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EDITORIAL

## HORRIBLE EXAMPLE OF 16 TO 1 MENTAL TRAINING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**W**ATSON'S *JEFFERSONIAN MAGAZINE* for the current month leads with an 18 page article by the mercurial Tom Watson himself on "Socialists and Socialism." The purpose of the article is to show authoritatively—mind you, authoritatively—and documentarily—mind you, documentarily—that the program of Socialism embraces a sweeping remodeling of the family relations, the "overthrow of the monogamic family" and the establishment of "free love."

Readers of the *Daily People* might ask, Why bother with such stale trash? Does not Socialism, in the platforms enunciated by its conventions, and in the classics upon which all Socialists are agreed, plant itself exclusively upon the economic question? Is not Socialism well understood by all intelligent people, foe and friend alike, to begin and end with the demand for the abolition of private ownership in the necessaries for labor and the re-organization of society upon that basis? What concern is it of Socialism what the private opinion may be of this or that Socialist as to whether monogamy will or will not continue, any more than it is the concern of Protectionism whether the protectionist Robert Ingersoll was an atheist; or anymore than it is the concern of Populism whether the Populist Tom Watson believes in the divine dispensation that the Negro is a special creation for the Watsons to ride; or any more than it is the concern of the Roman Catholic creed whether the Prince of the Church Cardinal Antonelli was a promiscuous begetter of children? Why bother with such stale trash, anyhow? That's all very true; and the *Daily People* does not propose now, any more than it has done heretofore, to allow itself to be drawn beside the question—the overthrow of the capitalist system of production, the only issue that Socialism presents. In taking up the article of our

effervescent, though oft admired, acquaintance Tom Watson, the *Daily People* purposes to render to the public the valuable service of illustrating the pitiable wreckage of all sense of responsibility that a liberal education in heels-over-head populist economics will work even in so bright an intellect as Tom Watson's.

The first four pages of the article in question are taken up with a roasting of the Socialist party man, the Rev. George Herron, for the "Socialist Wedding" which he celebrated with Miss Rand, after divorcing his first wife. Lest we digress, we shall not go into details to show that Mr. Watson substantially blundered even on this point, in that the revoltingness of the Rev. Herron's conduct—the casting off for a rich one a poor wife, whom shortly before he had pronounced "the inspiration of his life"—makes no part of Mr. Watson's anathemas. We shall let that pass. The Rev. Herron "Socialist Wedding" is but a prelude to Mr. Watson's article. However excited, Mr. Watson realizes that his case on Socialist immorality could not stand upon that leg alone. The remaining fourteen pages buckle down to business. Bebel is to be convicted out of his own mouth. The work of Bebel's, chosen to do the job, is *Woman Under Socialism*.

At first sight, as one turns these pages over in wondering anticipation, his heart is gladdened. There appears to be a vast amount of citations from *Woman Under Socialism*. The appearance is of conscientious research, and sober thought. Such ever is a treat to the Socialist, even if against himself. But what a disappointment follows!

It would fill nothing short of a book to cite Mr. Watson's citations, which he repeatedly asseverates are not garbled, and contrast them with the full passages actually in Bebel's work. That is here out of the question. The reader should in *Watson's Jeffersonian Magazine* and in Bebel's work, and make the comparisons himself. Nevertheless, although a direct proof of the recklessness of Mr. Watson is not allowed by our space—it would not do to quote one passage; if any, several should be quoted—a clear idea of Mr. Watson's state of mind can be furnished the reader expeditiously by quoting in full his observations upon the English translator's preface of Bebel (wherewith Mr. Watson introduces his assault upon Bebel) and then contrasting that with what the translator actually did say.

Mr. Watson says:

“In the translator’s preface, he states that *‘the Woman Question is the weakest link in the capitalist mail.’* He alludes to the efforts Socialists are making to enlist the women in the *‘overthrow of the existing order.’* He frankly uses the word *‘Communism,’* and expresses his belief that the race is now headed toward it.

“Mr. De Leon is one of the most conspicuous and energetic American leaders of Socialism. When he translates Herr Bebel’s book into English, and publishes it for use in Socialist propaganda, we need not be told that Mr. De Leon is in full accord with Herr Bebel, and desires to win converts to Socialism by the circulation of Bebel’s book. And when we find that *Woman Under Socialism* is an elaborate argument for just such ideals as those set forth at ‘A Socialist Wedding,’ we need no farther {sic} evidence to convince us that Socialism *does* make uncompromising war upon marriage, *as we know it,* and proposes to substitute therefor the informal ‘free and easy’ mating which Herron and Miss Rand first practised and then ‘announced.’” [The italics are in the original.]

Now let the reader turn to that translator’s preface quoted from, and referred to by Mr. Watson as evidence of the translator’s anti-monogamic views. It sets forth as follows:

“The ethnic formula commends self-effacement to a translator. More so than well-brought-up children, who should be ‘seen and not heard’, a translator should, where at all possible, be neither seen nor heard. That, however, is not always possible. In a work of this nature, which, to the extent of this one, projects itself into hypotheses of the future, and even whose premises necessarily branch off into fields that are not essentially basic to Socialism, much that is said is, as the author himself announces in his introduction, purely the personal opinion of the writer. With these a translator, however much in general and fundamental accord, may not always agree. Not agreeing, he is in duty bound to modify the ethnic formula to the extent of marking his exception, lest the general accord, implied in the act of translating, be construed into specific approval of the objected-to passages and views. Mindful of a translator’s duties as well as rights, I have reduced to a small number, and entered in the shape of running footnotes to the text, the dissent I thought necessary to the passages that to me seemed most objectionable in matters not related to the main question; and, as to matters related to the main question, rather than enter dissent in running footnotes, I have reserved for this place a summary of my own private views on the family of the future.

