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NO POSSIBLE LINK

By Daniel De Leon

A California correspondent who, like Edward Bellamy, was once a Nationalist, but who, with Edward Bellamy, has lately flopped over to the farming middle class party, writes that he is “much grieved and puzzled” by the attitude of the Socialists in refusing to drown themselves into that party. “Congressmen”, he says, “that is what we want. Why do you of the S.L.P. refuse to lend us a hand? Why do you waste your energy and money without hope of success at the ballot box by refusing to vote for the candidates of a party which, upon its St. Louis platform, can go a long way with you? It must be that you expect no redress but through war and bloodshed, whereas Bellamy and his followers strongly hope to secure the rights of the producers peacefully, by the use of the ballot.”

When men abandon the right track they inevitably become perverse. The use which our correspondent makes of the most hypocritical lie ever invented by the capitalistic press concerning “those blood-thirsty Socialists” is a case in point. The recent definitions of Socialism in Bellamy’s *New Nation* afford another illustration of this axiomatic truth.

Wherever universal suffrage exists in Europe—as in France and Germany—it has been the result of Socialist agitation. Wherever it does not yet exist—as in Belgium and Great Britain—it is demanded by the Socialists and opposed by the anti-Socialists. It was through the persistent use of the ballot that the Socialist Labor Party of Germany became the greatest political party in the Empire, and it was through the persistent use of the ballot that resistance was vainly made to its progress.

Likewise, it is through the ballot that the Socialists are publicly asserting themselves in this country, and it is through the bullet that their opponents would unquestionably, in the last resort, endeavor to prevent their peaceful triumph.

As the only party whose fundamental principle ever was, “Abolition of Classes and Equal Rights to All,” it is the only party that never can and never

will compromise with seekers of privilege in any way. “Congressmen, that is what we want.” Aye; elected, of course, upon the Socialist platform and no other. Of what use to Socialism could Congressmen be, pledged to maintain the very system which the Socialists want to abolish? Think of Wendell Phillips compromising with the small slave-holders and agreeing to divide among them the slaves owned by their richer fellows.

It is false, absolutely false, that men who stand on the St. Louis platform “can go a long way with us.” Stripped of the grandiloquent verbiage of a preamble obviously intended to catch gulls, the platform in its every demand looks to the betterment and perpetuation of a class which in the natural course of economic evolution is doomed. Even the nationalization of railroads—which is the only socialistic plank in that platform—is looked upon by that class as a means of increasing its profits to the full amount of the resulting decrease in the rates of transportation. Throughout the list there is not one measure proposed for the direct improvement of the wage working, proletarian classes. It is of one piece with the speech delivered last year at the Cooper Union by Senator Peffer; a speech replete with pathetic appeals to the homeless workingmen of cities for aid in securing the mortgaged farmers, “their heirs and assigns, forever,” in the undisturbed possession of comfortable homes, but ominously void of any reference to what the farmers might in return do for the tenement house victims of landlordism and capitalism. Of course, the pretense that the betterment of the farm-owing class would indirectly benefit the wage-worker is as hollow and false as the very same pretense of our plutocrats, that by employing—that is by exploiting—labor, they are the benefactors of mankind. Nor so much even as an indorsement of Labor’s demand for a shortening of the work-day appears in the St. Louis platform, and there is every reason to believe that such an indorsement, if proposed, would have been rejected with enthusiasm.

No; upon the lines marked out by the St. Louis platform there can be no affiliation whatever between the Socialists and the People’s party. But in the light of future experience the farmers will soon unlearn much and learn more. In the first place they will miserably fail in their attempt to get by class legislation and special privilege any portion of the vast benefits which they have in the past, through their support of the boodle parties, helped to confer upon the plutocrats. Again, they will, only by one, be expropriated and

cast into the ranks of the proletariat, until, as a class, they shall have ceased to exist. Then, and not until then, will they of themselves join hands with the Socialists, in whom they will at last recognize true friends, uncompromising upholders of right, whose acts have always and everywhere been consistent with their professions.

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