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EDITORIAL

“SOCIALIST,” ALIAS SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC, THEORY VS. SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY PRACTICE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE crooked “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, party attacks the Socialist Labor Party on the ground that it does not teach Socialism, but spends most of its time and energy combating the “Socialists,” alias Social Democrats.

This attack has been shown to be unfounded, as the press of the Socialist Labor Party and all of its sections are devoted to the dissemination of Socialism pure and undefiled either by Kautsky-Millerandism, or capitalist trades unionism. Both these ideas are alien to Socialism, yet they receive the support of that sterling teacher (sic) of Socialism, the “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, party.

But it is in yet another respect, hinted at in the close of the preceding paragraph, that the Socialist Labor Party proves itself a teacher of Socialism of the best kind, and that is in the example set by its uncorrupted practice, an example that is working for good even in the corrupt “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, party. The Socialist Labor Party does not, like the “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, party render the teachings of Socialism mere abstractions by ignoring them in its dealing with the capitalistic system. The Socialist Labor Party does not fuse with capitalist elements, as does the “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, party in seeking to overthrow the capitalist class. It does not support capitalist trades unions, a la Gompers’ Hannaized A.F. of L., as does the “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, party. It does not proclaim the necessity of the social ownership of capital by the working class and then vote franchises to capitalist corporations, as did the “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, members of the Common Council of Brockton, Mass. It does not denounce the anti-working class interests of Mark Hanna in theory and aid them in practice, as did the “Socialists,” alias Social Democrats, of Cleveland, when they recommended to the Central Labor Union of that

city the adoption of a “lower trolley fare” report, engineered by him to secure an extension of franchise and defeat the 3-cent fare scheme of another trolley magnate. In fewer words, the Socialist Labor Party does not teach Socialism by betraying the working class as does the “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, party. The Socialist Labor Party does more for Socialism by its concrete example than all the mouthers of Socialism, a la “Socialists,” alias Social Democrats, do by their abstract rantings.

The pedagogue utilizes the errors of the unscientific to combat their bad tendencies. So does the Socialist Labor Party utilize the corrupt practices of the “Socialists,” alias Social Democrats, to combat the wrong tendencies of the working class. No scientific man would attack the methods of the pedagogue as a failure to teach science. Neither are the attacks of the Socialist Labor Party on the “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, party a failure to teach Socialism. True, the “Socialists,” alias Social Democrats, dislike to be taken for the “horrible examples” that they really are, but that is not the fault of the Socialist Labor Party, no more that the errors of the unscientific are the fault of the pedagogue. The “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, may grow vicious and attack the Socialist Labor Party on account of their own corruption, but every sane man with eyes to see and a mind to comprehend what is seen, will know that “Socialist,” alias Social Democratic, theory does not stand the test of comparison with Socialist Labor Party practice, and is not half so salutary in the effects of its example.

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

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