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EDITORIAL

Let's Understand Each Other.

By DANIEL DE LEON

From Lohn, Tex., we have received the following communication, that deserves some attention.

“To the Editor of THE PEOPLE—The following is a resolution which was adopted at Lohn, Tex., by the Lohn People's Party Club:

“RESOLVED, That we, the Populist Club of Lohn, Tex., send friendly greetings to the Socialist Labor party club recently organized at San Antonio, Tex.

“The preceding is sent to you for publication in THE PEOPLE.”

It is just because we appreciate the good intentions that breathe through this resolution, and through the act of forwarding it here for publication, that we deem the occasion fit for a few plain words.

The political arena is not a ball room. In a ball room one single couple would feel lonesome. It is a feature of the ball room that many couples whirl on its floor simultaneously, and, what is more, in perfect accord. In the ball room one common harmonious impulse animates the dancers; collisions are not looked for but carefully avoided; the enjoyment of each is the certain measure of the enjoyment of all.

It is just the reverse with the political arena, and, when that is not the case, it is a certain sign of political stagnation and corruption. In epochs of healthy political life, a political party has a mission to fulfill; something that is in force is to be thrown out or upheld; something that is not in force is to be established or resisted. At such periods each political party—be it enlisted in behalf of or against the things that be—say as clearly as is possible: “None other but myself is entitled to the field; I am in the field to overthrow all others; the simple fact of my existence is a denial of the right to live of any other.” The political party that can contemplate with equanimity the existence of an adversary, and can exchange kisses with it, is not a party built on principle, but a

party built for political log-rolling. All political parties of historic importance aim at the upholding of an existing principle or at the extermination of such, and, with such extermination, at the establishment of a new.

The days we are living in are the days of strong political pulsations. Two principles are contending for supremacy—The one, now in force, is the principle of the private ownership of the things man needs to work with; it is the principle that to the robbers belong the spoils; it is, in short, the principle of wage slavery that condemns the majority to arduous toil and privation, while a criminal few enjoy luxury in idleness. This principle is the principle of CAPITAL. The other principle is that he who works may live, and he who does not shall die the death; it is the principle, consequently, that demands the public ownership of the means of production, without which robbery is inevitable; it is the principle of SOCIALISM. The two cannot live together. One or the other must bite the dust.

In our own country, as in all other so-called civilized countries, there is only one party that stands squarely and uncompromisingly upon the principle of Socialism, and that demands the unconditional surrender of CAPITAL. All other parties either pointedly uphold capitalism or wander from the question. There can be no love lost between the Socialist Labor party and any other. At great critical epochs, he who is not right is wrong; there can be no “in between.”

It is one of the hardest things to-day to get two men who call themselves Populists to agree upon a definition of the term or the aim of the thing. Recognizing this, we wish to believe that the Lohn, Tex., Populist Club has discovered how mixed up the crowd is from { * * * prin}ciple¹ for which it wishes to fight is straight out Socialism, and that the camp it should be in is the camp of the S.L.P. We wish, accordingly, to think that the greetings it sends are but a forerunner of its application for enrolment on the list of our party's organization. So interpreting its greetings, we receive and give them publication.

We repeat, these are not the piping days of peace, nor is the issue that is up one that allows of dalliance. It concerns the lives of the men and women, together with their children, who toil; it concerns the existence of the nation; it concerns the fate of civilization.

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

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¹ [One line of type shorn away during binding process.—R.B.]