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EDITORIAL

SHOT NO. 2.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Louisville, Ky., *Journal of Labor*, well known as an organ of the capitalist class has gathered a long string of questions which it heads “Pertinent Questions for Socialists to Answer.” It is not our habit to answer the dog that barks from behind the fence. For the canine we keep the toes of our shoes, should he get too near. But even if he remains at a distance, if he is too insolent, we see to—what? To him? No! To his master. And so now, especially seeing that his master—the piebald combination that feeds and eggs him on—has been stupid enough to expose himself through these questions as a target that it will be fun to riddle with shot. So now and at it, shot after shot—at the master. Shot No. 1 having been fired last week, now for No. 2.

Another of the “questions” is this:

“Is it not true that the policy of Socialist journals has been to slander and malign Trades Union leaders?”

Seeing that the individuals who make up the piebald combine behind the poodle—whether they be lay or clerical—have ever been found anxious when cornered to pronounce themselves “Socialist” of some description or other (Father Doyle is the latest clerical instance to our knowledge, Carroll D. Wright, the latest lay ditto) superfluous as it may be, we shall repeat that the Socialist Labor Party politely, and with whatever firmness may be requisite, declines to shoulder the “Socialism” of that mongrel crew. Excluding, accordingly, all such “Socialisms,” the answer is:

No! The statement implied in the question is false of the whole cloth; moreover the shoe lies on the other foot.

The journals of the Socialist Labor Party have made a long number of charges

against certain Trades Union leaders, in each instance named by name. For instance:

Gompers has been charged with and convicted of endorsing Jacob Cantor for Senator in this city within six months after Cantor had stood by and even applauded Governor Flower for sending the militia of the State to Buffalo, to break the efforts of the switchmen on strike to enforce the ten-hour law for railroad workers, which law the same Gompers had praised as a victory; again,

Tobin has been charged with and convicted of making contracts that expressly provide security to the employers against higher wages, in consideration of their forcing their employes to pay dues to Tobin, and the documents were published; again,

Mitchell was charged with and convicted of helping the bituminous coal mine owners, Hanna among them, by keeping up the strike of the anthracite miners, while ordering the bituminous wing of the union to scab it upon its anthracite wing by remaining at work and furnishing coal. The figures were published showing the picnic that the bituminous coal mine owners had during the strike turning out coal at almost five times higher prices than usual—due to the scarcity produced by the anthracite strike which was obviously lost; again,

Perkins of the cigarmakers was charged with and convicted of making himself a telephone for the lying claims of the capitalist class regarding the improved sanitation and longer lives of the working class. His figures, claiming that the cigarmakers were enjoying better health and longer lives, were pilloried with facts gathered from his own trade's journal and with the figures furnished by the Census itself, showing a vaster mortality; again,

A number of Trades Union leaders were charged and convicted of preventing the unification of the working class through the high initiation fees and dues that they demand—all intended to keep out members and establish a hard-shell corporation for a few; they were charged and convicted of denying the necessity of political action by Labor, while at the same time they were found on lobbying committees to Legislatures; they were charged and convicted of pretending to aim at the improvement of the working class by fathering certain legislative resolutions, and then betrayed their hypocrisy by supporting the parties of the capitalist class

who would not listen to any such resolutions; they were charged and convicted with facts, figures and reasoning of ignorance and stupidity, and of responsibility for the obvious impotence of the Unions and for the obvious decline of the condition of the working class. To sum up, in a pamphlet entitled *Two Pages from Roman History* a long list of these miscreant labor leaders is furnished, stating the exact act of betrayal of the working class that they, as the “labor lieutenants” of the capitalist class, are guilty of.

Now, then, only in the sense that “the greater the truth the greater the libel” can these gentry be said to have been “slandered and maligned{”} by the Socialist Labor Party—and such “slandering and maligning” will continue, and must. Capitalism is a plunderer of the working class; the plunder could not be as conveniently practiced without the aid of the labor fakir, that

Bat of the Indian brakes,
Whose pinions fan the wounds she makes,
And soothing thus the dreamer’s pains,

helps the capitalist class to drink the life-blood from the workers’ veins.

And there goes the second shot through the poodle’s master.

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

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