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EDITORIAL

FORCE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AN episode of the certainly memorable Civic Federation Cooper Union meeting was a certain interpellation made in the course of Mr. Gompers' little speech. The gentleman was floundering along, when he capped the climax of his spineless rhetoric with the declaration:

“We want PEACE.”

On the spot a strong voice rose from the audience:

“We want SOCIALISM!”

The response was correct; it was timely. “Peace,” in the mouth of such a misleader of the working class; uttered on a platform where—gathered for the express vampire purpose of concealing, by soothing, the spot at which capitalism sucks the blood in Labor's flanks—sat a collection of scrawny “intellectuals;” uttered moreover to an audience over whose eyes Gompers and his crew expected to pull the wool;—“Peace,” in and under such circumstances, is not the noble term that it implies, and that the Socialist has in mind. The word “Peace,” in and under such circumstances, means the condition under which the slave—broken in body and mind—lives under the yoke of the oppressor; “Peace” of the Mitchells and Gomperses, the Sprague Smiths and Felix Adlers means a social condition of human degradation. Gompers' “PEACE” was knocked down with the word SOCIALISM, which implies the peace that alone the self-respecting man cares to enjoy.

So far, the episode. It was complete—within the hall. It had, however, its supplement without, as did the whole meeting itself for that matter. The capitalist press felt the slap in its face by the word SOCIALISM—spontaneously hurled by the meeting in prompt contrast with the PEACE of the Labor deceivers. They felt the slap so keenly that not only did they not report the incident, but they falsified it. Instead of:

“We want SOCIALISM!”

the capitalist press reported the retort:

“We want FORCE!”

The Socialist Labor Party has no apologies to offer for any of its tenets; least of all does it conceal any. Frankly and proudly, it declares that, should the Capitalist Class attempt in this generation what its prototypes, the Southern slave-holders, did a generation ago; should it, like them, dare to seek to thwart the sovereign fiat of the people expressed by suffrage, then, unquestionably, the Socialist Labor Party will determinedly resort to FORCE, and the most forcible; and, meeting the Force of the would-be violators of the people's sovereignty with the FORCE of a sovereign people, mop the floor with the criminals in short order.

Nevertheless, Socialism is the evangel of Peace on Earth; it is the only principle yet uttered in the annals of the human race capable of removing the reign of rapine and establishing the reign of human happiness. As such it is hated by Capitalism with the deep, malicious hatred that the Angel of Darkness has for the Angel of Light. The genius of Capitalism feels rebuked by that of Socialism. How the former writhes under the mere gaze of the latter may be conjectured by the unanimity with which the capitalist press hastened to falsify the incident above quoted, and utter the calumny of presenting Force as the moving spring of Socialism.

The foe that flees to such breastworks for shelter, knows itself defeated. The Spirit of the Age is against it. In so far as the calumny of the capitalist press in this instance betrays the mental plight of its cause, it also is welcome.

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