

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 2, NO. 293.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 19, 1902.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

TEXT AND COMMENTARY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNDER the heading “Socialism To Be Opposed When It Attacks Religion,” a Pittsburg, Pa., “religious” paper, *The Observer*, by name, has an editorial which is reproduced below with running comments:

“It cannot be denied that a great part of the literature of Socialism, and a majority, perhaps, of the Socialist leaders, are unfriendly to the Christian view of life.”

That depends. There are scores upon scores of “Christian views of life.” The diversity of opinion among the holders of “the Christian view of life” is such that if these “view holders” were to be locked up in Madison Square Garden and left to settle the matter, all the ambulances of the city would be kept busy carrying to the hospitals the wounded and killed. *The Observer* should be more precise.

“Socialist leaders of prominence in every country regard life on earth as the be-all and end-all of existence,”

Hold on! Not so fast! Where did you get that from, Mr. *Observer*? You must have been digging in the same muck-heap from which Archbishop Corrigan got the yarn that he spun out to his congregation of labor-fleecers about Karl Marx having recanted his law of values just before he died.

“and look forward to heaven on earth under Socialist regime. They scoff at the view of life which makes the earth a place of probation and exile. They have no patience with men who turn their eyes longingly to the world beyond for a redress of the countless wrongs suffered on earth.”

Correct! This time thou speakest Truth. The Socialist has no patience for the poltroon who will tolerate Wrong, and less patience for the Knave who will shield it

by turning the attention of the victims to the clouds.

“They believe, and rightly, that if men can be brought to regard this life as the sum of human existence their impatience with social wrong will be quickened, and their faith in the Socialist program increased. For millions upon millions of men the Socialistic heaven would then be the only thing worth living for and hoping for.”

These statements, tho' they betray a clumsy touch, may not imply any more than appears, and are correct, too. The difference between the Socialist and the “religionist” generally is that while the latter would profit by sorrows, making that the greatest lubricator of purse-strings to his advantage, the former utilizes sorrow only as texts to preach from and to prove to the sorrowing that “God helps those who help themselves,” and that the cloth that will wipe their tears is one that they can and will have to weave for themselves.

“Perhaps many of the Socialist leaders are not hostile, but merely indifferent to religion, but the fact remains that a vast number of them conduct their propaganda in such a way as to identify Socialism with irreligion.”

Hold on again, Mr. *Observer*. Don't fling words about in that style. “Religion”? “Irreligion”? Define. If you mean by “religion” the sentiment that prompts man to “love his neighbor as himself,” there is no more religious being on earth than the Socialist. If, however, you mean by “religion” a hypocritical utterance of the above maxim, accompanied with the burning at the stake or the wishing, if you only had the power, to burn at the stake the neighbor who does not agree with you upon the name, the color of the eye and beard, the age and the details of the life of your God, then, indeed, and by the Great Jehovah, there is none more irreligious than the Socialist, nor one who more strenuously will fight your sort of “religion” until its blasphemous rites are exterminated.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded September 2006