

EDITORIAL

## A WORD FROM HERVÉ.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**NSWERING an Anarchist by the name of Henri Combes, who objected to the tenacity with which the revolutionary Socialists hold to suffrage and political action whilst they denounce the snares of parliamentarism, Gustave Hervé says in his organ *La Guerre Sociale* (The Social War):



GUSTAVE HERVÉ (1871-1944)

“The crowd walks on the ground: if you fly too high overhead it thinks you are in the clouds and follows you no more.

“Now, this crowd, which does not come to ordinary meetings, comes—rightly or wrongly—to electoral meetings.

“Jobert, when not a candidate, held a public meeting in Paris during a non-election period: two hundred people were there, all the same—already converted.

“Jobert, as a candidate in the municipal elections, during the electoral period, had an audience of three or four thousand citizens, who don’t go out of their way as a rule, and who have no other chance of hearing a revolutionary speech.

“It was the same in the Yonne district.

“I may add that if the same Jobert, not being a candidate, gave the same speeches, adding to them Anarchist phrases or abstention, nobody would listen to him during the electoral fever; and if anybody did listen, all the electors of advanced opinions (the only ones capable of understanding) would regard him as coming there to harm the advanced candidate for the benefit of the reactionary candidate, and would send him packing—him and his ideas.”

Here in America the substance of the identical thought has been expressed by Socialist Labor Party literature in these words:

“Only a political party can preach the revolution in the only way that it must be preached in order to be effective—over and above board. For this reason a political party of the revolution is indispensable: it alone can carry on the propaganda which alone can recruit, drill and crystallize the revolutionary Union, that is, the indispensable Army of Occupation to take and hold, and assume the reins of Government. The existence of universal suffrage in the land emphasizes the point. Chimerical, therefore, is the idea, especially in such a country as this, of expecting to conduct a great Movement, whose palpable aim is a Socialist Revolution, to the slogan of ‘Abstinance from the Ballot-box!’ ‘Direct Action!’ or any such hinting at pure and simple physical force, or dynamitism, frank or veiled.”

With that shallowness of reasoning that typifies Impudent Ignorance, there are wild-eyed and also slummy Anarchists in the land who have done Gustave Hervé the affront of holding him up as their patron saint. The patron saint slaps the faces of these devotees, and the slap re-echoes through the caverns of the country.

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