

Burlesque Bolshevism

American "Communism" as an Auxiliary of Capitalism

By Arnold Petersen



**Published Online by
Socialist Labor Party of America**

www.slp.org

February 2007

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PUBLISHING HISTORY

PRINTED EDITION January 1935

ONLINE EDITION February 2007

NEW YORK LABOR NEWS
P.O. BOX 218
MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94042-0218
<http://www.slp.org/nyln.htm>

FOREWORD.

The essays gathered together in this volume were originally published in the WEEKLY PEOPLE, official organ of the Socialist Labor Party. They deal with various aspects of the so-called Communist movement in America. In “Madmen Leading the Blind” the essentially burlesque and, on the whole, naive and imbecile character of that movement is underscored. In “A Prevaricating Peddler of Perversity” the lying and Jesuitical character of the “Communist” movement is placed on exhibition. In “The Roar of the Slum” the sinister slum-proletarian character of the Anarcho-Communists is demonstrated. And, finally, in “Burlesquing Marx” the freakishness of the “arty” and “literary” fringes of “burlesque bolshevism” receive passing recognition. “From Soup to Nuts,” one might say, if facetiously inclined, the first essay being largely concerned with the doings of the Communist “soup hounds,” whereas the last one touches upon the doings of what in the current vernacular are designated “nuts.”

Taken as a whole, this series of essays constitutes a fairly complete, and well documented exposure of the sinister and, to the proletarian movement, dangerous phenomenon called American Communism—a designation, however, as misapplied as is the designation “Socialist” to that other reform group, the Socialist party. Both groups are essentially alike, as is also, incidentally, shown in one of these essays. The difference, if any, may be summed up briefly as follows: The Socialist party is a reform party seeking to attain its ameliorative ends by legislation and log-rolling, while the Communist party (likewise a reform party) seeks to attain the identical ends by noise, hooliganism and all-around physical violence, though most of the attempts along this line so far have got little further than noise—“sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

It should finally be noted that the Socialist Labor Party does not stand by in the role of amused observer and commentator. While the Socialist Labor Party *observes* and *comments*, it at the same time exerts all its energies, and applies all its resources, to the task necessarily and logically neglected by the two reform parties mentioned here—the task of organizing the working class for the revolution, into Industrial Unions, the first approach to which must be the clearing away of all the rubbish which now obscures the vision of the working class, and which clutters up

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the site on which must be reared that Industrial Union edifice. The Socialist Labor Party tirelessly applies itself to this arduous task, while vigorously proclaiming that

CAPITALISM MUST BE DESTROYED!

A.P.

New York, N.Y., November 1934.

MADMEN LEADING THE BLIND.

*“’Tis the time’s plague,
When madmen lead the blind.”
—Shakespeare.*

Edgar Allen Poe in one of his fantastic tales (“The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether”) describes a scene in a *Maison de Santé* (French madhouse) during which the lunatics, seated at a gorgeous banquet table, and posing as the doctors and nurses, discuss the different “crotchet” of which each is possessed, while the physicians and keepers are locked up in the cells. The lunatics, entertaining a chance visitor who is ignorant of the fact that his host and fellow-guests are insane, act perfectly rational while sober, but in the measure that wine is imbibed, in that same measure the respective obsessions of the lunatics assert themselves, and bedlam soon rages.

Perusing the recent campaign literature of the Anarcho-Communists (Communist party of America), one is sharply reminded of such a *Maison de Santé*. Still, the parallel is not perfect. For in Poe’s tale there was pure madness, while in the case of the Anarcho-Communists one is never quite sure where to draw the line between madness and crookedness, not to mention the residuum which includes the element afflicted with hopeless imbecility, as well as the cross sections of the police spy or *agent provocateur*. It remains true, however, that Anarcho-Communism as a whole presents a fascinating study in amorphous social pathology. Up to the time of joining the Anarcho-Communists, the individuals may act in a manner rational enough, but the moment they imbibe the Anarcho-Communist “vodka,” the madness manifests itself. It usually takes a form something like this:

- a. Total loss of perspective.
- b. Rabid insistence that (for example) an east wind here will give the same result as an east wind in Europe.
- c. Constitutional inability to tell the truth even when nothing is gained by lying.
- d. A fixed belief that each and every one is a born strategist, built on Machiavellian lines.
- e. A fatal delusion that reform is revolution, and vice versa.
- f. A naive belief that the more emphatically error is persisted in, the more

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correct their course is.

g. The obsession, that the shortest distance between two points is a zig-zag line.

h. The hallucination that a person who is clean-minded, and who reasons logically, is what with romantic innocence they call “counter-revolutionary.”

One may add as many more examples as one’s experience and recollection may dictate.

The campaign “literature” referred to consists of (1) “Communist Election Program,” (2) “Communist Call to the Toiling Farmers,” and (3) “Unemployment Relief and Social Insurance.” It is a great pity that space and practical considerations forbid a complete reprint of these precious documents. For to be fully appreciated they should be viewed *in toto*. They represent a hopeless mixture of pure lunacy, almost unbelievable imbecility, unscrupulous crookedness, brazen insolence and total contempt for the intelligence of those whom (presumably) they desire to reach. The S.P., in its most ebullient reform mood during the heyday of Hillquitism, would not have dared to put on a show of such flagrant reformism and unalloyed opportunism. (The imbecility was, of course, imbibed through the “mother’s milk” of S.P.ism, whence sprang Anarcho-Communism.)

Let us take the first-mentioned pamphlet, “Communist Election Program.” I started to count the number of “immediate demands” (reform measures) and stopped at 59. Then I got tired of counting. There may be as many more. Hereafter when I cannot sleep at nights, instead of counting sheep I shall count Anarcho-Communist reform demands. The first section deals with Unemployment Insurance. “Every worker, irrespective of nationality, race, color or sex shall receive unemployment insurance to the full amount of his or her wages for the full time of unemployment.” Great! But why only wages? Why not demand bonuses, stock dividends, directors’ salaries instead of measly wages? When in the demanding business it is just as easy to insist on higher wages, etc., for the unemployed, for the result is precisely the same. And how are the means to be secured? Oh, yes, through “graduated tax on all incomes above \$5,000”; by “levy on all capital above \$100,000”; by “sharp [how sharp?] reduction of all city and state officials receiving more than \$2,500 per annum.” But why give the “grafting politicians” any salary at all? Why not let them depend on their tin-boxes for incomes, and grab their entire salaries? Do the Anarcho-Communists concede that any “city or state official” is worth \$2,500

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a year? Perish the thought!

Now we come to “Immediate Unemployment Relief.” Yes, “immediate” is right. What we have just mentioned must have been ultimate relief. Indeed, \$400,000,000 is wanted immediately or sooner! And since every Anarcho-Communist knows that the Political State is a huge charity bureau, run for the benefit of the workers, there should be no difficulty at all in getting that amount. Especially in view of the possibility of electing Izzy Amter Borough President, the which politician, as every one knows, tells the mayor, the comptroller, the board of estimate, the aldermen and the rest just where they get off when it comes to spending money.

