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EDITORIAL

THAT REVOLUTIONARY PLATFORM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THERE are those who have sincerely believed the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic party, would develop upwards towards the rank of a bona fide party of the working class, in short, towards the Socialist Labor Party. The late convention of the concern—even if it had not overthrown its previous platform, which stuck as close as it could to the S.L.P., and set up a new that flies as far away from the S.L.P. as it dared—bristled with evidences enough that the development is downwards and away from Labor. The new platform should leave no doubt. It is a long, nerveless, fiberless, spineless, toothless, incoherent document that sounds like a wail rather than the virile utterance of a class that is pecking at the shell of oppression, and ready to break through. One term—one demand—in the document tells the tale to those who have ears to hear and eyes to see. It is the demand for “land values.”

If a revolutionary, a Socialist platform of Labor can think it worth the while to bother with “LAND values,” why not with “CAPITAL values”? For what reason only nibble at the land-lord, and not treat the capitalist with equal nibbleness? If the capital is to be appropriated from the capitalist, why not the land from the land-lord? “Socialism means,” as this new platform says, “that the tools of employment” shall belong to labor, why not the land on which the tools must stand? If it be said that by taking the “land values” from the land-lord, you practically take from him the land, by what system of reasoning could it be denied that by merely taking from the capitalist the “capital values,” his capital would be freed from his clutches, or, in the language of the new platform, “the tools of employment” would belong to Labor? Obviously, if the taking of “land values” will fill the bill as to land, then the taking of “capital values” should fill the bill as to capital. Obviously, by making a distinction—demanding, not the land itself, but only the “land values” from the

landlord, while demanding, not the “capital values,” but the capital, “the tool of employment” itself, from the capitalist—a distinction is felt. Why is it made? Why the unequal treatment? Is the landlord’s possession, perchance, less of a monument of plunder than the capitalist’s?—And such a platform, whose spirit of duplicity and ignorance, of cowardice and bombast, is summed up and typified by the demand for “land values,” insolently advances itself as “embodying the principles of international Socialism,” and holds itself out as “the only proposition for intelligently and deliberately organizing the country”!

After the coyote’s whelp is born it grows; as it gains in size, the unsophisticated may imagine that it is developing into a Kentucky stallion. What a delusion! Its development can only be coyote-ward. The more fully developed, the more pronounced is its coyote being. The coyote of the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic party, can for identical reasons never reach the Socialist Labor Party stature. Its coyote being has been growing more and more pronounced. It is perfectly clear now;—it will be still clearer with the {passage of} time.

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

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