

EDITORIAL

THE RAMSEY COUNTY DISPENSATION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN the State of Minnesota lies Ramsey county.

In Ramsey county is located the good city of St. Paul.

In the good city of St. Paul is issued a municipal campaign broadside entitled *Campaign Bulletin of Public Ownership (Socialist) Party*.

In the *Campaign Bulletin of Public Ownership (Socialist) Party* appears a New Dispensation—Fact is bade good-bye to; Fiction is raised to the mast-head; in short, A, tho' not THE, Revolution is ushered in, a Revolution in the Concordance of History.

Here are some samples:—

“For a number of years it [the Socialist Labor Party] would not permit a party member to belong to a trade union.”—That's news. None of your regulation news that tells a fact. But revolutionary news; news that smashes Fact between the eyes, and promulgates a Whopper. The kind of news that will startle, draw attention upon the inventor—and advertise him—and send his name thundering down the Galleries of Fame, the original Ananias.

“They [the S.L.P.] still classify those who belong to the A.F. of L. as Frauds, Fakirs and Fools.”—From which the inference would flow that Eugene V. Debs was and continues to be a member of and spokesman for the S.L.P. Did not Debs state, over his own signature, in the *Miners' Magazine* of October 26, 1906, that the policy of the A.F. of L. was a “pro-capitalist policy,” and that association with the same was “contamination”? and, expressly contrasting the I.W.W. with the A.F. of L., did he not refer to the two respectively in these words: “A bona fide Union, organized for the benefit of the working class, and a bogus labor organization, defended by every capitalist paper and supported by every capitalist in the land”? Didn't he?

“The S.L.P. organized the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance some years back,

and succeeded in the breaking up the old Knights of Labor. But out of the wreckage has grown up the powerful A.F. of L.”—The S.T. and L.A. was launched in 1896. The A.F. of L. called its convention of that year “The 16 Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor”; and, consistently persistent with that chronology, it has entitled its last year’s gathering at Atlanta “The Thirty-First Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor.” Such is greatness, or, rather the hollowness of greatness! Despite the ponderous volumes in which the A.F. of L. prints, with all the pomp of its official seal, that it held its Thirty-First Annual Convention in 1911, the Ramsey County Dispensation dates the birth of the A.F. of L. only sixteen years back, when the S.T. and L.A. “broke up the K. of L.”—makes of the thirty-one year old antique a stripling bacchanale of barely fifteen!

“As a result of their [the S.L.P.] hostile attitude [to the A.F. of L] they have lost the confidence of the working people. . . . They are a detriment to progress.”—Who is it that said: “We need the S.L.P. comrades. As a rule they are sound in their economics, and they are honest, even if they are inclined to be fanatical, and the Socialist party needs just that element to neutralize and hold in check the political opportunists who want office at any price. . . . I can never forget that little band of valiant comrades—frenzied fanatics if you please, but still of the stuff out of which revolutions are made. For years they were a mere handful, and yet they fought as if they had legions behind them. Staunchly they upheld the red banner in the face of an indifferent or hostile world—and this, years before some of those who now scoff at them shed their bourgeois politics. . . . They have the backbone to stand alone. There are no trimmers or traders among them”—who is it that said this of the S.L.P.? Why, Eugene V. Debs. And when did he say that? Last century? No. He said that on the 20th of last month. Where? In the *Appeal to Reason* of that date.

It is to be hoped that the Ramsey County Dispensation will stick to its mission and help the S.L.P. of St. Paul to make clear the difference between itself and the Dispensationists.

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