“It is an error to imagine that, in its spiral course, society ever returns to where it started from. The spiral never returns upon its own track. Obedient to the law of social evolution, the race often is forced, in the

course of its onward march, to drop much that is good, but also much that is bad. The bad, it is hoped, is dropped for all time; but the good, when picked up again, never is picked up as originally dropped. Between the original dropping and the return to its vicinity along the tracks of the spiral, fresh elements join. These new accretions so transmute whatever is re-picked up that it is essentially remodeled. The 'Communism,' for instance, that the race is now heading toward, is, materially, a different article from the 'Communism' it once left behind. We move in an upward spiral. No doubt moral concepts are the reflex of material possibilities. But, for one thing, moral concepts are in themselves a powerful force, often hard to distinguish in their effect from material ones; and, for another, these material possibilities unfold material facts, secrets of Nature, that go to enrich the treasury of science, and quicken the moral sense. Of such material facts are the discoveries in embryology and kindred branches. They reveal the grave fact, previously reckoned with in the matter of the breeding of domestic animals, that the act of impregnation is an act of inoculation. This fact, absolutely material, furnishes a post-discovered material basis for a pre-surmised moral concept,—the 'oneness of flesh' with father and mother. Thus science solidifies a poetic-moral yearning, once held imprisoned in the benumbing shell of theological dogma, and reflects its morality in the poetic expression of the monogamic family. The moral, as well as the material, accretions of the race's intellect, since it uncoiled out of early Communism, bar, to my mind, all prospect,—I would say danger, moral and hygienic,—of promiscuity, or of anything even remotely approaching that.

"Modern society is in a state of decomposition. Institutions, long held as of all time and for all time, are crumbling. No wonder those bodies of society that come floating down to us with the prerogatives of 'teacher' are seen to-day rushing to opposite extremes. On the matter of 'Woman' or 'The Family' the divergence among our rulers is most marked. While both extremes cling like shipwrecked mariners to the water-logged theory of private ownership in the means of production, the one extreme, represented by the Roman Catholic church-machine, is seen to recede even further back within the shell of orthodoxy, and the other extreme, represented by the pseudo-Darwinians, is seen to fly into ever wilder flights of heterodoxy on the matter of 'Marriage and Divorce.' Agreed, both, in keeping woman nailed to the cross of a now perverse social system, the former seeks to assuage her agony with the benumbing balm of resignation, the latter to relieve her torture with the blister of libertinage.

"Between these two extremes stand the gathering forces of revolution that are taking shape in the militant Socialist Movement. Opinion among these forces, while it cannot be said to clash, takes on a variety of shades—as needs will happen among men, who, at one on basic principles, on the material substructure of institutional superstructure, cannot but yield to the allurements of speculative thought on matters as yet hidden in the future, and below the horizon. For one, I hold there is as little ground

for rejecting monogamy, by reason of the taint that clings to its inception, as there would be ground for rejecting co-operation, by reason of the like taint that accompanied its rise, and also clings to its development. For one, I hold that the smut of capitalist conditions, that to-day clings to monogamy, is as avoidable an ‘incident’ in the evolutionary process as are the iniquities of capitalism that to-day are found the accompaniment of co-operative labor;—and the further the parallel is pursued through the many ramifications of the subject, the closer will it be discovered to hold. For one, I hold that the monogamous family—bruised and wounded in the cruel rough-and-tumble of modern society, where, with few favored exceptions of highest type, male creation is held down, physically, mentally and morally, to the brutalizing level of the brute, forced to grub and grub for bare existence, or, which amounts to the same, to scheme and scheme in order to avoid being forced so to grub and grub—will have its wounds stanchd, its bruises healed, and, ennobled by the slowly acquired moral forces of conjugal, paternal and filial affection, bloom under Socialism into a lever of mighty power for the moral and physical elevation of the race.”

The reader should now refresh his memory by re-reading Mr. Watson’s account of the translator’s preface of Bebel’s *Woman Under Socialism*.

Far be it from us to believe that Tom Watson deliberately falsified, and deliberately misrepresented. In all sincerity we do not. If he had, the matter would not deserve handling. Mr. Watson did not mean to falsify. His false presentation of the translator’s posture is one of the inevitable results of the mental training imparted by the philosophy of 2+2=16 to 1. A system of thought that, from shallow premises, flies off to the scatter-brained financial theory of which Mr. Watson is an expositor, miseducates. If indulged in intensely, it disqualifies the mind for that conscientious reading and sober thought that renders a man responsible for his words. The translator’s preface is not quite four pages long. If the wheels in Mr. Watson’s head whirl so wildly that he can so wholly misapprehend and so rashly report the contents of a 4-page preface, what the chances are of his acting with a greater sense of responsibility, with regard to a nearly 400-page book, the reader may judge for himself.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
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[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)