene conspiracy. A moment arrived when its triumph seemed assured. That moment was critical to the Movement in America. It was critical, not merely because, if the campaign of calumny and intrigue triumphed by smashing the S.L.P. and the S.T. and L.A., Principle would have been rolled back to start all over anew; but it was critical because if the campaign of calumny and intrigue did triumph and the S.L.P. and S.T. and L.A. were really smashed, then the irreparable injury would have been done of A PRECEDENT BEING ESTABLISHED TO ENCOURAGE THE REPETITION OF SIMILAR TACTICS AGAINST EACH AND EVERY BONA FIDE MOVEMENT OF LABOR that would and was bound to spring up again. It was a critical moment to the Movement because, with such a precedent of successful chicanery against the Working Class, capitalism in America would hereafter have been doubly audacious in its periodical alliances with the ash-barrel refuse that its social system ever furnishes in large quantities. It was a critical moment to the Movement because, with such a precedent of successful fraud upon the Working Class, a wound would have been dealt to the morale of the revolutionary element of the land that would have rolled the wheels of Time back indefinitely. FORTITUDE prevented the catastrophe. At that critical moment in the Movement of the land the issue turned upon the fortitude of the organization upon whose shoulders Fate had placed the burden of facing out the music. Planted on the rock-bed of Principle; serene in the conviction that it was only a question of time when the decent and true element, whom the Kangaroo intriguers had lured and fastened themselves upon, would awaken to the facts; the S.L.P. faced, with ribs of oak, the *Volkszeitung*

or Kangaroo machinations and—defeated them. It thereby “saved time” to the Movement in America. Crookdom has learned the lesson that the S.L.P. can not be blackguarded out of existence.

It is the knowledge of these historic facts that conveys a proper appreciation of the special significance of the Cincinnati document. Obedient to the Jesuit maxim, “What is not known does not exist”, the *Volkszeitung* or Kangaroo element has sought to keep from the Movement the knowledge of the history behind it. By history’s repeating itself in Cincinnati, as it is repeating itself elsewhere, present history throws light upon the past, while, by becoming known, past history illuminates the present.

The Movement for the overthrow of the terroristic reign of capitalism needs MEN. The building up and gathering of MEN is, consequently, one of the imperative duties of all bona fide Socialist organization. The *Volkszeitung* or Kangaroo element, true enough, could not possibly long prevail. They were like monkeys on horseback. Nevertheless, capitalist society, which Edward Bellamy so pithily characterized as “the modern Golgotha”, may not be allowed by the Socialist to rear its hideous head a day longer than can be avoided. The cry of that humanity, which Bellamy so graphically portrayed as “hanging on the cross”, reaches the ears of the Socialist in too loud a volume and in too many keys—from the infant treble up to the female quaver and the male bass—to allow us to wait with patience till the *Volkszeitung* or Kangaroo monkey-disease has run its course. The heart leaps with joy at the news of the stalwart S.P. men of Cincinnati who have thrown the monkey off their backs; the heart doubly rejoices at the language of the document, announcing our comrades’ emancipation, a language that, coupled to that of sound Socialist principle, will in many quarters hasten, in a way nothing else could, the uprising that is to bring about SOCIALIST UNITY.

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