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EDITORIAL

THE SOCIALIST CAMP CAN BE NO ADULLAMITES' CAVE.

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“One mistake which the old Socialist Labor Party made was to make it appear that the Socialists were all factory or mine workers, and that only wage workers had a claim on Socialism.”

IT is a happy circumstance that the above erroneous passage appears in the Milwaukee, Wis., *Social Democratic Herald*. The circumstance is happy because that paper is the only organ of the variously named Social Democratic party that has not, by a persistent policy of baseness towards the Socialist Labor Party, placed itself beyond the pale of decency. With it one may feel safe that a discussion will be conducted, despite the inevitable firmness and severity, that the occasion requires, yet by a code different from that which prevails in Bowery dives.

The charge, above quoted, against the S.L.P. is groundless. If, in taking up the charge, the only purpose were to enter of record a refutation, then it would suffice to quote the platform of the S.L.P., whose closing and summing up clause starts with these words:

“We, therefore, call upon the wage workers of the United States, and upon ALL OTHER HONEST CITIZENS,” etc.

And this declaration might be backed up with extensive quotations from the literature, that the S.L.P. has issued, and many a column of which has of late reappeared on the pages of the *Social Democratic Herald* itself. The Socialist Labor Party does not hold that only wage workers have a claim on Socialism. It very expressly holds otherwise. But in taking up the charge, an infinitely more important purpose is in view than mere refutation. That purpose is to controvert the tactical theory that underlies the statement,—a tactical theory that is indicated quite clearly in the rest of the paragraph that the above quotation is taken from, a tactical theory that is disastrous to the Socialist Movement, and the evil effect of which the very Editors of the *Social Democratic Herald* have felt and moaned over.

In the course of its argument, our esteemed adversary says:

“And while the wage working class, being the most oppressed under the present system, naturally has also the deepest interest in its overthrow, and while that class will, by reason of its number, also furnish the bulk of its fighters, it will not furnish all the fighters.”

If this argument means anything it means that simple oppression, mere oppression is a sufficient bond to hold together all the fighters against Capitalism and to rear the Socialist Republic. This would mean that a sentiment would be enough, not only to “bring together,” not only to accomplish the harder task of “holding together,” but also, and above all, to give the right direction to the forces thus brought into one camp. Now this is a fallacy, it is a Utopian conception. A sentiment may bring together, but only the correct appreciation of the social law that underlies the Social Question can hold together the gathered forces. Suffering through oppression is not the same with all the oppressed. Sufferings differ radically. All oppressed individuals suffer; but gross is the blunder of failing to distinguish the difference between the sufferings of the small business man and the wage-slave. The difference can be appreciated only by the recognition of the different and conflicting class interests among the sufferers. Only by recognizing and understanding this will one be able to understand the species of the suffering that each class is subject to.

And this is indispensable for safety. The test is easily made. Bring together sufferers from several classes. Each will propose, to the extent that he is class-conscious, a different remedy. The remedies will vary according to the class suffering. In view of the fact that classes have hostile economic class interests, the remedies will be antithetical. Compromise, coalesce, fuse and the unity thus established will be on the surface only. In practice, the opposing class views will assert themselves, and manifest themselves in ACTS. Where the opposing class views have not yet had a chance to ripen into such acts, the capitalist politicians will take charge of bringing such acts to ripeness. The result is failure, with its train of disheartenment.

In view of this—illustrations of which are numerous in modern history—the question comes, How are the sufferers, naturally brought together by their sufferings, to be HELD TOGETHER? A fusion of class interests cannot do it. What then? The answer is:

First: No social evolution ever reached that crisis commonly named the

revolutionary epoch, except it moved upon the exclusive class lines of the class interests next in order in social evolution. It is not open to discussion—the *Social Democratic Herald* does not dispute the point—that, at the modern stage of social evolution, the class interests next in order are the class interests of the Working Class. Accordingly, it is the class interests of the wage slave that alone can be considered, and along the lines of which, to the exclusion of all others, the Socialist Movement must be guided.

Second: The distinctive fitness of members, of other than the class next in order, to figure in the Movement next in order, is that they unflinchingly steer their conduct by the light of the class interests of that class whose historic epoch has arrived. The Monks in the English Revolution, the Talleyrands during the seemingly chaotic but logically progressive period of the capitalist revolution in France, usually called French Revolution, down to the resting point reached at the time of both “restorations” are great historic sign-posts on this particular head.

By the light of these facts, the closing paragraph in the argument of the *Social Democratic Herald* is of great interest. It is this:

“In that respect it was significant that when the Social Democrats united with a part of the S.L.P. the new united organization simply called itself Socialist party.”

The significance thereof is, indeed, great. It marks sharply the distinction between the two parties. The one steers its course strictly by the loadstar of the class interests of the Working Class, and it demands of all within its camp, whatever class they may come from, strict adherence thereto: the word “Labor” in its name attests its stand; the other, by deliberately taking a name that excludes the word “Labor,” gives notice that it abandons the class interests of the Working Class, as its norm, and that community of oppression, of suffering, is the bond that it plants itself on.

The Socialist Labor Party is the well-knit organization fit to overthrow Capitalism: the Socialist party is but a cave of Adullam, whose tenants are bound to scatter.

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

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