Now we come to something called “Pending Relief.” P-e-n-d-i-n-g R-e-l-i-e-f? Let me see now, where are we? Immediate demands—immediate relief—pending relief—Help! Anyway, “pending relief” includes everything from free rent to free gas, free electricity, free use of schools, free carfare, free food, milk, shoes, clothing, school supplies and medical attendance, free (unemployment?) agencies. That seems pretty nearly all that civilized man needs—and all for the unemployed! Lucky dogs! Who would be employed and slave for a measly wage when by remaining unemployed all the comforts of civilization are to be thus secured? If we forget for a moment that we are discussing patients of a Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether asylum, we might ask: Why enumerate all these details? Why not simply urge the workers, as the S.L.P. urges, to organize to take and hold the means of production in order to secure the good things of life? Of course, that would be rational and revolutionary, hence, to the Anarchos, who are standing on their heads, it would be irrational and reformistic.

The next “chapters” provide strings of reforms for “Employed Workers” and “Negroes.” Oh yes, they are listed separately, from which may be deduced that “Employed Workers” preclude Negroes, and that “Negroes” are all unemployed. But that is contradicted immediately in the text. However, let us pass that up as one more insoluble mystery. The succeeding “chapter heads” follow: “Foreign born workers,” “Ex-Servicemen” (!), “Bank Depositors” (!!!), “Firemen,” “Women Workers,” “Child Labor,” “Young Workers,” “Farmers,” and just in case somebody or something has been overlooked, the concluding “chapter” is headed “General Demands.”

To analyze in detail the multitudinous demands would fill a book—and it would be very largely quoting the same stupid things over and over again. But the provisions for “Bank Depositors” and “Farmers” deserve special mention. The first

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demand for Bank Depositors reads: “Immediate payment in full of all workers *and small depositors* up to \$500.” Hurrah for the downtrodden corner grocer! But if “in full,” why in Hades only \$500? Suppose a worker had \$1,000 in the bank—must he donate \$500 to a bloated bank director who ought to be in jail anyhow? And as for the “small depositor”—how small must he be to qualify?—\$5,000 is small as compared to \$50,000. But certainly \$50,000 is small as compared to \$500,000. And indeed \$500,000—oh well, finish it yourself! The “Farmers” (i.e., the “tenant and small farmers”) are to have all mortgages, debts and interests cancelled. There is to be a reduction in “ground rent” of 40 per cent. Why not a 50 per cent, or a 75 per cent, or indeed a 100 per cent reduction is not made clear. Since the urban landlord was to be enjoined from collecting rent, why should the rural landlord be allowed to get away with 60 per cent? Is this justice, is it equity, is it respectable? Echo answers a thunderous *No!*

Let us skip hastily through the remaining pages of this “document in madness” (if the Anarchos will pardon this allusion to the “counter-revolutionary” Shakespeare). On page eight the 20,000 excitement hounds who gathered at Union Square on the memorable March 6, 1930, have become 110,000 unemployed workers. The rate of interest must have been enormous! On page ten Governor Roosevelt is mentioned as proposing \$20,000,000 as state aid for the unemployed “to be covered by income taxes which will be *saddled on to the workers.*” (The emphasis in the original). This is bewildering in the light of the foregoing! The vast majority of the workers haven’t earned enough on which to pay income taxes, yet the workers will pay the \$20,000,000 through income taxes! This is as good as Heywood Broun’s plaint that the workers pay for the millions of dollars of graft collected by city politicians. But that is only one of the many things that Broun and the Anarcho-Reformists have in common.

Then there is the plight of the farmers. They “are *robbed by the banks*, they have to pay fearfully high taxes and high interest.” Alas for the rural counterpart of the petty capitalist exploiters! They are promised rehabilitation as petty exploiters and social nuisances by the “Communist party program of struggle”—“commodity struggle,” presumably.

We are finally treated to this gem:

This [establishing a “Soviet Government” in the U.S.] cannot be done through the ballot box, but through the *active struggle* of the workers and small farmers. The bosses and their government will oppose with *armed*

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force the revolutionary decisions of the workers at the polls. The bosses will refuse to give up power to the workers and small farmers, but will use FORCE to retain control. The workers must prepare to meet this armed force with MASS ACTION OF THE WORKERS AND SMALL FARMERS. *This brought about the overthrow of czarist Russia and will overthrow the capitalist system throughout the world.*

Here the Anarcho-Communists acquit themselves thoroughly as yellow mongrels. They mean to convey the thought that success can be attained only through opposing the armed force of “the bosses” with armed force of the workers. But they haven’t the courage to say what they mean, and so it becomes the vague and meaningless, and perfectly legal phrase, “mass action.”

It would seem quite impossible for the Anarcho-Communist mountebanks to produce anything that would exceed in absurdity the so-called “Election Program” (2 cents to you!). Yet the pamphlet “Call to the Toiling Farmers” (3 cents to the “Farmers”!) almost attains the seemingly impossible. The bulk of it is, like the third pamphlet on “Unemployment Relief and Social Insurance” (2 cents to the “Unemployed”!), repetitions of the imbecilities and asinities contained in the first mentioned, but here and there one finds prize items worthy of special notice. The central theme is a plea for the “small and middle farmer”—that is, the rural element which corresponds to the small city corner grocer and hard pressed manufacturer, in short, the petty exploiters. The special pleas are the old Social Democratic immediate demands for relief of the “peasants”: higher prices for their farm products, lower or no taxes, relief from mortgages due, etc., etc.

Now for some of the “high spots.” From page eleven, under caption “How to Get Better Prices!” I quote:

Out of the misery and hunger of millions of toilers of city and farm these monopolists coin enormous fortunes for themselves under the protection of capitalist law which makes private property and private profits from trade sacred. Only when capitalism is overthrown, when the poor and oppressed of city and country rise in united revolutionary action against the robber capitalist class and establish their own Workers’ and Farmers’ Government can these conditions be ended. Only such a government will outlaw the robbers of the toilers and fix prices so that the city workers pay less and toiling farmers get more for farm products.

In other words, in order for the “small and middle farmer” (a useless and bankrupt social class) to secure better prices for products raised with their

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antiquated methods, capitalism must be overthrown! The Socialist Republic (as visualized by the Anarcho-Communist reformer) will see to it that the petty farmer under Socialism receives reduction in taxes, relief from mortgages, higher prices for their products (with higher wages for city workers so that their increased purchasing power may enable them to pay the higher prices asked by the petty farmers!!), etc., etc. By parity of reasoning the petty corner grocer and small manufacturer (corresponding to the “small and middle farmers” and like these constituting a socially useless and bankrupt, and withal the most reactionary element in society) will likewise survive in the new social system and will likewise be “saved” in line with the aforementioned recipe. Was ever such humbug, such reactionary imbecility? And all this, brazenly and with incredible impudence, in the name of Marxism!

Just like the reform “Socialist party,” the Anarcho-Communist reformers are howling about lower taxes, “indirect taxes” and the rest of the familiar petty bourgeois tommyrot that flies directly in the face of the economic principles formulated and enunciated by Marx. And in line with the argument of every petty capitalist reformer the Anarchos whine about the tariff taking “\$1,000,000,000 in indirect taxes out of the pockets of the poor of both city and farm, and thereby reduces the ability of the city workers to buy the products of the farm.” In other words, if there had not been a Hawley-Smoot tariff, the city and farm workers would have had \$1,000,000,000 that they haven’t now!! What a brazen or stupidly fraudulent claim!

