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NEW YORK, SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1912.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

“TO OUR FRIENDS OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

UNDER the above title, the New York *Call* of the 10th of the current month publishes a typical editorial.

As the Socialist Labor Party knows that the Social Revolution needs men and not brainless polliwogs, who accept conclusions without being allowed access to the facts from which the conclusions claim to flow, the *Call's* editorial is reproduced in this issue.¹

The editorial purports to be an invitation, extended to the members of the S.L.P. to join and merge with the S.P. It almost closes with the cordial words: “The door is open. The way is easy. The welcome will be extended to you as Comrades.”

While such fraternal language is held in spots by the article, it bristles with sentiments to the effect that, while the S.P. is fighting capitalism, the S.L.P. does nothing but criticize, bicker and find fault, “making a mountain of a molehill”—the “molehill” being wisely left unmentioned. Even graver charges are preferred. The S.L.P. is accused of spending not “even a little of that energy in attacking capitalism.” Indeed, the S.L.P. is accused of working against revolutionary Socialism, and even of the treasonable act of shooting into the ranks of the revolutionists.

What—by the light of such insolent, mendacious and insulting language—becomes of the seeming cordiality of the invitation? The latter stands exhibited as Hypocrisy—a trick olive branch whose sharp and poisoned pricks forbid its being seized.

Very different is the language of the largest-headed and most honorable men of the S.P. with regard to the S.L.P., whose literature they read with avidity, to whose

¹ [See Appendix, below.—R.B.]

existence they are frank to attribute the S.P.'s escape from utter demoralization in opportunism, and whose membership they honor for the generosity with which it pours its life-blood upon the altars of education against Capitalism.

Very different is the language of the *Call's* presidential candidate in the late campaign. As late as last April 20, Eugene V. Debs said of the S.L.P.:

"I can never forget that little band of valiant comrades—frenzied fanatics if you please, but still of the stuff out of which revolutions are made. For years they were a mere handful, and yet they fought as if they had legions behind them, staunchly upheld the red banner in the face of an indifferent or hostile world—and this, years before some of those who now scoff at them had shed their bourgeois politics. There are not many of them, but few as they are they have the backbone to stand alone. There are no trimmers or traders among them." Etc.

Unity will come, as surely as to-morrow's sun—so surely that not even such insolent, mendacious and insulting performances as this of the *Call* will be able to prevent it. But the invitation by the warmth of which Unity will be matured will be cast in a mold very different from that by which the *Call* was purblind enough to betray its measure.

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APPENDIX

TO OUR FRIENDS OF THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY.

[From *New York Call*, Nov. 10, 1912

DURING many campaigns there has persistently arisen the question, "What is the difference between the Socialist party and the Socialist Labor party? It would be easy to answer it sneeringly, jeeringly, gibingly by saying that the Socialist party has within its ranks practically all the former members of the S.L.P. It would be easy to point to the political history during the last twelve years and gloat over it or make a mock of it. But there is no reason why this should be done.

In the S.L.P. are many good men and women who should be working for Socialism, not devoting their good energies to a negative program of denunciation of the Socialist party. During the campaign just past they seemed bent on keeping back the onward movement of the revolutionists, of defeating the Socialist party, of cutting its vote, rather than in attacking capitalism. When the days of the final lineup come when we all must face the hostile, implacable supporters of a monstrous system of injustice, where will the members of the S.L.P. be? Shooting into the ranks of the workers, criticizing some minor flaws, making a mountain out of a molehill, merely kicking, protesting, faultfinding, and sulking in the tents? We have been guilty of many mistakes. That can candidly be admitted. But there has never been an orga-

nization that was automatically infallible, not even the S.L.P. It should no longer pretend that it is. On the contrary, it should drop its ridiculous role of super-critic of the revolutionary movement and get to work.

There are men and women in it who are capable of doing much bigger and better work for Socialism than they have yet done. They have been hampered by the fact that they felt it necessary to devote all their energies to what others were doing. Had they used even a little of that energy in attacking capitalism they would be farther advanced than they are now. There is no use in their taking the holier-than-thou or more revolutionary-than-thou attitude. There is no use in their continuing to prate and preach their own virtues the while they do nothing against capitalism. They have one place, one only, and that is in the Socialist party.

In the course of the development of the revolutionary movement in this country there have been some who simply sat back and discussed things that were, not things that are or things that are to be. They are like the tent generals who always know how the battle should have been fought, who are strong on ex post facto tactics, but whose directing ability is nil. It is easy to criticize. It is usually hard to work.

But we know that the S.L.P. contains

many workers, good, clean, honest, fearless workers. Now the question is why do they not work for revolutionary Socialism instead of working against it? The door is wide open. All they need do is come in and begin.

This vote which we have received is but the beginning. We are little yet. We are growing larger all the time. Our ranks are swelling. Our army is marching farther into the enemy's territory. Just now we need all who are real revolutionists. If our friends of the S.L.P. are revolutionists, let them join a revolutionary organization. Let them make it stronger and more revolutionary.

Socialism is not a personal thing. It is not

a privately or personally conducted affair, but one that needs all its fighters on the firing line all the time.

So the S.L.P. must cease shooting into the ranks. The members must enlist in the war of emancipation. It may be hard to resign the work of mere criticism for that of real fighting. But it is worth doing.

The door is open. The way is easy. The welcome will be extended to you as Comrades. Why not, then, become Socialists and start the fight and drop the querulous and petty bickerings that have merely depleted your own ranks and made no effect on capitalism?

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