

EDITORIAL

AMERICANISM—WHAT IS IT?

By DANIEL DE LEON

LIKE medicaments, like styles in clothing and hats, all of which go up and down according to fashion, it is periodically the fashion to denounce Socialism as “un-American.” Just now that particular fashion in flamboyantly in vogue. It is a veritable outbreak. On all hands “un-Americanism!” is the mystic term hurled at Socialism.

What is “Americanism”?

Is it love of flag? That love is found strong in all other nations, European and Asiatic.

Is it love of country? What country is loveless of itself?

Is it the belief that there is nothing comparable with the American? Why, the average German is not behind in sentiment toward Germans; and as to the French, the term “Chauvin” covers even broader areas than our own “Jingo.”

Is it, perchance, devotion to a republic? The Swiss cannot be denied the like devotion, and they have attested the same many a generation longer than any American.

Is it honor, is it truthfulness, is it purity of conduct? Even if one were to claim these qualities as nationally American, one has to admit they flourish to an equal extent in other countries as well.

Is it objection to Socialism? If that is what our “Americans” have in mind then they are off. There is not a ruling class on the face of the earth that has any more love for Socialism than the ruling class of America, or whose laws are more favorable to Socialism than American legislation.

What, then, is there that typifies “Americanism” above all other nationalisms?

Echoes answer: “Nothing.”

The cry of “un-American” is the unwisest that the anti-Socialist of this country

can take up. The use of the term is a positive incitement to ascertaining what that distinctive “American” feature may be; and the endeavor is rewarded with a discovery that the “un-American” shouter should be most anxious to keep dark.

That discovery is that “Americanism,” in the minds of those whose lips use the term “un-American,” is as indistinguishable from that for which “Capitalism” stands in Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland and all other countries as peas in a pod are distinguishable from one another.

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