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EDITORIAL

THE POSTAL SCANDALS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT takes an “outer”, panting to become an “inner” and get a lick at the public treasury, to indignant at the startling revelations made of corruption in the Postal service. It takes one of these “outers” to “point the finger of scorn” at the long list of Republican officials, from Perry S. Heath, the secretary of the Republican national committee and Hanna’s pet, down to the Paynes and Van Cotts, and exclaim “put the rascals out!” meaning, of course, to replace these with himself and his fellow Democrats, whose party record is as soiled as that of the Republican. The man of elemental intelligence knows that the “outer” is like the devil, being sick, and when he becomes an “inner” is like the devil, being well. In sight of this fact, established by experience, something more than elemental intelligence is needed to pull the well-intentioned from the slough of helpless despond. “Would Socialists do any better?” is the natural question that such distracted people put; and the question implies that Socialists would not.

Indeed, they would not!—if the aim of Socialism is merely a change of personnel; indeed they would!—if the aim of Socialism is a change of conditions.

A physician who would simply attend to his fees, will be no improvement upon another whose chief thought was likewise his fees. Is Socialism a sort of employment bureau, like the Democratic and Republican parties, intent only upon getting its men in and receiving its commission? That’s the point, and in grasping it the vista changes.

Socialism aims not at a change of officers; it aims at the overthrow of the conditions, which, having a wage-slave class at their root can not choose but blossom upwards into corruption. Drawing the sap of the robbery of the workers, the upper branches of the capitalist tree can produce no fruit other than that of the Heaths, the Hannas, the Greenes, etc. Crop off, or lop off these and an equally putrid set will inevitably take its place. The question then resolves itself into this. Is it possible to so alter the social soil that a vegetation different from that of capitalism will spring up? Let only those lose heart who say the feat is impossible.

All those, however, whose intelligence is beyond the elemental point, and whose moral fibre keeps step with their intelligence, know the feat is possible, and resolutely put their hands to the plow.

Nor will the intelligent citizen be bewildered by the tangle of the political field. The test he must and will put is easy. Does the party soliciting my support resort to the fly-paper tricks of catching votes? If it does, it can only be a seeker after change of official personnel. The party that aims at the overthrow of conditions needs something else, something over and above offices; it needs a constituency abreast of the officials, a constituency of revolutionists, an infantry army that will DO,—and for such an army molasses-caught flies are unfit. Such an army is not recruited by tricks. Education and organization, clean-cut and relentless, are its characteristics. The intelligent citizen, nauseated by the ever-recurring iniquities and corrupt outbreaks of capitalism, will not fail, despite all impediments, to catch sight of the beacon of the Socialist Labor Party, and catching take heart.

The recent postal scandals are a double-edged sword. They will throw down flat in hopelessness the well-meaning but not sufficiently intelligent; on the other hand, they will help to stir the vigorously intelligent, who do not succumb to the fallacy of the alleged inevitableness of corruption, and seek and will find the way out.

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