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EDITORIAL

POOR WIGGINS!

By DANIEL DE LEON

WE quote from *The Provoker* of the 16th of this month, the new Socialist party paper of which Mr. Thomas J. Morgan is Editor, and which was commented upon last week in these columns. We quote from it:

“A.A. Wiggins, ex-Central Committeeman, Seventh Ward, writes: ‘After eleven years’ activity in the Socialist party, professional control of the party, as illustrated by its National Executive{,} stopped me. I quit. To clean them out is a big job. They control all the means of reaching the membership. I wish *The Provoker* luck and will help it all I can.’”

Poor Wiggins!

Of all persons deserving of pity it is he with whom it takes eleven years to see the obvious fact that he is “in a hole,” and, having at last seen the fact and crawled out of that hole, forthwith and deliberately plunges into another hole. This is poor Wiggins’s case.

A press ever responds promptly to its owners. The bourgeois press gives daily evidence of the democratic principle that runs it. It jumps and sings what dances and tunes its stockholders will. Are they Republicans to-day? their paper warbles Republican ditties; do they become Free Traders tomorrow? forthwith does their paper twitter free trade madrigals; do they change, or their interests dictate a free silver policy? instantly their paper hums 16 to 1 catches. And so forth. The expectation that a paper perform the tunes of those who do not own it is a mere piece of acoustical absurdity. Whose voice is heard at the other end of a telephone wire? The voice of him whose lips are away from the receiver? Absurd expectation! His voice is heard who holds the receiver. So with a paper. It sounds the voice, utters the words, recommends the views of those who control it—and none controls a paper but those who own it. On that obvious principle the S.L.P. insists that itself

shall own its press.

All this is so obvious that it needs no argument. All this notwithstanding, Wiggins, who had not even the semblance of a voice in determining the policy of the “press of his party” seeing that press is privately owned, consumed eleven years to discover that fact—and, the moment he discovered it, kerslap he drops into another hole of like make-up by pledging all the help he can give to another privately-owned paper, Mr. Morgan’s venture.

Poor Wiggins! His is the case of the workingman, who, having supported the Democratic party of Tweedledum during eleven or more elections, and got it regularly in the neck, jumps out of that hole and, with wishes of “Good luck!”, bestows all his energy upon the Republican party of Tweedledee. His is the case of the staked ox, which may change his location but is kept within a given radius by the tether that holds him to the stake.

If a party of Labor or Socialism does not own its own press, “its press” will own it. Poor Wiggins—slipping his head out of the yoke of one privately-owned paper only to push his pate into the yoke of another privately-owned publication! Poor Wiggins—an S.P. dupe-type, held by the tether of Illusion to turn in a vicious circle, around the stake of Thimble-rig.

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