

EDITORIAL

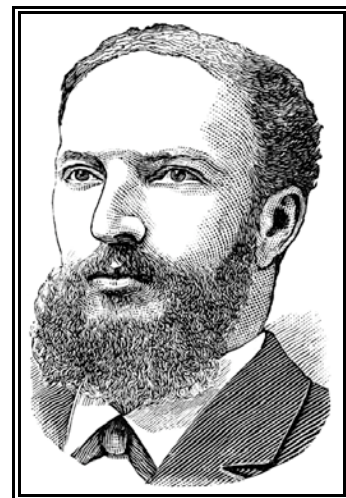
A TIP TO PROF. ELY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

PROF. FELIX ADLER recently delivered one of his regular Sunday orations. No. The oration was not of the regulation sort. Not quite. The regulation sort earns for the professor the unstinted praise of the bourgeois press. This time that very press has been calling him names, there anent.

Prof. Adler expressed the opinion that “the lower house in our popular legislative bodies should not be constituted on a basis of population but the representatives should be by occupation. There should be merchant deputies, then farmer deputies, labor deputies, and so on; under such representation women as well as men employed in any business would vote; and there would be a mothers’ representation.”

The last sentence in the passage—“a mothers’ representation”—suggests, if a “mothers’ representation,” why not a “fathers’ representation” also? Whereupon the whole passage might be dismissed as mere freakishness. This would be a mistake. The passage is not one of the professor’s numerous exhibitions of tart freakishness. It is an instance of the professor having been, in an important matter, treated by Fate less kindly than Moses was. Moses was allowed to take only a distant look at the Promised Land. However distant, the look was complete, and satisfactory enough to satisfy him regarding his people’s future. Prof. Adler, it would seem, was allowed so very imperfect a glimpse of the Promised Land of the Socialist Republic that the sight, refracted through the medium of his bourgeois optics, left on the retina of his mind a picture that is blurred and grotesque.



PROF. FELIX ADLER
(1851—1933)

The Parliament of the Socialist Republic will certainly “not be constituted on the basis of population”; it will undoubtedly consist of “representatives by occupation.” Social evolution unerringly points in that direction. We see the transition going on under our very noses. Every jurist who is an economist, every economist who is also a jurist, understands the nature of the conflicts now taking place in the Federal halls of legislation. It is the ripping of the political swaddling clothes of society, in which population is the basis of representation, ripping through the growth of the Industrial Commonwealth, the representation in which must of necessity be by occupation.

Putting it in other, and technical words, what Prof. Adler has seen through the mists of his bourgeois habits of thought is the Industrial replacing the Political system of society and government. Motherhood, no more than fatherhood, being an industry—they ceased to be that in this country since the Civil War broke up the slave-breeding establishments conducted by the “First Families of Virginia”—neither will be a constituency of occupation to represent. Moreover, the double-house system being an exigency of Political Government, a sort of social break-water to protect the ruling class, is kith and kin of the political system of representation. The reason for the downfall of the latter deprives the former of all reason for being.

Accordingly, the Parliament of the Promised Land of the Industrial or Socialist Republic will consist of one House—no upper or lower about it; and in that House will be gathered the representatives of all the productive or service Labor of the land; that is, of all the organizations of useful Labor, mental and muscular. That Parliament will not be the mongrel thing that Prof. Adler conceives of.

In one of his works Prof. Ely tells the story of a German professor who admitted it had taken him five years’ hard study to grasp what Socialism was after. Prof. Ely cited the instance as one of the weaknesses of Socialism. If it took a German professor five years, how many more would it not take for the proletariat to understand? Prof. Ely need not, next trip, travel all the way to Germany. Here is, right in the United States, Prof. Adler, who may serve Prof. Ely’s turn—and also the turn of Socialism to prove that, if the proletariat had to depend upon their class

interests penetrating the wool of these bourgeois-pampered professors, then Socialism would not be “weak” merely; it would be—well God help the human race!

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