Immediately following the part just quoted we read: “The Communist party demands the repeat of all such tariffs and *indirect taxes* on the poor in the interests of the rich.” If the Anarcho-Reformers understood Marxian economics they would know that the argument implied in this particular “demand” is a direct denial of the law of value. The Communist party reformers never fail to shriek out their claim that they stand on Marx. And they do. For, to paraphrase Lowell, how could they trample on him so if it weren’t that he is always under their hoofs? Frederick Engels, the life-time co-worker of Marx, succinctly stated the Marxian view of taxes, direct or “indirect”:

“Taxes!—A matter, to the bourgeoisie of deep, to the workingmen, however, of very slight concern. That which the workingman pays in taxes goes, in the long run, into the value of labor power, and, accordingly, must be borne by the capitalist.”

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In demanding repeal of the “tariffs and indirect taxes” the Anarcho-Communists certify to their solidarity with every Democratic Free Trader, with every petty reformer, and with every near-bankrupt capitalist and corner grocer.

Little time need be wasted on the third of the pamphlet-trinity in the Anarcho-Communist theology, viz., “Unemployment Relief and Social Insurance.” Demands are made for a seven-hour day, when economic progress dictates the maximum required to be two or three hours at the most. Hunger marches to Washington (a la Coxe’s Army) are urged. Ex-service men are cited as being discriminated against, and they are incited to fight “for the cash bonus for *all* without discrimination”—in other words, the Anarcho-Communists (who elsewhere howl against war and the military) want to reward ex-soldiers for having “fought for their country,” for having, willingly or otherwise, helped to slaughter workers across the sea, so that, presumably, when another butchery is started they may remember this reward and thus have an incentive for repeating the “heroic” performances of the last war!

In the concluding parts of the pamphlet we find this gem: “The dictatorship of the working class (the highest form of democracy for the masses ever known) must take the place of the dictatorship of the powerful finance capitalists . . . ,” etc. From this we gather that even as two wrongs make one right, so two dictatorships make one democracy. Needless to say, there is not the slightest attempt at explaining what is meant by the phrase “dictatorship of the working class,” nor still less is there any attempt made to demonstrate how such a “dictatorship” would work in a fully developed industrial country, where the power and control of industry lie within the grasp of a working class that needs only to be reminded of its tremendous and irresistible potential power if correctly organized in Industrial Unions.

Were it not for the evidence before us, it would seem impossible that any group, claiming to speak for the working class, and with “revolution” on their lips, could be guilty of such atrocious nonsense and, frequently, pure idiocy. But there it is, “plainly writ.” The question may be asked: Do these people act as foolishly as they talk? It is a matter of general knowledge that the Anarcho-Communists, at outdoor or indoor meetings, act like escaped lunatics. But, the question may be pressed, do they really appear before farmers’ bodies, depositors’ meetings, etc. And do they seriously tell them that they will be able to carry out their promises? The answer is that they do. With respect to the special case of the United States Bank depositors, the *Daily Worker*, the official organ of the Anarcho-Communists, in its issue of

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October 27, 1931, reports that I. Amter, the then candidate for the borough presidency of Manhattan, appeared before a gathering of about 1,000 of these depositors who had met to hear what the politicians running for office had to promise them in the way of securing restitution. The story relates that a letter from Mr. Norman Thomas, S.P. candidate for the borough presidency, was read, wherein, quite honestly, Mr. Thomas told them that the Borough President of Manhattan can do nothing about banks, etc. Why Mr. Thomas should have been so candid in this connection, when in other respects he is quite willing to promise heaven and earth to the workers if they will only elect him, is not clear, but that does not concern us particularly here. Of interest is Mr. Amter's performance. I quote the *Daily Worker* issue of October 27, 1931:

A great ovation was given Amter when he was introduced. Several times during his speech he was loudly applauded. "Norman Thomas says in his letter that he does not know what he could do if elected boro president, the Communist party pledges to you that if I be elected I'll use all my official power as boro president to organize all the 400,000 workers and small depositors for a militant fight to get their money back," said Amter.

Only a dyed-in-the-wool faker could be capable of making such a promise. It is, of course, no credit to the defrauded depositors that they believed in the fake pledge of the Anarcho-Communist, but gullibility of groups or masses is no justification for the scoundrels who prey upon such victims.

It would be possible to quote from almost every issue of the *Daily Worker* similar flagrant examples of fakerism and unscrupulous opportunism, but the recital would soon become monotonous. One more, however, ought to be mentioned because it likewise illustrates the depraved and unscrupulous character of these Anarchists who have the effrontery to parade as Marxists. In the *Daily Worker* issue of September 30, 1931, a front page article is featured with a five-column scare-line reading: "Fight for Your Baby's Milk!" The article goes on to criticize various efforts made by other reform bodies to purify the milk supply and the *Daily Worker* article winds up in this manner:

The issue is, between the milk companies, of who gets the profits, the loose milk companies or the bottled milk trust. But that issue is of no concern to New York workers. What is of importance to them is the question of PRICE. In another article we will take this up. But here and now we say: *Demand that milk, bottled or loose, be sold for no more than eight cents a quart!* (Emphasis mine.)

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Let me repeat the last sentence, “Demand that milk, bottled or loose, be sold for no more than eight cents a quart!” Those who have been active in the movement for some time will remember the campaign made by Mr. Hillquit for the mayoralty of New York City in 1917. At that time the “burning issue” was—cheap milk for the babies! The “issue” was symbolized by distributing broadcast advertising matter shaped in the form of a milk bottle, with the inscription, “Five-cent milk and Hillquit,” with the implication, of course, that if Mr. Hillquit were elected mayor of New York City, milk would be five cents a quart. Now I submit that the Anarcho-Communists are somewhat behind the times in respect to this “burning issue.” Not only that, but even as in their demand for a shorter working day they have raised the I.W.W. slogan of a six-hour day to a seven-hour day, so they have increased Mr. Hillquit’s price of milk from five cents per quart to eight cents per quart. This particular bit of political fakerism exposes the Anarcho-Communists not merely as frauds, but as clumsy frauds as well.

There are two varieties of lunatics, the harmless and the dangerous kind. The Anarcho-Communist lunatics are dangerous in the sense that any group of maniacs is dangerous. Their crazy antics may eventually lead enough workers into the bloody shambles of the capitalist rulers and cause the revolution to be run into the ground. One may humor the harmless variety, but the maniacs will have to be put in straitjackets. One cannot reason with maniacs. To keep the spotlight constantly on the Anarcho-Communists, to expose constantly their crazy and crooked schemes, and to reveal the group as the spy-ridden outfit that it has proved itself to be, is not one of the least important duties of the Socialist Labor Party. Nor must it be overlooked that the ruling class at this time needs just such an instrument as Anarcho-Communism in order to keep the workers from organizing for the revolution. Ancient Rome has supplied the rulers with the formula *Panem et circenses*—that is, bread and circuses to keep the “mob” contented. Baseball, football and ballyhoo, in general, have supplied the circus need heretofore. As the appetite of the masses becomes jaded they look for more exciting stuff. A few killings in the Roman Arena pleased the mob. Riots, cracked skulls, bloody noses, are grist on the mill of the Anarcho-Communists, even as they are special thrills added to the circus show for the mob, and with which circus show the capitalist class is so generously provided by the Anarchos. But it is a dangerous show, and though for a while it may entertain, it cannot in the long run satisfy the hunger of the starving and exploited multitudes, as the capitalist class and its Anarcho-Communist allies will learn to

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their sorrow.

