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EDITORIAL

WHO EXCUSES ACCUSES HIMSELF.

By DANIEL DE LEON

The Socialist press of Europe, particularly of the continent, and more particularly of Germany and Austria, offers interesting reading just now. It teems with apologetic explanations, excuses, by those delegates who, at the recent International Congress held in Paris, went on record in favor of the inglorious, not to say disgraceful, resolution condoning the accepting of political jobs at the hands of capitalist governments. The tenor of the apologies is that the resolution never was meant for an endorsement of Millerand, who accepted a portfolio in the French Cabinet, given him as a Socialist, and who stood by the cabinet despite its several massacres of workingmen on strike.

Vain are the efforts of these excusers. They cannot becloud their conduct. Their resolution itself was an abortive attempt to becloud their thought by means of a cloud of words. Additional clouds of words raised now have only the effect produced when cloud is heaped on cloud—the lightning flash that throws light into the very area that the clouds would conceal in darkness.

The discussion on political jobs did not come into the Congress like a bolt from a clear sky. It was introduced by a resolution from the French Socialist Labor Party that, in clear and terse language, expressed the unquestionable Socialist position. Planting itself squarely upon the theory of the class struggle, and evidently guiding its steps by the light of the experience gained from the devices that capitalism employs to corrupt and, thereby to lame, the onward march of the Working Class Revolution, this resolution declared plump and plain:

“Socialists should occupy those positions only which are elective; that is, those positions only which their party can conquer with its own forces by the action of the workers, organized into a class party.”

Nor did this resolution come in as a surprise. It had long cast its shadows before it. The accession of Millerand to the cabinet by the grace of a French capitalist premier, had forthwith aroused serious criticism from the virile portions

of the French Socialists; and when Millerand, by continuing in the cabinet after the massacres of workingmen on strike at the Creusot Works and in Martinique, gave his sanction to such outrages, the criticism grew in vigor, depth and breadth. All Europe, the whole world, was aware of the attitude of the French Socialist Labor Party on this subject. It was known everywhere that the French Socialist Labor Party looked upon Millerand's conduct as a proof that the class struggle could not be toyed with without exposing the whole Labor Movement to suffer shipwreck. It was likewise known that other divisions of Socialists in France, the Millerandists, held otherwise. And it was known that this question was bound to come up in the Congress. With all these antecedents, and they, in their turn, summarized by the resolution offered by the French Socialist Labor Party, the defeat of that clean-cut resolution, and the adoption of its verbose substitute, which does not condemn the accepting of political jobs from capitalist governments, but, on the contrary, makes a labored distinction to justify such action, can receive only one interpretation, to wit, the approval of Millerand's conduct. And so indeed it is interpreted everywhere by the militants, and so was it interpreted by the Millerandist delegates, who received it amid thunderous and interminable outbursts of applause.

The German and Austrian excusers are accusing themselves. A militant Socialist's conduct never needs explanation, surely not on matters of cardinal principle; upon such his conduct is ever clear and unequivocal.

But these excusers accuse themselves still more. The volumes of "explanations" that they offer is now a deliberate attempt to draw attention away from the actual, the real slip that they made, the real offence that they are guilty of. The real offence committed by these excusers is the fundamental offence of throwing the class struggle overboard. They might equivocate on whether or not their resolution endorsed Millerand; they can't equivocate on its abandonment of the class struggle. Their attitude toward Millerand is but a natural consequence of their desertion of the principle of the class struggle. Their substitute resolution closes with these wondrous words:

"A Socialist must leave the ministry when the organized party recognizes that the government gives evidences of PARTIALITY in the struggle between capital and labor."

"Partiality"?!

What else can this sentence mean than that it is possible for a capitalist

government to be IMPARTIAL in the struggle between capital and labor. It means nothing else. He who uses the expression, says: "Exit Class Struggle."

Capitalist governments are political engines of the capitalist class. Between the capitalist class and the working class there is an irrepressible conflict. The capitalist class cannot maintain its supremacy except at the expense and by the subjugation of the working class. Impartiality on the part of either is a badge of blindness to their class interests. Among large portions of the working class this blindness yet prevails, rendering them "impartial," and, consequently, delaying their emancipation, and urging on their downward course. In the ranks of the capitalist class, however, there is no such blindness. They are class-conscious, and, consequently, "partial" up to the handle. The main effort on the part of the capitalist class is to keep up the delusion of "impartiality," i.e., deny the existence of the class struggle, so that, while they, themselves, relentlessly practice partiality in their own behalf, the deluded working man may be left more completely helpless in their clutches. From capitalist government nothing can be expected but sharp-edged partiality, partiality towards capital and against labor. The resolution of the present excusers is a desertion of the class struggle. It means compromise, fusion, a sheathing of the sword, with utter demoralization and corruption at the other end of the line awaiting the elements that are headed by such "excusers."

To properly understand the conduct in Paris of the present excusers so as to profit by it here in America, as a horrible example, the mistake must be guarded against of supposing these gentlemen to have indulged in Paris in an act of deliberate "confession of faith." They did not. And there is the rub. What they did was an unconscious act; they involuntarily gave voice to sentiments that, unknown to themselves, have been slowly corroding their one-time revolutionary or Socialist fibre. They started well, but their movement was premature. It was premature because it had not been preceded by the proper bourgeois political movements. Accordingly they found their path blocked; they ran up against institutions that Socialism should not need to wrestle with. In this wrestle their spirits' edge has been dulled.

Of deep significance these facts are to us in America. They bring home to us the advantages of our own political topography. They are facts to cheer, encourage and inspire the Socialist Labor Party, whose delegation in Paris firmly put its foot down on the disgraceful pro-job and anti-class struggle resolution. Finally, these facts are a lucid commentary on the crew of "Broad{"} Socialists, who, here out of poltroonery

and corruption, would have the Labor Movement of America start where in politically backward Germany and Austria it runs into the ground.

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