

EDITORIAL

THE ST. LOUIS “PROTESTORS.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE members of the St. Louis Socialist party, who opposed the political deal of their organization with the capitalist parties at last April’s St. Louis municipal elections, and who are called the “Protestors,” have come out with an eight broad-page document reciting the facts and backing up their every allegation with documents.

They prove that the S.P. member and candidate Emil Simon not only did not protest against his name’s appearing on the capitalist Republican ticket, but that he publicly appeared with a letter “appreciating the honor” bestowed upon him by the Republican politicians.

They prove that a Democratic politician and candidate, Owen Miller, who holds to the “identity of interests between capitalist and worker,” was deliberately incorporated on the S.P. ticket.

They prove more. They prove that an “Independent Ticket” was contrived by the S.P. member G.A. Hoehn, with himself on the ticket along with other non-S.P. members.

They prove even more. They prove that both the German and the English St. Louis S.P. papers actually boomed the corrupt performance.

So far as all that goes, the “Protestors” make out a perfect case of false Socialist tactics, of betrayal of Socialism, and of corruption; and, supplementing those specific charges with further and documentary proof, they uncover a political machine of autocracy, low cunning, brutality and knavery such as is ever bred by and accompanies the schemes of folks who seek to “turn an honest penny” by speculating upon Socialism. So far so good. Where, however, the “Protestors” slip, stagger and fall flat is where they conclude that the acts they protest against “strike at the very foundation of the Socialist party.” This is a false conclusion. How false

may be gathered from the attitude of the S.P. press throughout the land towards the St. Louis affair. The denunciation of the St. Louis affair, on the spot, by the Socialist Labor Party press was met everywhere by the pasteboard S.P. cry: "*Daily People Lie!*" They all reveled in the St. Louis corruption. A blow at St. Louis hit the S.P. everywhere. Everywhere the S.P. knew that St. Louis was flesh of its flesh and bone of its bone. And they were right.

The S.P. is the fruit of the conjugal embrace between the element that Mr. Debs gathered around him in 1897 to start Socialist Colonies, and the element that two years later bolted the S.L.P. in the interest of that system of alleged Unionism, more properly guild system, that has since become the pet of the Civic Federation., and that justly earned the applause of the *Wall Street Journal* as the "bulwark of Capitalism in America," and the condemnation of the Socialist Berlin *Vorwaerts* as "deadwood." Superficially, the two elements had nothing in common. At bottom they had. Both aimed, in all sincerity [the crooks that were attracted by both, though loud, were negligible quantities; they do not typify the two moves] to bring about the Social Revolution by revolutionizing society behind its back. However distinct the two theories, the theory of "colonies" and the theory of "saving craft Unionism" may seem, they are one in this that both lead away from the fight. They proceed unconsciously from the notion that an enemy can be overthrown by leaving the field to him. Proceeding from the identical premises, the two theories and elements embraced. The fruit of the embrace was Pure and Simple Politicianism—Get votes! Any old kind of votes! Votes by any and all means, but votes by-all-means. Roll up the vote and the walls of the Capitalist Jericho will fall at the bray of the Joshua tooter. Hurrah! Hurrah!! Hurrah!!!—This, THIS is the foundation of the Socialist party

The consequence to the superstructure of such a foundation was to be foreseen. By an inevitable chain of cause and effect, that had to come which has come in St. Louis, and, with shades of color, has come everywhere else in the S.P., and is bound to come in still more pronounced fashion, until the false structure, already cracked beyond redemption, crumbles into ruins.

When the "Protestors" charge the majority of their organization with "striking at the very foundation of the Socialist party" they make a charge even the remote

truth of which is a denial of the stand that they take. Of course, the woodlouse "strikes at the foundation" of the tree on which he feeds; but to blame him therefor is to blame him for obeying the constitution and law of his existence, the fulfillment of his mission—to bring down that tree.

The woodlouse majority in the St. Louis S.P. and everywhere else, being true to the "very foundation of the Socialist party," are fulfilling their mission to perfection

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