S.L.P. men, yield not a hair's breadth to the enemy. Give the foes of the working class neither comfort nor quarter. Let the S.L.P. hammer fall on them with unabated vigor:

*“Hammer’s blow on Hammer’s blow,
Until life’s last spark must go.”*

The S.L.P. program of industrial organization and planned production for use is the only salvation of the exploited working class; it is the only hope of a bewildered humanity. Ring down the curtain on the ghastly three or four-ring “circus” show of capitalism, with its side-shows provided by the S.P. and Anarcho-Communist reformers and maniacs.

The day of the Socialist Labor Party is here.

A PREVARICATING PEDDLE OF PERVERSITY.

“An experienced, industrious, and often quite picturesque liar.”

—MARK TWAIN.

There are four ways of dealing with an opposition party. They are:

1. Meet it on the high ground of principle and facts, and debate the issues fairly and openly.
2. Ignore it, and attempt to “kill” it by a conspiracy of silence.
3. Misrepresent it, lie about it, and in general abuse and vilify it.
4. Suppress it forcibly, if the power to do so is there.

The opponents of the S.L.P. almost invariably choose the second of these methods. Having learned by experience that to come to grips with the S.L.P. is like coming to “grips” with a mastiff (it does not let go until all the fight is out of the opponent), the critics of the S.L.P., especially if they happen to be the petty bourgeois S.P. or the Anarcho-Communist reformers, become wary and ignore it, acting in line with the policy as it was expressed by the ex-S.P. reformer, Wm. J. Ghent, who said:

“If there is . . . one common attitude among all these warring groups [A.F. of L., Socialist party, Communist party, etc.], it is that the Socialist Labor Party and every one connected with it is to be ignored.”

That which cannot be controverted, or otherwise bested, must perforce be left alone, and silence becomes the golden policy. But silence about an opponent is effective only if that opponent can be isolated, and if he can be prevented from being heard. When that is no longer possible, the third method is resorted to—falsification, lies and slanderous vilification. Whenever the S.L.P. encounters this method we know we have them on the run—whether the lying scoundrels be of the A.F. of L., the S.P., the C.P., or that microscopic vermin collectively known as disrupter.

The policy of the Communist party, better known as the Burlesque Bolsheviki or the Anarcho-Communists, usually is to treat the Socialist Labor Party as if it did not exist. The S.L.P. mastiff having in the past had its teeth in the neck of the Anarcho-Communist rat, it is understandable that the latter would avoid an encounter with the S.L.P., if possible. But even a rat, when cornered, will bare its

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teeth and whine or hiss. It is obvious that the S.L.P.'s constant exposure of the pro-capitalist, anti-working class program and tactics of the Communist reformers has finally smoked them out, for recently there appeared in the *Daily Worker*, official "Communist" organ, a series of three articles, purporting to "explain" the S.L.P. to the many workers who had written for information. The writer of the articles (who shall be nameless here—it probably isn't his name anyway) has richly deserved a medal for brazen mendacity. In one way we have cause to feel piqued. When the Anarcho-Communists appoint some one to lie about the Socialist Labor Party, they might at least pick a clever and intelligent falsifier. Instead they seem to have picked the clumsiest liar they could find. However, times being what they are, we shall have to take the liars as they come.

The *Daily Worker* scribbler (whom as a matter of convenience we shall call Mendax, because that isn't his name, though it accurately designates him) has evidently been taking night courses at the Rand School of Slushy Science, for one of the first falsehoods he utters is one that originates in that institution for lying about Socialism.¹ After rattling off the customary imbecilities about the sectarian De Leon and S.L.P., about isolation and the rest, Mendax plunges right into deep waters. "Even during the 19th century," says Mendax, "Engels in his letters to American Socialists, had sharply criticized the S.L.P. for its sectarian policies." The gentleman probably does not know what it was Engels wrote about, and so I'll help him out. Engels had sharply criticized the pre-1890 *Socialistic* Labor Party for its failure to adapt itself to American conditions. Especially had Engels attacked the prevailing habit of carrying on the meetings and the business of the Party in German. "They

¹ On second thought perhaps I ought to give Mendax the benefit of the doubt—I mean with respect to having learned this particular fable at the Rand School. For strange as it may seem, Lenin in 1915 made the same stupid observation—I say "stupid" advisedly, for imbecility does not become wisdom even when a man of Lenin's intellectual stature utters it. Even Homer nodded, and Lenin has said more than one foolish and inconsistent thing, though when he had the opportunity he usually corrected himself, even to the point of complete reversal. Said Lenin then: "We have never objected in our press to uniting the Socialist Party and the Socialist Labor Party in America. We have always referred to the letters of Marx and Engels (especially those addressed to Sorge, an active participant of the American Socialist movement) in which *both* condemn the sectarian character of the S.L.P."—Lenin, in letter to the Socialist Propaganda League in America, November 1915.

When one otherwise admires and respects a man of outstanding character and achievement, it is an unpleasant thing to have to say of such a one that he talks like a fool. Yet, there is no other way of designating it. For to apply to the present S.L.P. what Engels said about the *Socialistic* Labor Party of the eighties, and to condemn the S.L.P. of De Leon's day and after for what the forerunner of the De Leon S.L.P. did, and which De Leon himself successfully fought and routed, is to be guilty of that vulgarity and sloppiness of thought which Lenin himself so often attacked, and rightly so, in Kautsky, Plechanoff and others.

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[the Socialistic Labor Party] . . . ,” said Engels, “must go to the Americans who are the vast majority and the natives. And to do that they must above all learn English.” It so happened that Daniel De Leon tackled this very problem at the beginning of his career, and successfully carried out the “orders” of Frederick Engels. Writing about this matter in 1930 the present writer observed:

“It is interesting and instructive to note in passing that the statement by Engels quoted in the foregoing has been cited repeatedly by the bourgeois reformistic ‘Socialist party’ as evidence that the Socialist Labor Party was condemned by Engels, as if Engels had directed his remarks at the S.L.P. subsequent to the birth of the S.P.! [Engels died in 1895.] Whereas, as we have seen, Engels condemned the very things which De Leon and the rejuvenated S.L.P. of post-1890 days successfully eradicated. And it is scarcely necessary to add that the caricature of the S.P. (the Anarcho-Communist party) has used the same line of attack with equally dishonest, if incredibly stupid intent, thus adding further proof that the bourgeois ‘Socialist party’ and the Anarcho-Communist party are the obverse and reverse of the same medal.”²

Mendax is horror-stricken at the audacity of the S.L.P. to demand the “unconditional surrender of the capitalist class.” Apparently the proper “tactic” is to demand a bit today, another bit tomorrow, until quite painlessly the poor capitalists have been “expropriated.” Apropos of this “step at a time” policy, Mendax pays a glowing tribute to the S.P. (He *must* be a graduate of Rand School!) Says he: “. . . that party [the S.P.] was in the main struggles of the American working class before 1919 *and represented the real revolutionary sector of the working class in this country.*” (Emphasis mine.) This is a serious deviation, or an aggravated case of exceptionalism, or counter-revolutionary, or what have you. For if Mendax will look up the clichés in the *Daily Worker* office he will find that the required thing to say at this point is that “since the Socialist party in 1912 added to Art. II, Par. 6 of its constitution the anti-sabotage clause (which action caused Haywood and other ‘revolutionaries’ to leave it) the S.P. thenceforth became social patriotic, etc., etc.” (Only the “sectarian” S.L.P. has insisted that the S.P. has been petty bourgeois from its very inception, and remains so today, only more so than ever.) Moreover, Lenin is known to have condemned the S.P. long before 1918. For having thus “deviated” and defended the S.P. at a time when it was most brazenly reactionary, Mendax ought to be punished by being compelled to read all the “theses” ever issued by the

² *Revolutionary Milestones*, 1931.

