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EDITORIAL

A CONTRAST.

By DANIEL DE LEON

LEAVING for some later day a more minute investigation of the presentation of what his Socialist party stands for, furnished to and published by the Pittsburg, Pa., *Press*, by Eugene V. Debs, what a contrast does that statement present to the statement by Arthur Elmer Reimer of what his, the Socialist Labor Party, stands for, also furnished to and published by the Pittsburg, Pa., *Press*!

The workingman who needs to be told that capitalism grinds him to dust—upon that workingman all argument is lost. What the workingman needs to-day is the reason for his misery; hence, the reason why all the “issues” raised by the parties of capitalism are, in so far as the “issues” are seriously meant, simply issues in the self-seeking warfare that Labor Exploiters wage against Labor Exploiters, and, in so far as the “issues” purport to concern Labor, are dust thrown into Labor’s eyes. What the workingman needs is enlightenment upon what to do, and how, in order to throw off the domination of the Capitalist Social System. In the short space allowed to them, Reimer does this, Debs does not.

While Reimer, to the extent that space allowed him, focused his words upon concrete subjects that aid the Working Class to understand Socialism; what it is; hence, what is Industrial Unionism;—while Reimer did that, Debs cast his words in the mold of abstraction. A.E. Holbrook of Joplin, Mo., in an open letter recently addressed to Debs, reminds his addressee that Industrial Unionism in the abstract “batters no parsnips.” No more will Socialism in the abstract.

While Reimer makes no effort at sensationalism, Debs does. Invectives inflame; they do not drill the mind, least of all when there is nothing but invective, and a total absence of constructive thought.

Men are, no doubt, necessary to Movements. Nevertheless Movements make

men. The contrast presented by Reimer and Debs is the consequence, or reflex, of their respective parties and their respective platforms.

While each sentence of Reimer is a hammer blow, and all together splinter the illusion of Capitalism, his words being the condensation of Socialist Labor Party teachings and platform; Debs, on the contrary, standing on a platform that squints with one eye at finance with demands for “democratically administered banking,” as though the working class was a depositor of money;—a platform that squints with another eye at the farm-hand employing and skinning small farmer;—a platform that deals in the mischievous bourgeois word of “the consumer,” as though the workers’ consumption would not take care of itself, provided the wealth their toil produced in the factories was not pilfered from them, hence, as though the issue were “consumption” instead of PRODUCTION;—in short, a platform that looks in all directions, intent only to hook votes;—standing upon such a platform, what else is there for the standard-bearer of such a party to do but fill space with wild denunciations and some wilder assertions!

The contrast is marked. Under the same title that this article bears the two statements—Reimer’s and Debs’s—are reproduced in parallel columns elsewhere in this issue.¹

¹ [See next page.]

APPENDIX

A CONTRAST.

Presented by Presidential Candidates of the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party.

LOOK AT THIS PICTURE,

[By Arthur Elmer Reimer, Pittsburg, Pa., *Press*, August 29, 1912.]

The position of the Socialist Labor Party in relation to the various issues in this campaign can best be understood when the working class realizes that each and every one of these so-called issues involves a change or reform of some sort or other to be inaugurated under the present capitalist State. All these various issues imply the continuation of the present capitalist State. The Socialist Labor Party, on the other hand, advocates the abolition of the capitalist State, hence from our viewpoint these so-called issues are no issues at all. The only real issue involved in the campaign is, "Who shall own the jobs of the working class?" The class that owns the tools of production, own the jobs—hence the capitalists to-day, owning these tools, own our jobs, and practically our lives. The Socialist Labor Party says that the workers should own their own jobs; hence we advocate the capture of the workshops of the nation. The various economic evils or ills with which society is afflicted to-day may be expressed in the term "The Industrial Question," and a concise statement of the

solution offered by the Socialist Labor Party in this campaign may be expressed as follows:

"The abolition of the private ownership, hence, autocratically irresponsible operation of the nation's productive and distributive plants known as 'capitalism,' and the substitution of such ownership with collective ownership and control, thus insuring actual democratic management and the full social share of his product to every worker—hence, the overthrow of the political or class State and its substitution with the Industrial or Socialist Republic, under which government, instead of being administered as under the political State by territorial representation, is administered by the useful occupations of the commonweal."

METHOD.

Organization on the political field, and through the ballot establish our right to abolish the capitalist State, and organization in the shop in an industrial union whereby we can enforce the fiat of that ballot—prevent the capitalist from closing the

shop, if election results do not please him, and more important still, we shall at the same time lay the foundation of the industrial republic which is to supplant our present capitalist State.

