

EDITORIAL

MUCH IN FEW WORDS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**T**HE emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself” is one of those principles that contain, by condensing, a whole world of experience; and the principle it expounds is read by the light of no torch better than that of the torch of opposition to it that is furnished by the alleged intellectuals, “Intellectuals,” for short; and by the light of the torch of false support that is lent to it by the “Horny Handed” element.

Not a single Revolution can be checked off on the long and resplendent rosary of Revolutions, that mark the onward March of the human race, without the Revolution being marked with the following two out of several other features:

1. It took the field equipped with all the intellectual conquests of the Age;
2. The class whose interests were incarnate in the Revolution took intelligent part therein.

The Socialist maxim that the working class must depend upon itself for its emancipation does no more than summarize these two facts which themselves are a summary of all great historic upheavals.

The Horny Handed element accept the maxim, but interpret it to exclude all but “horny hands,” together with what these expressly imply by the term. According to this element clean habits are a badge of treason, knowledge a sign of tyranny.

The “Intellectuals” reject the maxim as not in keeping with historic antecedents. They point out that invaluable elements in all Revolutions have been those who had profited by the advantages of culture enjoyed by the respective Ruling Class, and who threw their lot with the respective Ruled, hence revolutionary class.

A peep below the surface of these two opposing elements reveals both as unfit for a share in the Revolution.

The “Horny Handed” will be discovered to be ready betrayers of the class they are of, and to which they profess devotion. Their dominant quality is vainglory, envi-

ousness, and egotism. Unfit themselves for the positions that their vainglory demands for themselves, their hatred becomes deadly toward the more favored elements whose attainments the Revolution needs. Rather than be “ignored,” “slighted,” etc., etc., the Horny Handed will sacrifice the Revolution of his class. To what acts of betrayal the “Horny Handed” will stoop tragic pages of history record in the conduct of the element, which, in previous revolutions, corresponds to the Horny Handed of today; and the drama has kept their memory green.

On parallel lines runs the course of our “Intellectuals.” Sufficiently disconnected from the proletariat to have brought him in some kind of touch with the intellectual advantages enjoyed by the Ruling Class, the “Intellectual” imagines himself of clay superior to the proletariat. Never sufficiently connected with the Ruling Class to have enjoyed the full measure of the intellectual advantages which it offers, the “Intellectual” can not supplement the revolutionary class with the intellectual conquests of the Age. He imagines that a more or less grammatical English is a complete substitute for knowledge. Naturally rebuffed by the revolutionary class, and unacceptable to the Ruling Class, the “Intellectual” becomes what the mulatto is reported, in the histories of Hayti’s war for independence from France, to have been and become—a being who looked down upon the Negroes who were fighting for independence under Touissaint L’Ouverture, and who, in turn, was mistrusted by the French officers in the field against the Negro patriots. Betrayal of whatever side they went over to marked those mulattoes’ conduct. Certain betrayal of the proletariat’s cause marks the “Intellectual.”

All is implied in the Marxian maxim that the proletariat itself must emancipate itself. Only its presence—organized, drilled and disciplined—can safeguard the revolutionary interests that the Social Revolution is big with.

Profoundly wise is the Socialist Labor Party for providing that a decided majority of its units (Sections) shall consist of actual wage-earners.¹

¹ [A reference to the following provision of the SLP Constitution, as amended by the party’s Eleventh National Convention in 1912:

**ARTICLE II.
Sections.**

Section 1. Seven persons, five of who must be actual wageworkers, may form a Section, provided they acknowledge the Platform, Constitution and Resolutions of the Party and belong to no other political party. But if more than seven propose to organize a Section then at least three-fourths must be actual wageworkers.

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