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Anarcho-Communists! Furthermore, immediately thereafter Mendax acknowledges that De Leon carried on “a struggle against opportunism and reformism.” But since the S.P. was the source and center of that “opportunism and reformism,” how are we to reconcile this statement with the tribute paid to the S.P. as “the real revolutionary sector of the working class in this country”? It is all so bewildering.

Mendax’s treatment of Industrial Unionism is brilliant. He says: “We can have no argument against industrial unionism.” But shortly before that he had railed at the S.L.P. for attacking the S.P. trade union policy, which was one of consistent opposition to the I.W.W. (before 1908) and a slavish toadying to the A.F. of L. “But for De Leon and the S.L.P.,” says Mendax, “this [organizing Industrial Unions] was a purely abstract theory.” Prior to making this statement Mendax had noted the fact that De Leon and the S.L.P. had “participated in the convention which founded the I.W.W. . . .” Industrial Unionism was “purely abstract theory” to De Leon, but he helped to organize the *concrete* expression of it, viz., the I.W.W.! It is bewildering!

It is delicious to note in passing a reference of this ignorant, lying whippersnapper to De Leon’s “mistaken Marxism.” The crow instructing the eagle on sustained flights to soaring heights!

II.

The second part of Mendax’s “critique” of the S.L.P. is devoted to an exposition of the need on the part of the would-be revolutionary party to deceive the workers, to “kid them along.” He is not honest enough to say that in so many words, but that is the obvious point of a labored argument on “the part played by immediate demands in winning the workers over to the revolutionary movement.” Mendax does not like to call “immediate demands” reforms. (Note that we are here discussing the “immediate demands” of a political party, not the demanding of higher wages, shorter hours, etc., by workers on strike.) But if such political “immediate demands” are not reforms, perhaps Mendax will enlighten us as to the difference. The S.L.P. is accused of wanting “the whole hog or none”—the whole hog presumably denoting complete emancipation of the working class, i.e., the Socialist Republic. We do, indeed, want the whole hog or none—not that there is any choice in the matter. Only illiterate ignoramus conceive of new social systems being born piecemeal. Perhaps Mendax has heard of a child being born gradually, an arm today, a leg tomorrow, etc. If indeed I want a live—not a dead—hog I have no choice

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but to take all or none. I cannot snatch a pig's knuckle today, a ham tomorrow, and so forth, until I have the whole "live hog." When the left wingers (immediately after the break with the S.P.) began denouncing the mother party for its reformism, "immediate demands" were scored roundly. Then the "Communists" clearly recognized that immediate demands were reforms—just that and nothing more. So convinced were they of this that when subsequently they launched a political party, and being after all flesh and bone of the reform S.P., but wishing to appear "different," i.e., "revolutionary," they called their tapeworm of immediate demands "emergency demands," and they argued strenuously on the difference between "immediate" and "emergency." But whatever they called them, they were plain reforms, and the logic of events soon compelled them to readopt the term they had previously so bravely assailed, and "immediate demands" it was henceforth.

Now, then, the question of "something now" is not the simple thing which the naive or crooked Anarcho reformers would have us believe. It is not a question of whether the workers ought to have better living conditions, etc., before the revolution. If without dissipating revolutionary energy, and without neglecting the important task of *organizing for the revolution*, the worker could improve his lot in this or that respect, only a fool would refuse the improvements. But before urging such supposed improvements, the one who poses as a revolutionist ought, first, make sure it *is* an improvement; secondly, he ought to make sure that it is possible of attainment *within the framework of capitalism*; and, finally, due thought ought to be given to the question of whether, with the same expenditure of energy, and just as easily, it might not be possible to organize for, and accomplish, the revolution.

Pressed hard, the fellow who pretends to be a Marxist, though he be pleading for reforms, will acknowledge that, true enough, the "immediate demands" cannot be realized under capitalism—or, if they can be realized, a capitalist party can secure them, *and, if need be, will grant them*. But, says our reformer, the workers think they can be secured, and that they are worth striving for, and so we must go along with them—that is, "kid them along." The function of a revolutionary party is not to "kid along" the workers. Its function is to teach the workers, to instruct them in revolutionary principles, and in the tactics and organization needed to effect the revolution. A party which falls in these respects is simply no revolutionary party; it is a reform outfit. And its reformism is the more accentuated the louder the reformer shrieks "revolutionary" slogans and phrases.

To trifle with the working class, to impose upon it, to deceive it, is a crime of

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first magnitude. Only cowards and adventurers will be guilty of such conduct. Lenin's wife, in her *Memoirs of Lenin*, says that Lenin never resorted to demagoguery, and she quotes him as saying that "under no circumstances must we tell them [the workers] an untruth." A reform, said De Leon, is a concealed measure of reaction. And, as De Leon summed it up:

"The characteristic weakness of the proletariat renders it prone to lures. It, the least favored of all historic revolutionary classes, is called upon to carry out a revolution that is pivoted upon the most complicated synthesis, and one withal that is easiest to be obscured by the dust that its very foe, the capitalist class, is able to raise most plentifully. The essence of this revolution—the overthrow of wage slavery—cannot be too forcefully held up. *Nor can the point be too forcefully kept in evidence that, short of the abolition of wage slavery, all 'improvements' either accrue to capitalism, or are the merest moonshine where they are not sidetracks.*" (Emphasis mine.)

To argue for reforms is to argue for the reaction; it is to argue that that which is to be reformed is worth reforming. It is to concede, moreover, that if the reforms, or "immediate demands," are obtainable, then capitalism has not yet reached the point where the revolution is possible. And no sane man will oppose a reform program if for decades or generations it is out of question to effect the revolution. If it is honestly believed that the revolution cannot be effected in fifty or a hundred years, then all talk of revolution becomes moonshine. By all means, then, let us make the conditions as bearable as possible. But let this sink in: THE REVOLUTIONARY PREMISE RULES OUT, WILLY-NILLY, ALL TALK OF "IMMEDIATE DEMANDS," REFORMS AND PALLIATIVES. In a revolutionary period there *is* but one immediate demand: *The unconditional surrender of the capitalist class.* Even as the Whole includes any subsidiary part of it, so the demand for the surrender of the capitalist class inescapably implies a demand for everything that is desirable even now. If I want the "whole hog," and If I am entitled to it, I do not begin by enumerating a string of demands for the several parts which go to make up the hog. It would be silly to do so.

Now, elementary as all this is, it is undoubtedly beyond the power of Mendax to grasp. But Mendax is only the peg on which to hang the lesson. He himself is minus zero.

