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EDITORIAL

WHICH IS IT?

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE opinion of the Socialist Labor Party on the English style of Trades Unionism, known here as pure and simpledom, is well known. It has been the subject of articles, leaflets and pamphlets. Summed up, that opinion is that these organizations, being run by the Labor Fakir, are made to move obedient to the dictates of the capitalists, that they have become untrue even to their own economic pretences, and that they can no more be considered to be “labor organizations” than an Army, which consists of workingmen, can be considered a “workingman’s army,” when it is manned and officered by representatives of the capitalist class.

For holding these views the Socialist Labor Party was made the target of the vilest sort of abuse by the Kangaroo Social Democracy. The S.L.P.’s arguments were never touched, could not be touched; less yet could the array of facts be touched on which the S.L.P.’s argument was planted. The Kangaroos simply left all that alone; and squirted dirt; and patted pure and simpledom on the back; and licked the boots of the Organized Scabbery that led the pure and simpler; and sang songs in praise of them, pronouncing them “noble wagers of the class struggle.” A leader in such tactics was the *New York Volkszeitung*.—Stick a pin there.

The next fact to consider is a letter from London, published in a conspicuous place by the identical *Volkszeitung* in its issue of the 3rd instant. The letter is too lengthy to reproduce; it is upon the latest achievement of British Trades Unionism. A clear idea of it may, however, be had from its introductory passages. The first paragraph of the said letter is as follows:

“It is high time that we submit our opinion on English Trades Unionism to a revision. Not only has it smothered the political class struggle; it now threatens also to make impossible the economic class struggle. The closer one inspects the recent history of the English

workingman, the clearer does it become that Trades Unionism divides the workingmen and sets them at odds with one another, and that it hampers the wheels of Progress.”

Stick a pin there too, and join the two.

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Experience has established that when a man is ready to detect wrong at a distance and announces it, but is slow to perceive the article at home and there make it known, one has to do with either a fool, or a knave, or a combination of both.

Irish landlords in New York, who evict their tenants by the squad, are found to be loudest and foremost on Irish platforms to denounce evictions in Ireland.

American Jingoese, who attend “Lynching Bees” at home, are the most pretentious declaimers against the barbarisms of the “Mafia” in Italy.

American capitalists, who lead in blacklisting their employees, are classic Fourth of July rhetoricians on the despotism of the feudal lords.
Etc.; etc.; etc.

Are these people fools? or are they knaves? or are they a compound of both. The answer, whatever it be, will fit the Kangaroo *Volkszeitung* with its concealment of the fact that the English style of Trades Unionism in America has become a clog to progress in America, and its publication of the fact touching England.

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

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