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EDITORIAL

## LO, THE REVOLUTIONISTS!

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE *Daily People* reporter of the Social Democratic mass meeting, held last night, enjoyed the show so immensely and took such voluminous notes, that it became impossible to get the report ready for this morning's issue. Rather than have the epoch-making occurrence remain wholly unrecorded in this morning's columns, a condensed account will be here given editorially of the two leading speeches, and a few of the most thrilling incidents.

The two principal speeches were delivered by Candidates A.L. Boudjianoff and Simon Pollack—the two illustrious gentlemen who, as lawyer and notary public, have just been figuring in an action for an injunction by an employer against his employees, the Ladies' Waistmakers' Union.

Mr. Boudjianoff said in part:

“The Social Democratic party represents freedom. It is the living contrast of the tyranny represented by the Socialist Labor Party. I am one of ‘the 300,000 best men’ whom that party kicked out. I am one of the men who would not submit to its narrow, dictatorial and Spanish inquisitorial ways. As a standard-bearer of the Social Democratic party, I stand here to give testimony of the freedom it allows—did I say ‘allows’?—no, that we, its members TAKE as our birthright. We have to live. The pure and simple union is there to help us to a living. My profession is lawsuits; whether they are injunctions or not, and whomsoever they may be against. I have just been pocketing fees in an injunction suit against a union by an employer. Any wrong in that? Has not the employer got to pay me? Don't I thereby work for the Social Revolution by ‘living on the enemy,’ the capitalist who sues for an injunction? Now, think of that narrow S.L.P. kicking me out for such practices! Think of its dictatorial notion of attempting to direct how I shall earn my living! Just think of that Spanish inquisitorial spirit of prying into my private business! Avant! Avast!

“That abominable Socialist Labor Party seeks to wreck the unions. If the unions were what it wants them to be, men of my profession would have to eat snow-balls in winter. If unions did not keep up the capitalist

class, whence would we get lawsuits? We of the Social Democracy reject all such notions as trash and new fangled. We hold with our friend Millerand in France, whom our delegation to the International Congress supported. He sent soldiers to shoot down strikers. Good! That brings business both ways: it gives us something to talk about, and it brings lawsuits. We believe in getting something now and something to live. And so we do not object to suits against workingmen when one of us gets the job, or in fusing with Republicans and Democrats. We are revolutionists. Who ever heard of revolutionists who are against freedom? That's why we dote on freedom and practise it. We do as we please. Hence we were kicked out, we, the 'best men' of the S.L.P.—kicked out by that tyrannous S.L.P.! And that's why we formed the Social Democracy!"

The vast array of empty seats listened attentively to the speaker, and the business Socialists on the platform applauded frantically. The next speaker was Candidate Pollock. As there was somewhat less Yiddish in his brogue than in Mr. Boudjianoff's, he could be taken down more fully. He hobbled to the front. The limp in Mr. Pollack's gait is due to the precipitancy with which three years ago he threw himself one midnight out of the window of the house of an irate husband, who pursued him with a pistol. Mr. Pollack broke a leg or two on the occasion, and still limps.

He said in part:

"Yes, that's what we are! We are lovers of freedom, and therefore are we revolutionists. I too am one of the numerous 'best men' whom the tyrannous S.L.P. kicked out. The S.L.P. calls itself 'revolutionary,' and its members 'revolutionists.' Pshaw! It does not believe either in injunctions against workingmen or free love! They 'revolutionists'? Why, absurd! Not one of them limps. Look at me! I carry on my body the scars, so to speak, of my revolutionary struggles. I do! You see it! And so do many of us in this freedom-loving and truly revolutionary Social Democ"—

The speaker's voice was here drowned by the applause, especially from the platform; and the scene that ensued lasted so long he broke off his speech, content with his success. Mr. Charles Furman, the Social Democratic candidate for Mayor, jumped to the middle of the platform, extended his arms and, flapping them like wings, twirled on his toes. The *Volkszeitung* editorial staff, headed by Herman Schlueter, and, excepting Alexander Jonas, who tried several times to get up but failed, made a circle around Furman, spread their coat-tails like skirts, and hoofed a

“pas-au-quatre” like ballet dancers, while Mr. Pollack beat time with his hands and Mr. Jonas wobbled time with his head. It was thrilling. And ever and anon the shout went up:

“Freedom!” “Make room for the Revolution!”

The above account, though it may be charged with imperfection, cannot be charged with lack of photographic accuracy in essentials. Such was the essence of the Social Democratic, or *Volkszeitung* party’s Cooper Union mass meeting last evening.

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