Mendax tells us that the "Communist party" has "developed a program expressing the day-to-day needs, not only of the workers, but of their allies, the farmers and *Negro people.*" So we have workers, farmers and "Negro people." "Negro

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people” obviously are neither workers nor farmers, since they are listed separately. They are, presumably, a politico-racial entity, composed entirely of bankers and their like! The imbecility of the Anarcho-Communist is not illustrated more perfectly than in this enumeration of “groups” in capitalist society. Only a brainless idiot (including those who advocate race segregation and everlasting supremacy of the White and more particularly the “Aryan” race) could be capable of listing the Negroes as an entity apart from the workers, etc.; only a fool would (in the United States of America) include the farmers as allies of the workers—unless, of course, one be an avowed capitalist reformer. Basil Manly, who compiled the so-called “Manly Report of the Commission on Industrial Relations (1914),” said in his summary: “The interests of the producing farmer and of the wage earner are identical.” Here we have a striking instance of complete agreement between the out-and-out bourgeois reformer and Anarcho-Communist reformer—and this is by no means the only instance!

Who are the farmers? They are the agricultural capitalists, large and petty. They are property-owning people who have a solid stake in the present order, and are therefore crass conservative and anti-proletarian. They are exploiters of farm laborers, who, of course, are not *farmers* in the accepted sense, any more than shoeworkers (though they are engaged in the manufacture of shoes) are shoe manufacturers. In grouping the farmers with the workers, the Communist party exhibits its true and essentially reactionary and anti-working class character.

III.

Mendax would not be the complete fool he appears to be if he did not rush in where angels fear to tread. Having no knowledge of the materialist conception of history he obviously does not possess even the slightest qualification for understanding, let alone discussing, the significance or implication of the term dictatorship of the proletariat. This question has been dealt with exhaustively in the pamphlet *Proletarian Democracy vs. Dictatorships and Despotism*, and it is only necessary to treat it very briefly here. In part Mendax observes:

“De Leon and after him his apostles contend that no dictatorship of the proletariat will be necessary after the overthrow of capitalism and that there will be even less need at that time for a revolutionary working class party. While this, they say, may not be true in Europe, the U.S. is an exception. *Whenever anyone claims an ‘exception’ for a fundamental principle of the working class movement, you may be sure that he is but*

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seeking for an excuse to reject that principle.” (Emphasis mine.)

This is most interesting. For in saying this Mendax (and the Communist party for which he speaks) is, de facto, condemning Lenin himself. But possibly Mendax and Co. may concoct an exception to the exception!

The dictatorship of the proletariat, as conceived by Marx, and after him by Lenin, etc., is predicated upon an assumed transition period. Where a transition period (a la Russia, for example) is needed, the dictatorship is inevitable. No transition period, no dictatorship of the proletariat. As this is simple logic and good sense it will be violently disputed by our Anarcho-Communist. But while logic fails where religious fanatics or Anarcho-Communists are concerned, authoritarian dicta usually bring the worshiper around. I invite Mendax to consider carefully the following from the speech delivered by Lenin on March 15, 1921, at the 10th Congress of the Russian Communist party:

“There is no doubt [said Lenin] that the Socialist revolution in a country where the immense majority of the population belongs to the petty land-holder producers, is possible only by reason of a number of special transition measures, *which would be entirely unnecessary in countries having a developed capitalism, where the wage earners in industry and agriculture constitute an immense majority.* In countries with a highly developed capitalism, there has been for decades a developed class of wage workers engaged in agriculture. Only such a class can serve as a support to an immediate transition to Socialism, socially, economically and politically. *Only in countries in which this class is sufficiently developed will the transition from capitalism to Socialism be possible.* [Emphasis in the foregoing mine.—A.P.] In a great number of utterances, in all our addresses, in the entire press, we have pointed out that the condition in Russia is different, that in Russia we have a minority of industrial workers, an immense majority of petty land-holders.”

Here, indeed, is “exceptionalism” with a vengeance! But whatever happened to the “fundamental principle”? Alas! the Anarcho-Communist’s lot is not a happy one!

While we are about it, it is, perhaps, just as well to cite another passage from Lenin touching on the same subject. Lenin’s wife quotes the following from Lenin in her *Memoirs*:

“All nations will come to Socialism, this is inevitable, but they will not all reach it in the same way; every nation will introduce certain special features into this or that form of democracy, this or that variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat, this or that tempo of the Socialist

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transformation of the various sides of social life. *There is nothing that is theoretically more paltry and practically more ridiculous than to picture, 'in the name of historical materialism,' a future painted in this respect, in the same drab color; this would be a mere Suzdal daub.*" (Emphasis mine.)

"This or that form of democracy"; "this or that variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat." The American "variety of the dictatorship of the proletariat" is the Industrial Union of the workers whose motto is, "All power to the Industrial Union!"—that is, "All power to the proletariat," and to the proletariat alone.

Mendax does not like the term "Industrial Democracy." Being cursed with a "dictatorship" complex, he does not understand that even in Russia there will eventually emerge a Proletarian Industrial Democracy. Perhaps it will give him some comfort to know that the man whom he does not know, but whom he thinks he follows, had quite a liking for democracy. The phrase "Proletarian Democracy" abounds in Lenin's works. Lenin's wife, in the *Memoirs*, makes this interesting observation:

"This, perhaps, is what most divided Lenin and Trotsky. Trotsky did not understand the democratic spirit, the democratic principles of Socialist construction, the process of reorganizing the entire mode of life of the masses."

The S.L.P. agrees with Mendax for once when he says that "it is a great crime against the working class to spread the illusion that capitalists will simply throw up the sponge, for it leaves the working class unprepared for the revolutionary struggle." The bourgeois reformist S.P. and the Anarcho-reformist C.P. are perpetrating this crime today. They are fostering the twin illusions of pure and simple politics and pure and simple physical force as the only things that are needed (one or the other, or both, as the case might be) in order to effect the revolution. The S.L.P. *insists* that the capitalist class will not simply surrender, either because of a mere majority at the ballot box, or because of howling, disorganized mobs parading up and down the avenues. The S.L.P. insists that without the *might* behind the ballot, the workers will meet with disaster. And that *might* is, *and can only be, the revolutionary Socialist Industrial Union*. Mendax and his "party" stand self-condemned as criminals who would neglect the important and indispensable task of organizing the economic force of the proletariat for the revolution. They stand self-convicted as betrayers of the working class.

If advocacy of violence, physical force, etc., on behalf of the working class made

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one a revolutionist, then indeed the late Mr. Victor L. Berger (S.P. reformer *par excellence*) was the bloodiest of bloody revolutionists, for in 1912 he openly stated in his paper, the *Social Democratic Herald*:

“In view of the plutocratic law-making of the present day, it is easy to predict *that the safety and hope of this country will finally lie in one direction only—that of a violent and bloody revolution*; therefore I say that each of the 500,000 Socialist [sic] voters and of the 2,000,000 [!!] workingmen who instinctively incline our way, should, besides doing much reading and still more thinking, **ALSO HAVE A GOOD RIFLE AND THE NECESSARY ROUNDS OF AMMUNITION IN HIS HOME.**” (Reported in published proceedings of S.P. convention held at Indianapolis 1912.) (Emphasis mine.)

