

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 4, NO. 290.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, APRIL 15, 1904.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

“THE STRATEGIC POINT.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Spanish language has a figure of speech to indicate the plight of a man who is in trouble brought on by himself, and who gets into ever increasing difficulties in his attempt to escape. He is said to have got into a shirt eleven yards long. Anyone who ever got into a gown much too long for him and tried to stand, let alone walk in it, knows what happens. That is what is happening with the crumbling-away so-called Socialist alias Social Democratic party on its Trades Union policy. It is tumbling and floundering like a Barnum clown. At the risk of being considered uncharitable enough to make sport of the utterances of a person uttered under such distressed conditions, we shall here take up an utterance of the Seattle *Socialist*, uttered in one of its tumblings in its issue of the 10th instant—“The strategic point at which capitalists are now aiming their attacks is the Trades Unions.”

There is nothing of the sort.

The big capitalist brewers of New York, so far from “aiming their attacks at the Trades Unions,” are bribing the fakirs in the local brewery Unions to keep a solid body in existence; it was not “attacks” but “kisses” that the late lamented Hanna had for Mitchell in the latter’s efforts to save his organization from disruption; the large capitalist Marcus Marks of the clothing trade does not exchange blows with H. Korkorowsky, alias Harry White. On the contrary, indulges in a unilateral course of wining and dining the gentleman, and booming him through the capitalist press; there may be two bodies between the Railroad Conductors’ Chief Clark and President Roosevelt, but their hearts beat as one; Schwab, or whoever then presided over the Steel Trust was such a pet of President Shaffer that the latter helped the Trust by using the Union for an advertising scheme for its stock, and the former pronounced the Union his brother; to sum up, the *Wall Street Journal* has uniformly

sung the praises of the Unions and went so far as to pronounce them—the pure and simple Trades Unions expressly and distinguished from the New Trades Unions—to be “the bulwark of the nation and of modern society.” A big hole, such a big hole is knocked into the Seattle *Socialist* pronouncement that nothing is left of it.—Nothing? Aye, something is left, and that something is essential to the full appreciation of the Seattle *Socialist*’s tumbings.

There IS quite a fight on against the Unions by employers, but those employers are not capitalists, proper, they are not the pace-setting capitalists; they are the “left-overs,” the smaller (relatively speaking) crew of the employers’ class who find it hard to keep step with the big fellows, and who seek to ease their march by ridding themselves of the Unions. They are the Parry crowd. In other words, in so far as there is any “strategy” in the matter, the strategy consists in close friendship between the real capitalists and the Unions, which they seek to dominate through the fakirs, and which they can dominate simply because, being big capitalists, they have a sufficient corruption fund to keep their labor lieutenants in pay; while on the other hand, the Parry crowd of sinking capitalists, having no such funds at their disposal can not out-bid the big capitalists in the purchase of the labor-lieutenants, and consequently are engaged with the Trades Unions in a free fight, where “strategy” is clean out of question.

Thus the utterance of the Seattle *Socialist*, tumbling in the eleven-yard-shirt of the full-grown Social Question, lines up the paper in a fight, not for Socialism, but in one that belongs to the teething-and-measles period of the Question—the clapperclawing period of small and competing capitalists with pure and simpledom as a caricature of the capitalist.

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

Uploaded May 2007

slpns@slp.org