

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 141.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1907.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

NEUTRALITY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WERE it not so heart-rending, it would be laughable, with what a parrot-like tone nine out of every ten S.P.-ites answer to the question: "How do you stand in regards to unionism?" "Neutral," is the copyrighted reply, copyrighted by Hillquit, Berger, Simons and their ilk, handed out to their rank and file to be used exuberantly; and so used it certainly has been.

As well might a shepherd say he is neutral as to whether a wolf or a trained sheep-dog be put among his treasured flock. No shepherd can say he is neutral on the foregoing proposition, unless he lacks his reason or has not the slightest inkling of the definition of the word. Neither can a reasonable workingman say he is neutral on the union question.

The class-conscious laborer or Socialist is the shepherd among the proletariat. His duty is to make them understand their true position, make them realize that there can never be fraternity between the robber and the robbed, that there never can exist a true friendship between two nations, classes or individuals, as long as the existence of the one depends on plundering the labors of the other. How can there be peace between the wolf and the flock upon whose choicest members, young and old, the former feeds? Let the neutralist answer.

Still, when such men as Berger, Simons or Hillquit adopt a word, there is more than mere sweetness of sound behind their choice of it. The word is used with the hope that it will prove an excellent patch to keep the cat from getting out through the hole in the bag. And were it not for the "stubborn" S.L.P. man, their efforts might be crowned with success.

That neutrality, as used by the S.P. leaders is not meant in the sense the word itself conveys, can be read in their every move. If they are neutral, how comes Berger to be so active in the A.F. of L. convention? If they are neutral, how comes it

that their privately-owned press is so highly occupied with giving reports of trades unions, and advertising craft union-made goods, that they cannot find one inch of space for reports on the ever-increasing success of the Industrial Workers of the World? If they are neutral, why did the Jewish *Vorwaerts* have no word of encouragement for the laborers who are striking because Nichtom is an S.P. boss and a member of the Vorwaerts Press Federation? Is it not also because most of the strikers happen to be strong sympathizers of the I.W.W.?

It seems the S.P. has yet to learn the simple lesson that its deeds cannot hide in a hole and then pull the hole in after them. It must face the issue whether it will or not.

So, he who is honest, be he among the S.P. leaders or among the S.P. followers, if he would not prolong the slavery of the working class, let him come forth and join the workingmen's union, the organization whose mottoes are, "Workers of all countries, unite," and "To him who labors belong all the products of his toil." Let him join the union which will not be misled by "a fair day's pay for a hard day's toil."

Let the honest worker remember, "neutrality" is a cloak in which the hypocrite tries to hide from the truth.

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

Uploaded November 2009

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