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EDITORIAL

S.P. SCABBERY IN CALIFORNIA.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN another column of this issue will be found the third letter written to the San Francisco *Organized Labor* by a California A.F. of L. man,¹ who, of course sharing the Union principles of the Socialist party, calls upon members of the S.P. to vote for the San Francisco Mayoralty candidate set up by the A.F. of L. Unions of the city—the Union Labor Party. Good and straight to the point as the previous two letters were, this third one is the best yet.

As far as the Socialist Labor Party, and thereby the cause of Labor and Socialism is concerned, the thorough lashing, with which the writer of this third letter justly castigates the S.P. Mayoralty candidate and the S.P. generally, is of only secondary importance. The important feature of the letter is the firm stand its writer takes in calling upon the members of the S.P. “if they stand for the principle of the Socialist Party and not for an unprincipled clique,” to vote for the Union Labor candidate for Mayor.

The Socialist party, in general, the California Socialist party, especially, has been and continues to be exceptionally clear-spoken on its “Union principles.” The party did not merely set up, it illustrated its “principles” on this head with a consistency that, from S.L.P. standpoint, is worthy of a better cause.

Did some A.F. of L. Union bow reverently before its “contract” with the employer and remain at work, thereby scabbing it upon an affiliated Union on strike in the same shop? The S.P. silently signified, if it did not loudly shout, “Amen!” Did some A.F. of L. labor lieutenant of the capitalist class conduct a strike in the interest of some employer? The S.P., as did in the instance of the great coal strike of 1902, loudly proclaimed the gentleman a “champion of Labor.” Did the A.F. of L. carry its labor-dislocating principles to the logical extent of demanding the

¹ [To be appended at a later date.—R.B.]

exclusion of “backward” races? Why, the S.P. took up the slogan with enthusiasm, crossed the Ocean, and sought to inject the poisonous virus into the whole International Socialist Movement. And so forth. At every turn the S.P. bowed to, salaamed, applauded every act that A.F. of L.-ism typifies. The S.P. did more. Performing the role of a veritable gouger in a dive, every time the S.L.P. exposes with facts and reasoning what it holds to be baneful to Unionism in the A.F. of L., the S.P. rushes upon the S.L.P. with unmeasured denunciations intended to cover with the mantle of Socialism the policies exposed.

Upon no subject is any political party more explicit in principle and in practice than the S.P. with regard to A.F. of L. principle and practice.

Such a persistent policy on the part of a political party of Socialism imperatively dictates the following alternative to all concerned—

Wherever the A.F. of L. has not reached the maturity of reflecting its own political expression, it is there the bounden duty of every true member of the A.F. of L.—that is, of every one whose membership is an evidence of his approval of A.F. of L.-ism, and joins the A.F. of L., not because the employer orders him through the check-off, or other systems, nor because of any economic compulsion, like the one that drives him into the employer’s shop although he knows he is there plundered—it is the bounden duty of every true member of the A.F. of L. to support the S.P. ticket from top to bottom;

Wherever, on the other hand and for the same reason, the A.F. of L. has reached, as already in California, the maturity of reflecting its own political expression, it is there the bounden duty of the S.P. member to support the A.F. of L. ticket from top to bottom, and it is there the bounden duty of the S.P. to disband as a political party.

The S.L.P. does not accept, it rejects as harmful the A.F. of L. brand of Unionism. Nevertheless, in the untterrified pursuit of its function to bring order in the chaos that reigns in the American Labor and Socialist Movement; in the Party’s untterrified pursuit to disentangle the kinks, that false premises, followed by still falser and confused reasoning (and not a little pusillanimity), have knotted up the minds in, the *Daily People* repeats—

The California A.F. of L. men, whose letters are appearing in the San Francisco

Organized Labor, reason soundly from their own premises coupled with Marxian Socialism—

So soon as a political party of Socialism encounters an economic organization, whose principles and methods it upholds, and which has ripened to the point of setting up its own bona fide, political expression, the mission of that political party of Socialism is at an end. For it still to insist in keeping the field, as the S.P. of California insists, is to be guilty of political scabbery.

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