

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 6, NO. 327.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MAY 23, 1906.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

SOCIALISM, NOT NEUTRALITY

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE below is a passage from a letter received at this office from a prominent member of the German Social Democracy. The letter is in response to receipt of a copy of the stenographic report of last year's I.W.W. convention, together with several American addresses and other documents bearing upon the burning questions of "Unionism", "Neutrality", "Politics", etc. The passage is here reproduced in English translation, to which the original German is subjoined:

"The stenographic report of the convention of the Industrial Workers of the World has pleased me greatly. So far as I have been able to look into it, and so far as I may at all presume to form an opinion upon a manifestation of Socialism that takes place under conditions so different from the conditions under which the continental European manifestations of the Labor Movement take place, I believe I agree with your fundamental principles. This is the crucial point:—the political and the economic Labor Movement belong together, not merely in the sense of tolerantly putting up with each other's existence, or even tolerantly running beside each other, but they have to be 'like one soul in one bosom'. Class-conscious, rigidly class-Socialist. Not Neutrality, but Socialism. Like all other political Movements, the political Movement of the Social Democracy has a tendency towards slurring over things, toward opportunism. To counteract this, the economic Movement organized upon integral class lines, seems to me to be pre-eminently requisite. But the latter can accomplish this task under one condition only: it must ever be, and train itself to be, conscious of its ultimate goal, the abolition of class rule."

Der stenographische Kongressbericht der Industrial Workers of the World, hat mich sehr erfreut und, soweit ich habe ueberblicken koennen und mir ueberhaupt in einer der europaeisch-kontinentalen Formen der Arbeiterbewegung doch so verschiedenen Milieu-Form des Socialismus ein Urtheil anmassen darf, glaube ich mit Ihren Grundzuegen uebereinatimmen zu koennen. Hauptsache is das: die politische und die gewerkschaftliche Arbeiterbewegung gehoeren nicht nur zusammen, im Sinne eines leidlich vertraeglichen Zusammenlebens oder vielmehr

Nebeneinanderlaufens, sondern “they have to be like one soul in one bosom.” Nicht Neutralitaet, sondern Socialismus. Klassenbewusster, klassenstrenger Socialismus. Die politische Bewegung der Socialdemokratie besitzt—gleich jeder anderen politischen Bewegung—die Tendenz zur Uebergloisierung, zum Opportunismus. Ihr entgegenzuwirken scheint mir vor allen Dingen die klasseneinheitliche Gewerkschaftsbewegung benoethigt. Aber diese kann jenen Zweck erfuellen lediglich unter einer Bedingung, naemlich dass sie sich ihres Zieles, der Aufhebung jeder Klassenherrschaft, bewusst bleibt, respektive bewusst wird.

The Movement, both in Germany and America, will sooner than later hear more from our correspondent and from the element whose opinion he voices. In the meantime the fact is here placed on record that, not “Neutrality” but “Socialism”, in other words, not corruption-breeding political TWADDLE, such as the “Intellectuals” in this country stand for and seek to foist upon the American Movement, but politico-economic ACTION is the key-note and soul of the International Socialism.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded March 2009

slpns@slp.org