

Daniel De Leon

Editorial: French Socialism Won't Scare Worth a Cent

Vaillant, the French Anarchist and would-be murderer, has been condemned to death. If there was any lingering hope in the breasts of his scatter-brained coreligionists that he might find clemency with his judges, and that his sentence might be commuted, that hope must now be dead.

All hope of clemency must have been based upon the reasoning that the French capitalist Government was at heart glad about Vaillant's sauce-pan bomb: it killed nobody and was considered by the Government to have come at the nick of time to save it from perdition. The Government was sadly pushed by the Socialists in the Chamber, and the Socialists outside of the Chamber were carrying on a propaganda that threatened to make still greater inroads into the Chamber. At that moment Vaillant's bomb burst; just as soon as they recovered from their scare, the French capitalists—Government officials and others—could hardly restrain their joy. "Vaillant's bomb," thought they, "will scare the people away from Socialism; we shall make it appear that Anarchy and Socialism are one; the indignation of the people will do the rest; Socialism is dead! Socialism is permanently checked!" And indeed their press did declare Socialism in France to be permanently checked, and our own boodle press did echo the hope as a fact and also announced "Socialism in France is at end; let there be music in the spheres!"

Unfortunately however for Vaillant and his compeers, and

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for all the capitalist interests and capitalist scribblers here and elsewhere, Socialism, if a ghost, is of the sort that will not down; and the people, though quite credulous for long spells, do finally shake off credulity and refuse to be gullied by Capitalist lies.

The first of this month, i.e., only 3 weeks after Vaillant's bomb had exploded, a special election for a Deputy to the Chamber was held in the Department of La Correze. At the last elections in August this Department cast 1413 votes for the Socialist candidates. French capitalism turned its eyes towards La Correze and held its breath. It expected at least a falling off of the Socialist vote, it hoped to see the vote reduced to insignificance, and it had in readiness long articles and longer speeches to prove how Socialism was dead. All these articles and speeches lie now in the waste basket. La Correze increased its August Socialist poll of 1413 to 2323 this month!!

It is evidently useless to encourage or be lenient with Anarchists; people know too well that they and the Socialists are distinct, and that there is no better cure or preventive for Anarchy than Socialism.

There is no longer any hope for Vaillant. His sentence will not be commuted.

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*A De Leon editorial transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the
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