

EDITORIAL

## SEASONABLE S.P. PRONOUNCEMENT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**E**LSEWHERE in this issue is reproduced from Mr. Victor L. Berger's *Social Democratic Herald* of the 4th of this current month a seasonable article by Silas Hood, dated from Minot, S.D., and bracketed "Special to the Herald." The article carries a four-column wide double-decker title as follows:

"PAID DISTURBERS IN SOCIALIST RANKS."

"Spies Hired by Master Class to Try to Disrupt Party Organization—More Evidence of Stupidity and Viciousness of the Captains of Industry."

Not the flaming headlines only, nor the contents of the article only, but especially the Editor's foot-note at its close, extending to Socialist and Labor papers the privilege "to use the whole or part" of the same,—a privilege that the *Daily People* gladly avails itself of—denotes the importance that the Editor of the *Social Democratic Herald* attaches to the article. And we agree with him.

Mr. Hood's "special" may be condensed in these words:—

A recent meeting of Minneapolis millionaires decided to raise a \$4,000,000 fund to keep in the ranks of the Socialist party a number of men whose business it shall be to throw suspicion upon "faithful leaders" in the S.P., and keep the party in the perpetual hot water of acrimonious discussions upon such topics, and also upon "industrial unionism," the "general strike" and "direct action." The article concludes with the specifically unspecific statements that such "comrades" are "paid disturbers," that they are at work within the party, and that they are "earning part of the money," to wit, the \$4,000,000 fund.

Some may brush Mr. Hood's article aside as pure fiction, if not a "fake." Others may accept it literally as true. Others, again, ready to fly to neither extreme, may be willing to conclude that "there is a good deal in it." However that may be, we re-

peat—the article is seasonable.

Secret agents, “police spies,” whatever the name of the tribe, sing just two tunes.

One tune has earned for the secret agent the technical name of “agent provocateur”—agents who incite the workers to acts of violence and moral turpitude, such as theft and dynamitism, and thereby lead them to destruction. It is not likely that Mr. Hood apprehends much danger from that quarter. The dismal failure of the schemers who schemed the I’m-a-bummery tells the cheering tale that the working people, except in spots, have outgrown that peculiar mental poise that renders them prone to the inclination of such infection.

The other tune has not yet earned any technical name for the secret agents who chirp it. It consists in the careful abstention from any specific statement lest the chirper be caught red handed. The tune consists in charges, without specifying date, and place, or furnishing any semblance of proof. In short, the tune consists of ungrabbable insinuations, hints and suggestive gestures. It is from that quarter that Messrs. Hood and Berger apprehend danger—and well they may—and in the circumstance that they do lies the significance and seasonableness of their apprehensions.

Again we may repeat the oft-made analogy of the tuberculous bacillus.

Like most bacilli, the tuberculous bacillus is an inoffensive thing unless he alights upon weak lungs. The strong lungs cast him off, probably done up. Upon the weak lungs, however, he fastens and thrives with deadly effect. Exactly so with the secret agent who sings the insinuation tune. He can not possibly thrive upon a body whose members carry their sovereignty under their own hats. The moment he starts his tune he is pronged. For this secret agent to do his work, he requires as a *conditio sine qua non* that the people whom he approaches be easy “flutes to play upon.” In such a crowd, this particular secret agent has a picnic.

It is just such a crowd that the officialdom of the S.P. have endeavored to gather around them, hence their present fear. Indeed, Mr. Hood’s Berger-recommended article itself carries the proof positive that writer and Editor, Editor and writer take for granted and build their hopes upon the gullibleness of their own rank and file. Only officials who take their membership to be as stuffable as sau-

sage-guts would dare offer them the affront that is offered by this very Mr. Hood's Berger-recommended article to the S.P. membership, individuals among whom are referred to as "comrades" in quotation marks, and, without naming them, are accused of being in the pay of millionaire foes of Socialism.

While we do not for a moment believe that Mr. Berger, or any of his fellows in S.P. officialdom, is a paid agent of capitalism, this we know, that, being bourgeois in spirit, hence bourgeois and anti-proletarian in aims, as has been repeatedly and documentarily proven in these columns, they have for so long adopted against the Socialist Labor Party the methods of the latter sort of secret agents of the bourgeois, that, on the one hand, the practice has become nature to them, and now they begin to turn it against their own members; and, on the other hand, they have grown apprehensive of similar practises against themselves upon their own incubatees.

Mr. Silas Hood's article, appearing in Mr. Victor L. Berger's paper, raises the article to the dignity of an S.P. pronouncement—and seasonable is the pronouncement.

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