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EDITORIAL

A SUPERFLUOUS QUESTION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**W**HAT is the matter with the Socialist party?” asks the S.P. organ, the *Montana News* of December 16.

Surely a superfluous question to be put by that paper, and in that particular issue.

That very paper, on the front page of that very issue answers the question to a tittle. Five and three-quarter inches' space of that issues front page is taken up with yellow-yelling full-page wide headlines such as these: “Spokane Officials Use Russian Torture.” “Unexampled Barbarities—Gross Immoralities in the Prisons—Scurvy Spreading Because of Starvation Atrocities—Free Press as Well as Free Speech Crushed Under Foot in Spokane,” Etc., Etc.

What's the matter with the S.P. The S.P. is a cross between St. Vitus's Dance and Yellow Journalism; it is a feather blown hither and thither by any gust of wind; it is a chaser after sensation; it is a bubble inflated with windy rhetoric; it is a bundle of contradictions, and a betrayer of the Working Class.

What's the matter with the S.P.? The hysterics that convulse a patient afflicted with St. Vitus's Dance finally leave him limp and prone; Yellowness, like the persistent splicing of the main brace, ends with delirium tremens; the blown-about feather lands finally in the ditch; the headlong chaser after sensation tumbles, eventually if not sooner, heels-over-head at the foot of the rainbow he would grasp; the bubble, whether of soap or rhetoric, bursts soon as it strikes a hard substance, often sooner; the monger of contradictions finally gets tangled in his own rantings; above all, the betrayer of the Working Class who—so long as the name of “I.W.W.” stood only for, and was known only as, a sanely and soundly aggressive organization in Labor's interest, a credit and glory to the American proletariat—had vituperation and calumny only for the organization; but who—the instant the name of “I.W.W.”

was usurped by a bunch of men and women who repudiate the ballot, advocate theft as a proletarian method, unfurl the execrable flag of Anarchy and Slummery, in short, threaten to heap disgrace upon the American Labor Movement—now line up with the cockatrice, that betrayer of the Working Class is bound to be found out.

What's the matter with the S.P.? Why, it is found out. That it was "found out" was quite clearly indicated by the returns of the presidential election of 1904; was indicated still more crushingly by the election returns of November, 1909 from New York to San Francisco; was re-indicated with peculiar emphasis at the special election held in the Seventh Senate District in Brooklyn last week to choose a successor to the late Senator McCarren, and where the S.P., which, not two months before polled 781 votes now came out with 96. The "Vote," the one thing with which the S.P. used to justify all its misdeeds, the fig-leaf with which the party sought to cover its nakedness, has shriveled. But what was "found out"? Simons's letter to Walling is now eclipsed by the *Montana News*.

What's the matter with the S.P.? Why, look at the *Montana News* of Dec. 16, 1909.

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