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EDITORIAL

THE LABOR VOTE.

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“**S**enator Hanna”, says the *Evening Post*, “is paying more attention to gaining the walking delegates of the trades unions than to all other business put together. During the Porto Rican trouble there were as many as fifty scattered around the different hotels so that their presence would not be known, and he saw them at the rate of two or three a day.”

The labor vote, according to the same article, is causing uneasiness to the administration. It does not matter what the issue may be, this same labor vote is traded and bandied back and forth by the union leaders. It was so in the K. of L.: it is so to-day in the A.F. of L., but in the latter case the status has changed, not from within but from without. The Socialist Labor Party lays down as an axiom that a man's material interest influences all his actions. Material interest is the divinity that watches over us, that causes us to initiate, and that causes us to cease from action.

The labor leader finds in politics an opening for the betterment of his own condition in life, and he uses politics for his own advancement. He must do so at the expense of the whole body. The interests of the Republican and Democratic parties differ from the interests of the working class. The labor leader does not sell to himself, or to his class. He must sell himself and his class to the enemy. The men in an organization, the atmosphere of which is permeated, poisoned, with the spirit of capitalist parties, are prone to act in unison. The man at the head of that organization usually controls it. He may not be intelligent. He may not be honest. He may not even have highly developed instincts of deception. The means whereby he can sell out are supplied by ignorance within, and craft and duplicity without.

This very fact that the union, and the labor vote, are a source of anxiety is the best possible argument why that vote should be cast solidly for the class to which it belongs. The rank and file can never win for itself the few offices and plums apportioned to the labor vote. They must be forever the reward of the one who

barter the vote, if the barter lasts forever. The history of the last past twenty years is a record of the most contemptible and criminal double dealing. We have even had men taken from the trades unions and elevated to office, and yet there they worked conjunction with the enemy. There is not on record a single man who was not corrupted and prostituted by the circumstances in which he willfully placed himself.

The labor measures which he may have ostensibly “championed” were without avail. They meant nothing and could mean nothing. If the inhabitants of a country, 50,000,000 in all, lived in a swamp, and they were afflicted with fevers and malaria, it would be a waste of time and energy to send quinine and other drugs and opiates to them. The only rational course would be either to remove the people or drain the ground and make it habitable. The average man would be “shocked” beyond the power of words to express it if those people were forcibly held in the miasmatic and pestiferous country. It would be still worse if some of the inhabitants, for the privilege of living on high ground for a while, were to assist in holding their fellows in the midst of certain death. Yet that is the position in which the trades unions leader has placed himself.

The one disturbing element in the formerly prosperous traffic is the fact that the working class is rapidly awakening to a knowledge of its true position. The increase in the Socialist vote will make the attempts to control the labor leaders all the more vigorous, but the very vehemence of the attempts only proves the force of the Socialist Labor Party. It placed mark against the actions of the labor leaders, and in the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance it gained the means to end those actions. The labor leaders may be bought, but they are no longer in position to bring with them the rank and file of whole unions. That day has gone forever.

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

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