

EDITORIAL

PLAGUES OR TARES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

HE who contemplates the visitations from Europe that fall upon the Socialist Movement of America—the Glasgow plan municipalization schemes, the bourgeois radical political upheavals that here assume the shape of pure and simple political Socialism, and the imitation British Parliamentary Laborite movement in the shape of the Gompers political venture—may well be puzzled to determine whether it is a case of the plagues of Egypt over again, or an ordinary case of tares; whether it is that America is so old-Egyptianly sinful as to call scourges upon her head, or whether it is a mere case of tares, that have to be put up with as the inevitable accompaniment of the good things that America imports from Europe. The latest of these plagues or tares is the Gompers “Independent” “Labor” “Party.”

When in France, some six and odd years ago{,} the spectacle was seen of a Millerand, reputed a Socialist, taking a seat in a bourgeois cabinet; when on top of that, a ministerial “bloc,” or parliamentary party was formed out of Socialists and bourgeois; when on top of that top the Socialists of the “bloc” were seen to stick through thick and thin to the cabinet’s acts, to uphold its Chalon and Martinique massacres of workingmen, and even to support its bills for the military budget;—when such a performance appeared upon the Socialist stage there was a veritable commotion through the Socialist world. The commotion came to a head at Amsterdam. No more stinging charge could be made against the Millerand element at Amsterdam than the charge that it “supported the military budget,” that it thereby approved of the appropriation of funds whose only purpose was the slaughter of workingmen, abroad or at home, or in both places. The military-budget-supporting Millerandists’ performance has been repeated in the Parliament of Great Britain. A Labor-Socialist-Fabian combination, openly allied with bourgeois

politicians, carried some 40 of its candidates triumphantly into Parliament. One of them, John Burns, was by the grace of the capitalist government, “elevated” to a seat in the cabinet—just as was Millerand; most of the other Laborite members of Parliament disgraced themselves by congratulating the “chosen” one of their class upon his being considered sufficiently tainted to be “chosen”—just as the Millerandists did; and, just as was done by the Millerandists, the Laborite delegation in Parliament stuck so close to the cabinet that supported not only an “Education Bill” which contemplates the lowering of the school age in the interest of the exploiter who needs child-labor, but also SUPPORTED THE MILITARY BUDGET. The Millerand scandal of France has repeated itself in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

It is such a British echo of French Millerandism that Gompers has re-echoed here in America—at least incipiently. He has launched “by proclamation” his “Independent” “Labor” “Party,” of which may be said what Voltaire said of the “Holy Roman Empire.” The latter was neither “holy” nor “Roman”; the Gompers party is neither “independent” nor “Labor.” It matters not whether the Gompers venture will at all points, down to the last, be a repetition in America of the monstrosity witnessed, first in France, and now in the British Parliament, or whether, thanks to matured conditions, the abortion will forthwith go to pieces, as is likely. Sufficient unto the day is the fact that Gompers has proclaimed the British affair his model, and has started, true to his model, by proclaiming his readiness to ally himself with any old thing that promises success, i.e., votes.

Is it a plague or is it tares? Different views may be held according to the viewpoint. Whether plague or tares, it is surcease *{sic}* of mischief, against which the Socialist Movement of the land has to attest its virility by confuting it with argument, and downing with facts.

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

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