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EDITORIAL

MOONSHINE REFLEXES OF CAPITALISM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT was about ten years ago when a certain sight, rich in instruction, was seen in this land. Rotund and rubicund capitalists and their orators—the Depews, the Hannas, the Belmonts, the Bourke Cockrans, etc.,—all of them folks of frequent trips to Europe, rose before large audiences, mostly of workingmen, and argued against Bryan saying: “You want a dollar that will pass in Europe as well as America. Imagine you took a trip to Europe thinking you had \$5,000 in your pockets, and when you arrived there found that the \$5,000 amounted to only \$1,000! Would not that be horrible? It would smash your European trip!” The sight, as we said, was rich in instruction. It revealed the spirit of capitalist fairness of argument. Workingmen, who would be thrice happy could they lay by as little as \$24 during the winter, so as to be able to take a trip into the country during the dog-days, are coolly and shamefully urged to establish a monetary system at home which would enable the capitalist idler, after he had idled away the winter in America, to also idle away the summer in Europe. The whole trend of the argument was that which the monkey addressed to the cat when he wished to use her paws to draw the hot chestnuts from the fire—FOR HIM TO EAT. The sight was the real light given out by the capitalist sun.

The moonshine reflex of that same light is now being given out by the pure and simple political Socialists who own private papers, or are scheming to own such, in order to exploit the Movement. Knocked out at every point; shown to be the creators of cliques in any party that tolerates them; proven to throw themselves upon the party for support, and then turning around and despotizing the party at whose breast they were nursed; exposed as demagogic cringers for pennies before the members, whom they do not hesitate to insult as “lobsters” and “idiots” if these same members refuse meekly to accept their stupidities as wisdom, and insist upon

doing their own thinking;—in short beaten from pillar to post, these pure and simple political Socialists, who hold privately-owned papers, address the workingmen in their party with these words: “Just think of the tyranny of it! If any of you wants to start his own paper he is not to be given freedom to do so. You want a party that will give you full freedom to start as many papers as you choose (sic)!” Is there any difference between the spirit of this argument and that of the capitalists on the score of trips to Europe? If there is any difference it is in favor of the capitalists. It is the difference between the bold, daring highwayman who strikes for a big stake, and the cowering, cowardly sneak thief who aims at crumbs.

Impossible is it for a pure and simple political Socialist to disengage himself from his bourgeois affinities. The same petty bourgeois causes that make of him a politician, that bounds the horizon of his aspirations with a political job, and that leads him to look at workingmen simply as voting cattle to carry him into office—those same petty bourgeois instincts lead him to echo the disingenuous arguments of the Upper Capitalist, use them with the working class, and talk to poor workingmen as though each owned a Babylonian potatoes and Egyptian onion grocery store, or some other pluck-me contrivance, or were maturing some embezzlement scheme, or were perfecting some leg-pulling plan to scare up money with which to start HIS paper!

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