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EDITORIAL

NEUTRAL BETWEEN PRO-CAPITALIST AND ANTI-CAPITALIST POLICIES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**A**FTER thunderous applause”—thus does the Chicago *Daily Socialist* of May 15, describe the racket that followed upon the speech made by Mr. Algernon Lee against the proposed meek-as-Moses recommendation in favor of the “industrial form of organization”—the recommendation was “killed”; and “loud applause,” the paper adds, punctuated the closing sentence of the orator. What may that closing sentence have been? Here it is:

“I want a declaration sent out that cannot be used by Mr. Gompers to attack the Industrial Workers of the World; and I want a resolution that cannot be used, in the name of the Socialist party, by the Industrial Workers of the World to attack the American Federation of Labor.” In other words, Mr. Lee did not want his party to take sides; he wished his party to remain neutral in the conflict between the two principles represented by the two economic organizations.

Now, what are those conflicting principles, respectively? Let the presidential candidate, nominated by the identical convention, with identical clatter, answer the question—rather than the organ of the “Union-smashing” Socialist Labor Party.

In an article entitled “The Coming Labor Union,” which appeared in the *Miners’ Magazine* of October 26, 1906, Mr. Eugene V. Debs speaks of the principle of the A.F. of L. as a “pro-capitalist policy”, and association with the same as “contamination”; and, expressly contrasting the I.W.W. with the A.F. of L., he refers to each in these words: “A bona fide labor Union, organized for the benefit of the working class, and a bogus labor organization, defended by every capitalist paper and supported by every capitalist in the land.”

Accordingly, the neutrality that Mr. Lee proposed and the S.P. convention

adopted “with less than a score of votes in opposition,” as the Chicago *Daily Socialist* jubilantly reports, was a neutrality between Honesty and Fraud, between Cleanliness and “Contamination”, between an “anti-capitalist” and a “pro-capitalist policy.”

The question comes, Can this be? Seeing there is no “can” about it, the further question forces itself to the mind, Why?

Again, rather than have the question answered by the organ of the “blackguard” S.L.P., as the exquisitely gentlemanly organs of the S.P. love to designate *The People* and its Party, we shall again give the floor to the gentleman who was again strained through the loins of the S.P. convention itself, as its party’s presidential standard-bearer.

In the identical article, above quoted from, and referring to the forward step in I.W.W.-direction, taken by the American Labor Union several years before, Mr. Debs said:

“The press of the Socialist party, almost solidly, instead of cheering the new departure and encouraging and supporting the movement, treated the matter coldly, or damned it with faint praise. *These papers felt themselves committed to the American Federation of Labor, and feared to offend the anti-Socialist organizations. Upon no other ground is such opposition to Socialist action by Socialist papers conceivable.*” The underscoring is ours.

Delegate Corngold stated at the convention that there are “more industrial Unionists in the A.F. of L. than in the I.W.W.” The statement is correct; the delegate might have gone even further, and said that probably a majority of the A.F. of L. membership is industrial Unionist at heart. But in the A.F. of L. they are terrorized into craft Union submission to the Civic Federationized officials, just as the Russian people who aspire to freedom are held in dumb submission by the terrorism of the Czar. No help is to come to these industrial Unionists in the A.F. of L. from the quarter of the Socialist party. On the contrary.

On the 20th of May of this year, addressing the Episcopal national convention in Garden City, L.I., the Rev. J. Howard Mellish announced that “the Church can not *take sides either with capital or labor.*” Everybody understands what that means. It means an express declaration and promise of protection to the

Plunderbund class. The “neutrality” of the S.P. towards industrialism is of the nature of the neutrality of the Rev. Mellish between Capital and Labor: it is like the “neutrality” of the Kaiser towards the aspiring Russian democracy: it is a crack aimed at the head of the industrial Unionists in the A.F. of L.; and Mr. Eugene V. Debs allows his name to be used—a right that none pretends to dispute him, but that others claim an equal right to criticize,—in the S.P. manœuvre to add swing to the club that gives the crack.

There is no such thing as “neutrality” between Wrong and Right, between a “Pro-Capitalist” and an “Anti-Capitalist policy” to a bona fide convention of bona fide Socialism. This is pre-eminently an instance of “he who is not with Me, being against Me.”

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