Will someone point out the difference between S.P. bourgeois reformer and Anarcho-Communist ditto? Scratch a bourgeois and you have an Anarchist; scratch an Anarchist (Anarcho-Communist) and you have a petty reformer. The difference between a Berger and a Foster is a difference in mood; they are otherwise as alike as two peas.

Mendax suffers an attack of moral indigestion in the following: “The present leaders of the S.L.P. have even descended to the role of provocateur in the labor movement by trying to create distrust in the Communist party and its leaders.” This delicious passage is explained by a reference to the S.L.P. pamphlet, *W.Z. Foster—Renegade or Spy?* If to expose the slummism, the reactionary character of the Anarcho-Communists, if to convict them as the faithful servants of capitalism they have proved themselves to be, is to “descend to the role of provocateur,” then, indeed, the S.L.P. is guilty—as “guilty” as Marx was when he exposed and attacked the Anarchist Bakunin who, incidentally, raved at Marx exactly as do Mendax and Co. at the S.L.P., and in almost identical language.

We promise Mendax and his crew of lying scoundrels that we shall, if need be, publish more pamphlets or exposures on the sinister role played by their precious “leaders.” But, incidentally, Mendax lies when he says that we charged “out of the whole cloth” that Mr. Foster was a spy. We did not charge that Foster was a spy. We *proved, by documentary evidence and out of Foster’s own mouth, that the precious fellow was either a renegade OR a spy.* If Mr. Foster was not a spy, the conclusion is inescapable—on the basis of his record, his own writings, and his sworn testimony—that he was a cringing, spineless, yellow creature who simply could not help being a renegade. On the other hand, if Mr. Foster were a spy then the term

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renegade would obviously lose its meaning, for the business of a spy would require his appearing now in this, now in that disguise. But we are content—without making the choice now—merely to pose the question: Which is it—Renegade or Spy? It cannot be both, but it certainly and incontestably is one or the other.

If to attack misleaders of labor (even though they designate themselves pro-working class) is to sow distrust, etc., the S.L.P. pleads guilty. Though in logic they cannot do so, nevertheless, the Anarcho-Communists have frequently denounced the A.F. of L. fakers and S.P. politicians, even as the S.L.P. has done it for, lo! these many years. If, then, the mere act of denouncing the crimes and mistakes of groups or individuals who pose as “friends of labor” is to “create distrust,” then the Anarcho-Communists are indeed guilty of that heinous crime! And Mendax himself is caught red-handed, lying brazenly about the Marxian S.L.P. in order to “create distrust” for the S.L.P. among the workers! The difference, then, between the Anarcho-Communists and the S.L.P. in this particular respect is that whereas the Anarchists lie out of the whole cloth about the S.L.P., the Socialist Labor Party *proves its charges to the hilt*. That is what hurts. And what hurts still more is that we do not merely file away our evidence, but we broadcast it among the workers who particularly are interested and entitled to know the truth. That we tell the truth about the Anarcho-Communists and other enemies of the working class, and that we are efficient—these are the crimes of which the S.L.P. is guilty!

IV.

We are offered this choice chunk of mendacity: “Its leaders [the S.L.P.] hurriedly withdrew into their cubby-holes when an opportunity was offered the S.L.P. to enter united front struggles with the Communists and other workers [sic!] against war, for unemployment relief and insurance, against fascism, etc.” Just what prompted this stupid falsehood is hard to explain. Mendax may be such an ignorant fool that he does not know any better, but after all he was writing for the *Daily Worker*, and it should have been easy for him to learn that the S.L.P. was never “offered” such “an opportunity.” For his fellow Anarchists know quite well that any such “offer” would have been flung back at the disrupters and agents provocateurs who made it. This business of the S.L.P. “leaders” hurriedly withdrawing, etc., is a piece of unmatched mendacity. We do not unite with the slums, with *provocateurs*, or with anarchists and betrayers of labor and renegades a la Foster.

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As to “united front,” perhaps this bit of sound advice by Lenin may have a sobering effect on the “united fronters”—but more likely it will not. Here it is (from a letter to Kollontai):

“And you emphasize that ‘we must put forward a *slogan that would unite all.*’ I will tell you frankly that the thing I fear most at the present time is indiscriminate unity, which, I am convinced, is most dangerous and harmful to the proletariat.” (Quoted by Lenin’s wife in *Memoirs.*)

And in the same connection Lenin observed:

“What I fear most is the heaping together of heterogeneous groups, and then call that thing a party.”

This, no doubt, is another case of “deviation” and “exceptionalism” on the part of Lenin who, unfortunately, did not live to benefit by the profound knowledge and wisdom of Mendax!

The third installment of Mendax’s “thesis” on the S.L.P. is headed, “S.L.P. Believes in Ballot as the Road to Revolution.” Not being Anarchists, but Marxian Socialists, the S.L.P. does, indeed, plead guilty to that grave charge. The implication of Mendax is, however, that the S.L.P. believes that the ballot is all-sufficient. In so far as this is the Jesuitical gentleman’s contention it is, as has already been shown, utterly false.

Mendax says: “The De Leonites, running true to their ‘exceptional form,’ have cried that while the Communist party of the Soviet Union is not so bad, the C.P. of the U.S.A. stinks to high heaven. We have indeed made application to the Communist International, they exclaim, and in fact we should be its recognized party. But they always forget to add that they wished to join the C.I.—minus the 21 points of admission! In other words, minus the program of the Communist International.”

We are thankful to Mendax for the phrase “The C.P. of the U.S.A. stinks to high heaven.” It does. No self-respecting proletarian revolutionist could have anything to do with it, even if it were not so reactionary. But when the gentleman says that the S.L.P. “indeed made application to the Communist International,” he lies again. The S.L.P. never applied for admission to the “Communist International.” The bourgeois S.P. did and was emphatically rejected, though in point of principle and tactics, it is difficult to understand why a Hillquit, for example, was regarded as undesirable when a Foster (who was simply a Hillquit in a minor key) was accepted. As for “the

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21 points,” most of them were the craziest Bakuninistic nonsense ever foisted upon a world weary of nonsense and weary of Anarchism. Certainly the “points” were ludicrous in the extreme as applied to the United States. When a group in an extremely backward country such as Russia dictates to a movement in a highly industrially developed country such as the United States, particular details as to methods and tactics, we are treated to a spectacle at which one does not know whether to laugh or weep. Some of these “21 points” made it compulsory for a would-be revolutionary organization to become illegal and go underground. Others made it compulsory to carry on agitation among the army which, in the United States, would be equivalent to carrying on agitation among, say, Tammany Hall politicians, for the “army” (except in war-time when conscription is in force) in the United States, as everyone knows, is composed of volunteers who choose this sort of life because they are either adventurers or mercenaries, or both. Adventurers and mercenaries are as likely converts to the revolutionary movement as would be the hired lackeys (butlers, footmen, etc.) of the individual capitalists.

The element which in 1919 largely composed the so-called Communist movement in this country had been recruited almost entirely from the Socialist party, where they had received training as bourgeois reformers, infused with that peculiar form of Anarchism of which Victor Berger’s remarks (quoted above) constitute a typical example. The Bakuninistic points of the “Communist International” were like candy to this element and no time was lost by them in accepting the “21 points,” lock, stock and barrel. With some minor exceptions, the “21 points,” however, were observed mainly in the breach. If the Anarcho-Communists of that time had attempted to carry out the instructions contained in the “21 points,” they would have been outlawed and driven underground entirely—as, indeed, they were for a time, until they thought better of it and carefully put away most of the “21 points,” to repose peacefully side by side with Woodrow Wilson’s also forgotten “14 points.”

