

EDITORIAL

DEPENDENT INDEPENDENCE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AMONG the documents circulated by delegates at the late Indianapolis convention of the Socialist party was one entitled:

“THE SOCIALIST PARTY OR?”

The document sets forth the theory: “We do not believe that the Socialist party should be the tail or auxiliary of any labor organization,” and it closes with the statement: “We submit this to you in the interest of preserving the independence of the Socialist party.”

Construed together the two sentences mean, in point of theory:

“A party of Socialism can and must be independent of the economically organized Working Class; and, in point of fact:

“The Socialist party practices, enjoys and illustrates such independence.”

The theory is false; the fact untrue.

As to the theory:

True, enough, and correctly so, a political party of Socialism can not consist of Working Class members only. In a political party of Socialism all those non-Working Class forces belong, who, having risen above their own class interests, plant themselves upon the interests of the Working Class. These elements are entitled, as human beings and as beings who are contributory to the Social Revolution, to a place in the revolutionary ranks. There is none other for them but in the political party organization of the Revolution. This notwithstanding, a national political party of Socialism is unimaginable the majority of whose membership is recruited from any class other than the proletarian. It so happens even with the political parties of capitalism. It can be no otherwise with a political party that flies the colors of Socialism. Any other state of things is a sociologic absurdity. These premises grasped, the rest follows.

A political party of Socialism, being composed mainly of Working Class elements, will consist mainly of proletarians who are economically organized. Man is not spoilable into two. Wherever any part of him is there will the rest of him be also. An element that is organized in some other body and constitutes a tangible, even tho' not a majority portion of some other body is bound to cause its influence to be felt in the latter. The final consequence of this sequence is that a political party of Socialism can, under no imaginable circumstances, be so unaffected by the economic organization of its Working Class members as to claim independence from it.

As to the fact:—

The theory of independence from the economic organization, advanced by the document in question, being false, the allegation of fact—S.P. independence from Unions, which is grafted upon the theory—will be found untrue. It will be found worse than untrue. The issue being one of fact, the demonstration is easy.

Only two short years ago, at the 1910 annual convention of the Socialist party, the subject of immigration being before the house, the New Jersey delegate W.B. Killingbeck said:

“Let us be honest with ourselves and say that we want a political victory and in order to get that victory we must have the co-operation of the American Federation of Labor, and say to them: ‘We are willing to have you dictate to the Socialist party just what we shall do, so that we can make other cities and States as famous as Milwaukee.’” (Page 140 of Proceedings.)

This was a frank expression of what the majority of the delegates had on their breasts, and of what the majority of those who spoke stated covertly. The policy prevailed. A.F. of L.-ism dictated, and the S.P. subscribed to the infamy of anti-liberal immigration. It could be no otherwise. The dependence de facto of the S.P. upon the A.F. of L. was not only proclaimed, but was ratified.

The document, claiming to be “in the interest of preserving the independence of the Socialist party” and circulated at this year’s S.P. convention, was signed:

“DAVID WILLIAMS, delegate from Pennsylvania.

“ERNEST BERGER, delegate from Connecticut.”

We know not who these gentlemen be. Nevertheless, as unerringly as a litter of

coyotes points to a coyote parentage, the document they fathered points to a fatherhood of A.F. of L.-ites—direct, or indirect beneficiaries of the A.F. of L.

Whosoever demands INdependence, from that that should be dominant, betrays DEpendence upon that that should be rejected.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded July 2013

slpns@slp.org