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EDITORIAL

THE CATHOLIC UNION AND TIMES AGAIN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

SOCIALISTS are revolutionists. Revolutions may be radical and profound, yet bloodless, and unaccompanied by social upheavals and cataclysm. Such a revolution was the transition from handicraft to steam-manufacture, and from small production to production en masse. The former destroyed medieval industrialism, the latter created modern capitalism. When a Socialist speaks of revolution then he does not mean a violent, premeditated uprising and conflict. He means change, transformation, through evolution. Though he is aware that great social changes and transformations are frequently accompanied by bloodshed he claims that that bloodshed is due to the resistance of the ruling class, who, refusing to evolve must be overthrown, if society would progress. Such bloodshed occurred in our civil war, when the dominating class, the slave owners of the South, sought to impose their out-grown system of slave labor upon the rapidly-growing capitalist system of so-called "free" labor. One had to make way for the other and so the slave-holders fell. The fact that they, too, like our friends the ecclesiastics of Buffalo, denounced the abolition of slavery as an attack upon private property, as rapine-breeding Socialism, counted as naught; social necessity demanded that they go, and go they had to.

The socialist then believes in revolution through evolution. Aware of the tendency of modern institutions toward concentration and consolidation, he consciously labors for that period in the growth of the race when collective ownership of capital shall take the place of capitalist ownership. He consciously antagonizes the capitalist philosophy of progress; offering in its stead that of Socialism; that of collective and not capitalist ownership of capital. He derides all palliatives tending to prolong capitalist ownership, pointing out by actual results their vicious character. Like the physician who would remove the cause of disease instead of tampering with, and profiting through, its

symptoms, the socialist aims to remove the cause of social disease, instead of palliating, and profiting from its effects. And as the physician by this radical treatment secures speedy recovery and perfect health for his patients, so too does the socialist aim to promote and ensure social progress. To accuse him under the circumstances of desiring the destruction of society and to call his intentions criminal is to mistake figment for fact, imagination for science.

The socialist is a revolutionist in principle and an evolutionist in practice.

The socialist, let us repeat, acting in accordance with the tendency toward concentration desires the collective ownership of capital: that part of wealth used in the production of more wealth for capitalist profit and not social use. Socialists are not communists. They do not desire not do they think it essential or beneficial to society that society should own and control ALL property.

This is made clear in the oft-repeated quotation from Schaffle's *Quintessence of Socialism* that "The Alpha and Omega of Socialism is the transformation of private and competing capitals into a united collective capital." This quotation, made by a man who is not a socialist, is eminently true; though it is not entirely accurate, as it implies an arbitrary plan rather than an evolutionary growth.

Again is the fact that socialists are not communists, who desire the social ownership and control of ALL property, made clear in another quotation, not so well known, by another non-socialist: the American professor, Richard T. Ely. He says in his Chataqua lectures "Objections to Socialism," "Socialism, the reader should remember, means simply the socialization of the instruments of production, social control over and management of production, social distribution of the national dividend, and private property in individual income."

Private property, except in the instruments of production and distribution which are social in character and effect, as will be shown later, will be possible under socialism. He who labors will be given an income in proportion, to do with as he chooses. He can spend it in houses, books, libraries, clothes, paintings or what ever he will, SO LONG AS HE DOES NOT USE IT TO ENSLAVE OTHERS. The much-vexed addle-pates, who object without investigating, accordingly will be free to select their own soups and wear the most outrageous styles of clothes, if they care to; so that the argument "I object to

the government telling me what soup I shall eat or what clothes I shall wear” falls like a Buddenseik tenement to the ground. He who will not labor will have to go without soup and clothes, unless his friends or relatives care to support him. Socialism has not relief for those who will live without working.

This, then, is Socialism. Revolutionary in principle, evolutionary in practice, it aims to transform capital into collective property. It is not cataclysmatic; it is not communistic. When, consequently, the *Catholic Union and Times* commends to its readers an address in which the lecturer declares it to be his belief that Socialism is the destruction by one blow, root and branch, of ALL property, it commends a falsehood, not substantiated in any particular by socialist teaching or independent investigation.

And it is with such mental pabulum as that that the *Catholic Union and Times*, through the generosity of a non-Catholic lawyer, seeks to stuff its readers. And such is the inane balderdash which the *Catholic Union and Times* informs its readers is “in line with the Catholic position on this grave subject!”

Still more anon.

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