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EDITORIAL

TURN ON THE LIGHT!

By DANIEL DE LEON

THIS month's issue of our esteemed contemporary, the Edinburgh *Socialist*, organ of the Socialist Labor Party of Great Britain, shoots the following shaft of satire at H.M. Hyndman and the set he stands for:

“The King has written a letter expressing sympathy with Mr. Keir Hardie and asking how he progresses.”—Edinburgh *Evening News*, Tuesday, Oct. 27, 1903.

“In connection with the above our Astrological Editor has handed in the following journalistic forecasts:—

“‘We are informed on the best possible authority that His Majesty sent a letter regretting his inability to be present at last week's Central Dinner of the London S.D.F., owing to the fact of a previous engagement in the pigeon shooting line at Monte Carlo—not to mention a few baccarat parties to which he has absolutely pledged himself. He sent his best wishes for the success of the Federation, and hoped he would soon have another opportunity of shaking the hand of his friend Mr. Quelch. He explained that he had somewhat misunderstood the aims of the Party until he had perused their recent Coronation Manifesto, which had put to rest all his misgivings as to their loyalty and devotion. The communication was received with enthusiasm, and when Mr. Hyndman rose to propose the health of His Majesty there was not a dry eye in the company.’”

Is the shot wrongful, is it cruel, is it of the nature of “Socialists quarreling with Socialists,” is it a “gratuitous insult,” is it “mud-slinging”? Let's see. The Paris *Le Socialiste*, organ of the bona fide, that is, the anti-Millerandist or Jauresist Socialists of France, of the 8th of this very month utters the following cry:

“HYNDMAN AND...”

“A set of folks who once figured under the name of ‘Group of Collectivist Students,’ but that has long since gone out of existence, have granted themselves the pleasure to have Hyndman speak on ‘The Imperialism of Mr. Chamberlain’ in the hall of the Scientific Societies, and under the presidency of Jaures.

“To fetch the paladin of more than twenty years of the political class struggle in England and present him under the auspices of one of the chiefs of the ministerial bourgeoisie of France;

“To give the floor to the man who it is not so long ago challenged Millerand to defend his policy of participation in a debate with him, and to have the floor thus given him by one of the most ardent champions of Millerandism, by him who, only last week, supported Millerand in his Ministerial report, by the identical Jaures whom Hyndman himself recently styled ‘a watered Millerand’;

“To collect on the same platform the Socialist who not only is at present engaged in combating the anti-labor politics of Chamberlain but also struck with hand and feet and scourged the capitalist authors of the Transvaal war, with the publicist who, in that same war openly took sides with the English companies of Chamberlain against the Boers ‘in the name of civilization’;

“That’s curious.

“Was Citizen Hyndman aware of the net spread before him? Did he step in with full knowledge? Or did he accept merely in a spirit of international courtesy? That’s the question.

“All we can say is that he is not disgusted.”

The facts tearfully recorded by *Le Socialiste* are the vindication of the Edinburgh *Socialist*. Utopianism means blindness to facts, hence visionariness as to consequences. It is Utopianism to ignore the agency of man in the introduction and conquest of new ideas, especially of revolutionary ideas. Hence, it is a not a least important duty of Socialist agitation to acquaint the masses with, by pitchforking, the stage-strutter, whose Socialism consists of an overpowering itch to hear himself talk—on the right side, if possible, on any side, if wanted.

Principle is greater than any man, but without man principle collapses. Corruption lurks behind the stage-strutter. It is the duty of Socialist agitation to expose him. This duty is as important as that of abstract instruction. It is upon man and not phantoms that a great Movement rests. To turn the light upon the spooks is a Socialist duty.

Turn on the world-encircling light,—and ever stronger!

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

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