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SOCIALISM AND THE PEOPLE'S PARTY

By Daniel De Leon

Elsewhere in this issue will be found the report of an address delivered by Mr. Powderly at a public meeting held in Brooklyn last week under the auspices of the K. of L. We leave with our readers to decide for themselves whether the radical utterances of the speaker or the shouts of applause with which they were received are most suggestive of the progress which Socialism has made. Our special purpose here is to comment on the brief remarks made at the close of the meeting by Mr. A.W. Wright, editor of the *Journal of the Knights of Labor*. Inasmuch as these remarks may be taken as a direct question, publicly, frankly and honestly asked by a highly esteemed brother and sympathizer to the Socialist Labor party concerning its probable attitude in the coming Presidential campaign, they call for a direct answer, public, frank and honest.

In the first place, is the farmer movement, as Mr. Wright asserts, a revolutionary movement? We must answer, No. Far from being a revolutionary movement, it is one of the most conservative and even retrograde attempts ever recorded in the history of economic evolution. Its object is to perpetuate a class that modern progress has doomed, and its only result can be to prolong the agony of the poor people who belong to it by deferring the day of their complete emancipation. Mr. Wright mistakes blind rebellion for intelligent revolution.

Could the American Socialists, then, win the sympathy of the rest of the American workingmen by supporting the Presidential candidate of the People's party? Obviously, we must again answer, No. Any other reply would be an insult to the intelligence and honesty of American Labor. It was by steadily marching in a straight line to the only possible objective point of the labor movement, never driven from it by showers of abuse or waylaid by the blandishments of false issues, that they won for their advancing cause indestructible popularity, and for themselves the respect which they now enjoy. And Mr. Powderly himself would probably admit that he might not

now speak so well of Socialism if he had to speak ill of the Socialist Labor party.

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