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EDITORIAL

WHAT “NEUTRALITY” AMOUNTS TO.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AMONG the “whimsical Trades, Union notions” which, according to the Socialist party man Morris Hillquit’s words to the International Socialist Congress at Copenhagen, afflict the Socialist Labor Party, and cause the S.L.P. to leave “a bad taste in the mouth” of the American proletariat, the “notion” that “neutrality,” on the part of a party of Socialism, on the Union Question is a posture of corruption certainly stands in the front ranks.

A political party of Socialism is nothing unless it is a party planted upon the class interests of the proletariat. True such a party is in duty bound to take in non-proletarian elements. Indeed, so to do is one of such a party’s missions. It gives an opportunity to valuable non-proletarian elements, whose virtues would otherwise evaporate, to be turned into the channel of the Social Revolution, and become tributary to the same. All the same, whatever its component elements, a party of Socialism must find its center of gravity in the class interests of the workers. Neutrality by such a body on the Union Question is as much of an incongruity as darkness in a lighted place. It is sheer nonsense. Yet just such a bit of nonsense is a distinguishing feature of the Socialist party.

Nonsense may be held with impunity on matters of no consequence. Where nonsense is held on a matter of consequence the results are such as virtually to nail the holder, self-nailed, on a pillory. This is the present plight that the Socialist party is being exhibited in by its press in this city.

The shoemakers, 5,000 of them, are on strike. The demand is for better, indeed, for living wages. The fight being one of wage slaves against their capitalist masters, has, as a matter of course, extended into a fight of wage slaves, on the one side, against capitalist masters and the Labor-lieutenants of these, on the other side. In this particular instance the fight is between the shoeworkers of this vicinity and the

shoe manufacturers together with Tobin, the A.F. of L. shoe padrone. And what is the attitude of *The Call*? After having published, at the beginning of the conflict, a statement by Tobin and a counter statement by the men on strike, *The Call* has shut up like a clam. It refuses to accept reports of the fight from either side, with the consequence that all information on the strike is shut out of the paper's columns. In short, Neutrality on Unionism is manifesting itself by a Socialist party newspaper as a news suppressor!

Neutrality on Unionism is not Nonsense merely. Neutrality on Unionism is downright Dishonesty. In pursuit of the dishonest policy of siding with the padrones in the A.F. of L. under the false pretense of Neutrality, the S.P. paper *The Call*—a paper that claims to be of and for the workers, withholds from its workingmen readers out of town information that might save them from being lured to the city for strike breaking purposes; and capping the climax,—a newspaper, that claims to convey news, looks as if it were published in Patagonia, so far as any information in its columns is concerned on the at least interesting news item of 5,000 shoeworkers being here on strike.

We shall not say this is what "Neutrality" COMES to. This is what "Neutrality" AMOUNTS to.

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