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EDITORIAL

## CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL SCORES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A** GOOD deal of displeasure is being felt in the “high places” of the Socialist party towards Charles Edward Russell of the said S.P., and not a little venom is being spewed at the gentleman from the aforementioned places.

The reason why?

In the course of last summer, there appeared in the *Chicago International Socialist Review* an article by Mr. Russell, in which this passage occurred:

“A proletarian movement can have no part, however slight, in the game of politics. The moment it takes a seat at that grimy board is the moment it dies within. After that it may for a time maintain a semblance of life and motion, but in truth it is only a corpse.”

The meaning of the passage was obvious. The “game of politics” could be nothing else than the current chicanery of pretending to aim at lofty political goals, yet seeking place and pelf for self-aggrandizement and lucre. The “grimy board” at which that game is played could be nothing else than the board around which pure and simple politicians of all colors and shades gather to ply their ignominious trade of scheming.

So obvious was the passage’s meaning that there was a good deal of wincing in the high places referred to, more than one of the denizens thereof declaring quite confidently that HE was meant, and all pronouncing the passage “discourteously uncivil.” Instead of time allaying the soreness, it festered it. The spectre of the St. Louis corrupt deal with Democrats, subsequently condoned by the National Execu-



CHARLES EDWARD RUSSELL  
(1860-1941)

tive of the S.P.; the spectres of like corrupt transactions in New Jersey, in Massachusetts, in California, etc., etc., etc.; the spectres of S.P. National Conventions pronouncing—upon order from the “high places”—the miserable scabbery, practised by A.F. of L. bodies upon one another under command of their occupants of “high places,” a “noble waging of the class struggle,” and then aggravating the iniquity by unceremoniously tabling a resolution condemning the National Civic Federation; the spectres of these and many more iniquities of like kidney—pronounced, with Tweed-like self-assurance, “Daily People Lies” by the afore referred to occupants of “high places” in the S.P.—started by Mr. Russell’s article, rose to plague the memories of so many of the culprits that one of them, Mr. Morris Hillquit, was driven so wild as to demand an explanation. The act was insanity itself. It was the sort of insanity that had obsessed Mr. Hillquit before that, when he took the lead in white-washing J. Mahlon Barnes and thereby rendered poor Barnes so confident in scampishness as “to do it some more” and more brazenly than ever—and break his neck. Mr. Russell’s explanation was short and “sweet.” He said:

“I do believe in political action. But I don’t believe in compromise, truckling, thimble-rigging, dealing, ducking and dodging.”

And having thus outlined the profile of the element whom his questioner represents, Mr. Russell proceeded to fill up the space as follows:

“No one in the Socialist party that is opposed to these things has any quarrel with me. I trust this sufficiently explicit.”

It certainly is explicit—amply so.

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