Of all the so-called issues in this campaign the two most prominent seem to be the “tariff” and the “curbing of the power of the judiciary.” As to the tariff, we maintain that it affects the interests of any set or class of men who live on “profit”; that is, the business interests of the land, hence, to them it is the principal issue. With the workers it is otherwise. We depend for our living on wages, not profits, and our wages are determined by the law of supply and demand for labor, and this law is not seriously affected by the fact that the class which pays that wage carry on a business under a high tariff, low tariff, tariff for revenue, or no tariff at all. Tariff laws will never remove the army of the unemployed.

As to the judiciary, we consider it an institution necessary in a class society, and as such it reflects that class society, or in the last analysis, the institution of private property upon which class rule is built. Judicial justice is impossible for the workers as long as economic injustice remains a fact, and economic injustice will remain a fact as long as the entire industrial equip-

ment of production remains the private property of the capitalist class. Private property is the substance; abolish that, and the judiciary, which is but one of its numerous reflexes, will necessarily disappear, and with it adverse or unfair court decisions.

From the foregoing we may sum up the position of the Socialist Labor Party as follows:

First—We propose to abolish the capitalist State, or the wages system, while other political parties advocate its continuance.

Second—That is, frankly speaking, not reform, but social revolution; all other parties, including our opponents in the so-called Socialist party, advocate reforms, and hence are reform parties.

Third—Our method is organization, based upon the education of the masses, whom we seek to organize, hence we have nothing in common with anarchy or violence.

We of the Socialist Labor Party wish to save for society all that which is useful under capitalism, and preserve the same for the Industrial Republic. We of the Socialist Labor Party are in this campaign, battling for the right, and in the words of Henry Clay, “I would rather be right than be President.”

AND THEN AT THIS!

[By Eugene V. Debs, Pittsburgh, Pa., *Press*, August 27, 1912.]

The supreme issue in this campaign is Capitalism versus Socialism. The Republican hosts under Taft, the Democratic cohorts under Wilson and the Progressive minions under Roosevelt are but battalions of the army of capitalism.

Opposed to them are the ever augmenting phalanxes of the world’s workers, organizing in the ranks of the Socialist party, to do battle for the cause of Socialism and industrial emancipation.

Nothing in the political history of the

world has presented so inspiring a vision as the formation of the battle lines for the campaign in America.

For the first time since the civil war there is a political cleavage upon a great moral question. It is the question of the right of one class of human beings exploiting another class of human beings to the very point of physical existence.

It is a question of human freedom versus human slavery.

This question is as old as the race, but for the first time in human history the issue is stripped of all subterfuge and the exploited class have the political power in their own hands to accomplish by peaceful means their own emancipation.

No longer can the political harlots of capitalism betray the workers with issues manufactured for that purpose. The beating of tariff tom-toms, the cry for control of corporations, the punishment of "malefactors of great wealth," the wolf cry of civic righteousness under capitalism, will not avail the politicians in this campaign.

Neither will the purely political issues of direct legislation, the recall, direct election of senators, or the economic reforms promised, of old-age pensions, minimum wage, industrial insurance and welfare of labor, about which the politicians of capitalism are now so much concerned, bring aid or comfort to them, for the people know that all of these are a part of the program of Socialism and that they are only seized upon by designing men who are not Socialists in an effort to deceive the people and prolong

the reign of capitalism.

Taft may have stolen delegates enough to secure his renomination, but it remained for Roosevelt to burglarize the Socialist platform in order to secure his election under false pretenses.

The millions of American tillers of the soil and toilers of factory, mine and railroad, have abandoned once and forever all political parties of whatever name which do not challenge the very existence as an institution, and they are in open, organized and intelligent revolt against the system.

They have bunched all the so-called issues of the capitalist parties, along with wage slavery, poverty, ignorance, prostitution, child slavery, industrial murder, political rottenness and judicial tyranny, and they have labeled it "Capitalism." They are bent upon the overthrow of this monstrous system and upon establishing in its place an industrial and social democracy in which the workers shall be in control of industry and the people shall rule.

The Socialist party offers the only remedy, which is Socialism.

It does not promise Socialism in a day, a month, or a year, but it has its definite program with Socialism as its ultimate end. Its advocates are men and women who think for themselves and have convictions of their own and they are in deadly earnest.

The hour has struck! The die is cast and Socialism challenges the institution of Capitalism.