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EDITORIAL

POTATO-HEADS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT is a pity that the funds of this establishment are chronically so low that we cannot with greater frequency regale our readers with cartoons. But for that, we could to-day delight their hearts with a certain master-piece. Unable to reproduce the cartoon itself, we shall describe it.

The cartoon in question appeared in the Toledo *Socialist* of the 8th instant—a so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic party paper. To the left is a head marked “De Leon,” and representing our comrade as physically played out as fakirdom would like him to be, and has, for these many years, been trying to make him out to its dupes. A sign-board bearing the legend “Impossibilism” points in his direction. To the right, and going up in smoke, is another head; it is labeled “Berger” and makes the Wisconsin Social Democratic chieftain look as if afflicted with chronic catarrh. Pointing towards him is another sign-board, and that bears the legend “Opportunism.” So far, there is nothing particular in the picture. A caricaturist is not supposed to idealize his foes. The third picture—and now the thing grows interesting—stands in the center of the foreground, it is a man walking on a straight, broad road labeled “Straight Socialism,” and at the further end and goal of which is the head of Karl Marx in a sun-burst. It is in the drawing of the individual walking up that road, and representing the genius of the Toledo *Socialist*, that the artist excelled himself. As the product of a true artist, the idealized genius is true to the fact. His face cannot be seen—it is facing Marx; only his back can be seen—the back of his head—it is unmistakably a potato-head, well sketched, boldly drawn.—That was a stroke of genius!

A potato-head must he be who imagines that a political party of Socialism in America need not an economic organization to stand on—in other words, that it can stand in the air.

He who furthermore imagines that an economic state of organization, which, instead of solidifying, compels the Working Class to be at perpetual feud, can possibly be reflected in a united and powerful political organization of Socialism,—he must be doubly a potato-head.

He who considers opportunism towards the economic movement the proper tactics, and balks at the inevitable result thereof—political opportunism—he must be a triple potato-head.

One itches to see the face of the potato-head in the picture: only the back of his head is seen: but here again the artist proved himself a genius: though the face is not visible, directly, we are given a clear hint as to what it looks like: it is reflected on the opposite face of Marx: the keen-witted philosopher looks positively perturbed at the sight of the hair-pin that is ambling up towards him.

No wonder!

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

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