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EDITORIAL

THE FATE OF THE DESERTER.

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ONCE upon a time, when still in the control of the Socialist Labor Party, the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* struck hard blows against the betrayals of the proletariat that Gompers and his A.F. of L. were guilty of. In those days, *The People* and the *Volkszeitung* fought shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy of Socialism.

Then came a change. The bribe of label advertisements; underground subsidies from labor leaders who were selling out their membership; promises, through these, of brewery bosses' advertisements; and more such impurities caused the *Volkszeitung* to begin to trim its sails. "Gompers should not be attacked," so sounded the first tune, not because the attacks were false, but, "because attacks would render Gompers popular." The disingenuousness of the contention was obvious. By degrees the mask was dropped, until *The People* tore it off entirely, and the *Volkszeitung* came out as a shameless apologist and supporter of Gompers and Gompersism. Of course, Gompers and Gompersism could not be stood by without the performance being accompanied with calumnious assaults upon *The People*. It became a favorite expression with the *Volkszeitung* to say that *The People* "bekaempft den amerikanischen Arbeiterbund in gehaessigster Weise" (fights the A.F. of L. in the most malicious manner). In short, the *Volkszeitung* deserted.

Fully ten years have passed since then. The mills of the gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine. Gompers endorses Bryan. That spoils the *Volkszeitung* game of covering its criminal conduct in the eyes of the comrades of Europe with a large Socialist party vote which failed to come. The paper indulges in some angry words against Gompers PERSONALLY. Presently Gompers proceeds to Europe; gets the ear of the Berlin *Correspondenzblatt*, the central organ of the German Trades Unions; in its issue of August 7 that paper refers to the *Volkszeitung* as a

Socialist organ “das den amerikanischen Arbeiterbund in gehastigster Weise bekaempft” (that fights the A.F. of L. in the most malicious manner)—exactly the language that the *Volkszeitung* loved to hurl at *The People*, and the Socialist Labor Party.

Twelve years ago, when one of those caricatures of the enlightened German nation, which become *Volkszeitung* pets, charged the Editor of *The People* at a meeting with false tactics in that he “attacked,” whereas Socialism would only come gently “wie die Fruehlingssonne” (like the sun at springtime), he was answered by the Editor of *The People* “der Sozialismus ist der Kampf, der Sozialismus ist nicht die Ausreisserei” (Socialism is struggle, not desertion).

The fate of the “Ausreisser” (the deserter) has overtaken the *Volkszeitung*. Deserters mean to escape the danger in front, and they fall, shot in the back.

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

Uploaded by Donna Bills, October 2010

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