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EDITORIAL

A JOINT ANSWER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Hon. Algernon Rosicrucius Lee, the employe and Mayoralty candidate of the Volkszeitung Corporation, having challenged the Hons. Wm. M. Ivins, Geo. B. McClellan and Wm. Randolph Hearst, the candidates of the Republican, Democratic and Municipal Ownership parties, respectively, to a public debate, the three latter gentlemen are reported to have met, conferred upon the challenge, and agreed to forward a joint answer to the challenger. The joint answer is as follows:

“Mr. A.R. Lee,

“Illustrious Sir:

“Not slight was our surprise at the news you conveyed to us that you also are running for Mayor. Our strenuous campaign activity must have caused the fact to escape us. Nevertheless, great as was our surprise thereat, it was still greater when, upon ascertaining the principles of your employer and nominator, the Volkszeitung Corporation, we see you strike a posture of hostility towards us. Why should this be thus?

“The Volkszeitung Corporation holds, and maintains with praiseworthy zeal, that the workingman pays taxes.—So do we; emphatically so. We may not be quite ready to accept that, since the Spanish War, the workingman’s taxes have been increased at the rate of \$100 for each member of his family, as the Corporation’s statistician, Herr Alexander Jonas, pretends. But that is a matter of detail upon which we should not split. Upon the principal fact we are agreed: the workingmen pay taxes.

“The Volkszeitung Corporation holds that progress must be made by palliatives, and its municipal platform declares in favor of gradual municipalization.—So do we; precisely so. Moreover, seeing that the workingmen pay taxes, and seeing that, in the measure that municipal franchises are municipalized, the burden of taxation is lighted from the shoulders of the taxpayer, we, the undersigned trio, are, at least on these two heads, fully in accord with both the methods and the aims of the Corporation, and the Corporation is in accord with us.

“Nor are the vital points on which we fraternize exhausted by these

two and leading heads. We fraternize on many other, indeed, on all vital points. For instance, on the point of Trades Unionism. The Corporation holds that to 'bore from without' the A.F. of L. is mortal sin, and it holds that those who do so, especially if they 'raise the lid' from the A.F. of L. pot, more especially if they organize what they call 'class-conscious' Unions, are 'scabs,' 'De Leonite disrupters' and should be thrown upon the streets to starve.—Need we assure you, illustrious Sir, that them are our sentiments to a T?

"We need not multiply examples. You call yourself a Socialist. We believe you; aye, we know you are! By these tokens we are Socialists also. Does it behoove Socialists to present the unseemly spectacle of disharmony among themselves? Is it not more becoming for us to present a united front to the common enemy, those unspeakable impossibilists, that weed-like stubbornly uneradicable Socialist Labor Party, that presumes to maintain that the workingman is not plundered by taxation but is plundered in the shop; that denies that municipalization will be of any benefit to the working class; that vilely asserts municipal issues are only 'politicians' tricks'; and that, logically enough from their unpractical premises, makes the life of the A.F. of L. leaders a burden by giving their aid to such monstrous conceptions as the I.W.W.? Should you not rather throw the weight of your mighty intellect jointly with us against that S.L.P. that we all hate with the hatred of all sane, safe, practical and possibilist Socialists?

"Illustrious Sir, in your recent and distant Minnesota home you surely had no opportunity, and you have been too short a resident here to be informed upon the calumnies that are rife in our city. We desire to save the spotless character that you brought with you from the land of Minnehaha. Evil tongues have it that the Volkszeitung Corporation is in politics for business only—some call it 'peesiness'—and that it set up its political party only as a tender to secure advertisements, which the Impossibilism of the S.L.P. interfered with. We know this is foul calumny. But do you realize that your consenting to figure as the Corporation's candidate will give a color to the further calumny that you, the Corporation's employe, are but a stool-pigeon for the corporation's business? If you had a ghost of a show to be elected the matter might look otherwise; as things are, a strong color is given to the stool-pigeon roorback.

"In view of all this, illustrious Sir, and anxiously wishing to save you the triple mortification of losing your character, of cutting a ridiculous figure at the polls, and, above all, of injuring the cause that all of us sane, practical and possibilist Socialists have at heart—in view of all this we, the undersigned trio, have agreed to propose to you, jointly with your running mate, the Hon. Morris Braun, that you come over to us. We promise you a hospitable reception. You have said yourself that we are honest; as to Mr. Morris Braun, we can assure him that he will find in our camp many a friend who esteems him highly, having more than once

weighed and never found him wanting—ever finding him safe, sane, possible, above all practical.

“As an evidence of the harmonious feelings, which, despite outward appearances, bind us, the undersigned trio, together, we have agreed among ourselves that if you and Mr. Morris Braun accept our proposition, we shall not wrangle about your possession, but will toss pennies for you.”

The above joint answer, the tapped wires say, has been signed and sealed by the Hons. Ivins, McClellan and Hearst and been delivered to the Hon. Algernon Rosicrucius Lee.

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

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