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EDITORIAL

## A LABOR PARTY?

By DANIEL DE LEON

**F**ROM Albion College, Albion, Mich., the request comes for information upon six questions regarding a Labor Party. The questions are hereby stated, with the answers thereto:

1st. Do you think the plan of an Independent Labor Party feasible and timely? Why?—Wherever there is a proletariat, and the suffrage is free there the broad conditions exist to render a Labor Party feasible and timely. The economic conditions that compel the proletariat to organize into Unions have their supplementary political conditions that likewise point to the necessity of organization into a party. Where either organization or wanting the other must needs be imperfect and inefficient.

2nd. Do you think class-consciousness is sufficiently developed among the laboring people to cause them to support an independent party?—Not all the efforts, through mystification and other processes, to dig the brains out of the proletariat and render them as abject as the Climacidae, those women in Syria of whom Plutarch tells that they were trained to squat on all fours as footstools and step-ladders for their mistresses, or to render them besotted and cruel enough patiently to submit to indignity on earth in exchange for the delight, after earth, of reclining over the balustrades of heaven and beholding those who plundered them on earth sizzling in hell fire—not all the processes put in practice to this end have been aught but dismal failures. Those who succumb are the exception: with the majority the spring of their humanity never is snapped. Superficially looked upon, class-consciousness is absent from the American proletariat. Appearances are mainly that way. The appearance is a thin crust of ice. It has been amply tested: address a crowd of proletarians gathered at random, and the language of their class interests quickly breaks through the ice. The proof of this is amply furnished by the National

Civic Federation in the effort of its lay and clerical capitalist agencies to raise the wall of their labor-lieutenants between the rank-and-file and the word of class-consciousness.

3rd. Do you think strikes and boycotts are still potent factors and strong weapons in the hands of labor?—The strike and the boycott have not lost their edge. On the contrary. These weapons have increased in potential power, a potential power that will become actual soon as both the striking arm of Labor is freed from the artificial bonds, such as “contracts,” etc., that tie it down, and the political organization of Labor supplements its economic formation—two consummations that, tho’ they may be delayed, are inevitable.

4th. Do you think the present Trades Union methods sufficient of advance the best interests of American Labor?—No, for the reasons set forth under 1 and 3.

5th. Would you advise independent political action by the laboring people?—Yes, giving, of course, the word “independent” its full significance in this connection, that is, “unfettered by bourgeois notions.”

6th. What do you think is the ultimate plan for the solution of our labor problem?—If by “plan” is meant the “goal,” then the solution is the Socialist, or Industrial Republic. If by “plan” is meant the “means,” then, the unification of the proletariat upon the economic field (without which their independent political action would be derailed) and their unification upon the political field (without which their economic unity could not recruit and drill its forces). See on this head the article of the 1908 Presidential candidate of the Socialist Labor Party, August Gillhaus, *Daily People*, October 18; *Weekly People*, October 24, 1908.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [Identify, etc.]