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TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

SUPPLEMENTALS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE letter of C.H. Duncan of Los Angeles, Cal., withdrawing from the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic, alias Public Ownership party, and the letter of James H. Arnold of Louisville, Ky., who still is a member of the said party of aliases, but who roundly condemns the said concern and does full justice to the Socialist Labor Party,—both of which letters appeared in these columns in the course of this week—should be read together; they should be studied together. The American Movement should not allow the matchless opportunity offered to it by the said party of aliases to pass unprofited, while it lasts. The object lessons offered by the concern will, if properly taken to heart, save much trouble in the future. It is as certain as if we were now there, and the thing were happening that, as the result of the numerous causes operating in that direction, similar concerns will spring up again, and yet again, until, like the waningly succeeding circular ripples on the water, they will have wholly vanished, and left the field clear for the revolutionary forces of the land. Only in the measure that the object lessons offered by the bogus Socialist concern of to-day are well learned, will the straggling brothers of the future be saved time and trouble.

Every word in Duncan's letter is true; there is hardly a Local of the so-called Socialist party anywhere in the land to whom the Duncan charges do not fit as closely as they fit the Los Angeles Local, and surely there is no State organization of the said party that can escape his charges—the quibbling to justify chicanery, the double dealing under the pretext of democracy, the tyranny in behalf of corruption, these are all characteristics of the “tolerant” and “broad” so-called Socialist concern. In view of this, indignation and execration would seem to be the only sentiments that such a concern would call forth, and one would incline to the belief that, only scamps could set up and be drawn by it. This would be a substantial error, and the

error would deprive the object lesson of its value. That scamps would be drawn to such a body, that scamps must have a leading part in its setting up—that goes without saying. But scamps alone can accomplish nothing, or very little. For their ephemeral successes they need well-meaning, honest but uninformed men. These they deceive. Consequently, the honest element that they draw upon is a deceivable element—an element that is credulous and does not weigh evidence sufficiently. This is the point. Calumny is the weapon of the scamps, and the weapon tells upon all those who are not upon their guard. And thus it happens that after a while the scamps are buttressed by a very decent element. But the evolution does not stop there. It is at this point that the Arnold supplements the Duncan letter. The closing passages of the Arnold letter are the clinchers of the point. He says:

“That a Socialist Labor Party editor would advise the support of a capitalist candidate under any circumstances is unthinkable.

“That any Socialist Labor Party member would shield such treacherous scamps as Mitchell, Stone or Gompers is unthinkable.

“The Socialist Labor Party knows its own mind on the question of a sound economic organization of labor and its position is known to all men; but who can tell where the Socialist party stands on the question of trade unionism? No living man.

“It either has no mind on the subject or if it has, it lacks the moral courage to speak out in plain language.”

Joining the two letters and interpreting them together the following conclusions are reached:

Scamps may gather honest folks around them; they may lure them into their camp; some of these will become tainted, and develop into scampishness equal to their masters; very many of these will remain untainted; but although the scamps may not have a positive effect upon these in the matter of scampishness, they do have an effect upon them in the matter of information. The seat of bravery is the head. Where knowledge is, bravery will not be absent. But where there is no knowledge, where contradictory principles are practiced, there knowledge can not take root. The result is that the honest element in such a scamps' concern can not know its own mind, and not knowing it will wobble and lack courage to speak out and act. This lasts for a while, and then having gone through the bitter experience

the deceived and honest element begins to “rise and smash.”

Admirable, refreshing is the smashing that this honest element is now indulging in. But the question comes, Why go through the bitter experience that leads to these volcanic rumblings and explosions? Is there no way of saving the masses the painful ordeal? There is. But the means lies in their own hands, and none can help them but themselves. That means is to eschew as one would the pest whoever states conclusions, and expects them to be accepted. Such men are scamps. And, closely connected with these means, is the ruthless condemnation of whomsoever makes a serious charge, when the facts upon which it is based are found to be false. In short, the masses must carry their sovereignty in their own hats.

As noticed to-day, “you can not cheat all men all the time”. The point is to spread such education abroad as will minimize the number of the men who must learn through first being cheated. So long as their number is large the capitalist class will not lack for “Socialists” to act as decoy ducks.

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

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