“Was Lenin influenced by De Leon?”, asks Mendax. Continuing, he adds:

“These artists of the word have also claimed that Lenin recognized the greatness of De Leon and gave him credit for having invented the system of Soviets. This contention is based primarily on the report of a bourgeois newspaper correspondent, Ransome, who said that Lenin had told him that after reading the works of De Leon (this was not until after the Revolution) he expressed admiration for him and gave him credit for his position on industrial unionism and his forecast that in the future governmental

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representation would be, not from geographic areas but from industrial units, which has something of the idea of Soviets. How much of this was actually said by Lenin and how much was the imagination of the newspaper correspondent will never be known.”

Again Mendax lies, “This contention” is not based primarily on Ransome’s report, but primarily on the report of John Reed who is one of the major heroes of the Anarcho-Communists, and who lies buried under the Kremlin Wall. On May 4, 1918, addressing the National Executive Committee of the S.L.P. in regular annual session, Reed said:

“Premier Lenin is a great admirer of Daniel De Leon, considering him the greatest of modern Socialists—the only one who has added anything to Socialist thought since Marx. . . . Lenin intends to translate this [biography of De Leon then being written by Katz and others] into Russian and write an introduction to it. It is Lenin’s opinion that the Industrial ‘State’ as conceived by De Leon will ultimately have to be the form of government in Russia.”³

This is clear and explicit, and it is impossible for the cleverest Anarcho-Communist casuist to distort its plain meaning. Reed conveyed this information almost six months before Robert Minor discovered that there was money to be made by wiring the sensational news to American newspapers that an American Socialist’s writings were influencing the thought of Russian revolutionists. Reed’s statement was published in the WEEKLY PEOPLE in the issue of May 11, 1918. At that time the WEEKLY PEOPLE had as editor one E. Seidel who was removed shortly thereafter for treason to the S.L.P., the said editor being a mere tool of Boris Reinstein who by that time had arrived in Russia (where he had first joined the Mensheviki, the group opposed to the Bolsheviks) from which, no doubt, he was directing the assault on the Socialist Labor Party. Incidentally, Arthur Ransome was not merely a “bourgeois newspaper correspondent,” but a distinguished writer and essayist who had no previous knowledge of De Leon, and who had no interest whatever in misrepresenting Lenin when he spoke in such unreserved praise of

³ It is an interesting commentary on the views prevailing at the time, even among such supposedly ardent adherents of Soviet Russia as John Reed, that grave doubts were entertained as to the possibility of the Soviet Republic surviving. Reed expressed the opinion “that the Soviet Republic could not ultimately succeed, because it was being subjected to too much pressure—on the west from Germany, on the east by Japan.” Reed added that he “expected a monarchy to be established in the west and a bourgeois republic in the east, with the reform Socialists in control.”—A.P.

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Daniel De Leon and his great contribution to Marxian science. This and related points, however, will be dealt with in detail in a special article. Certain it is, however, that there is no “never to be solved mystery” in regard to Lenin’s acknowledgment of De Leon’s genius, as Mendax so hopefully fears. Lenin’s utterances were too detailed, and have come through too many and varied sources to permit of misunderstanding or misinterpretations.

In the following Mendax imputes to Lenin a conception of the S.L.P. which flies violently in the face of the correct appraisal and approval which he gave in 1918 and later. For the sake of the record the statement of Mendax (probably as false or distorted as other statements or charges by him) is given here in full:

“But Lenin has set down in writing his opinion of the S.L.P. During the war, in his letters to Kollantai, who was at that time in the United States organizing the opposition within the S.P. to the imperialist war, he referred to the S.L.P. as having a ‘yellow sectarian streak.’ ‘Aren’t these people hopelessly sectarian?’ he asks in another letter, ‘Or are they maniacs of the fixed idea about a special economic organization of workers?’ ‘Yellow sectarian streak’—‘hopelessly sectarian’—‘maniacs of the fixed idea’—this was Lenin’s characterization of the S.L.P. And time has only served to develop these characteristics even further, to make out of the S.L.P. not only a ‘hopeless sect’ but an anti-working class sect.”

Mendax is shrewd enough to suppress the fact that Lenin wrote those letters in 1915 or 1916—that is, before the Russian Revolution of 1917, and before he knew anything about De Leon and the S.L.P. These letters—if they contained the utterances alleged—belong to the same period in which Lenin made the reference to the pre-1890 Socialistic Labor party and Engels’s just condemnation of the tactics of that organization. Since Lenin undeniably is guilty on that particular occasion of making what must be called a stupid observation, it is credible, though equally regrettable, that he could have made similar stupid and wholly unfounded charges about the Socialist Labor Party in his letters to Kollontai. Whatever Lenin, in his then ignorance of the S.L.P., may have said about the S.L.P. in 1915 or 1916, it is a matter of record that by 1918 he had completely changed this opinion. He changed that opinion still more fundamentally later, after he had become a student of De Leon’s works, and incorporated many of De Leon’s ideas in his program and speeches. One of the notable instances of this change may be found in his recognition of the fact that in a highly developed country there is no need of a transition period from capitalism to Socialism, and that, since the transition period

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is the reason for the “Dictatorship of the Proletariat,” therefore there is no need in such countries of this so-called “Dictatorship of the Proletariat.” For while in 1921 Lenin had so clearly and unqualifiedly made this point about there being no need for a transition period in highly developed countries, in April of 1917 he still spoke unqualifiedly about “the necessity of the state during the transition from capitalism to Socialism”—that state, of course, being the “Proletarian Dictatorship.”

However, in letters written to Kollontai early in 1917, Lenin correctly appraises the Socialist Labor Party and recognizes in it a revolutionary organization to be sharply and clearly distinguished from the reform social-democratic Socialist party of America, and the bulk of the social-democratic organizations which made up the Second International. In a letter to Kollontai dated March 16, 1917, Lenin wrote:

“Never again along the lines of the Second International! Never again with Kautsky! By all means a more revolutionary programme and more revolutionary tactics. K. Liebknecht, the American Socialist Labor Party, the Dutch Marxists show elements of such programme and tactics.” (Lenin, *“The Revolution of 1917,”* I, p. 21.)

Again, in some observations entitled “Tasks of the Proletariat in Our Revolution,” and published in his collected works, Lenin observes:

“Closest to the real internationalists are: in France, etc., etc., etc. . . . They, only they, are internationalists in deed. In the United States, the Socialist Labor Party and certain elements of the S.P. . . .”

These references by Lenin about the S.L.P. were evidently too strong and unqualified in their approval of the Socialist Labor Party to suit the editor of the American edition of Lenin’s works. For this editor, the notorious ex-S.P. reformer and now Anarcho-Communist reformer, Alexander Trachtenberg, wrote the following editorial note in the Lenin volume just quoted: “At that time [said Trachtenberg] the Socialist Labor Party was considered to have revolutionary Internationalist leanings.” Mr. Trachtenberg found it necessary to invent the fiction that while in 1917 the S.L.P. was revolutionary (the qualifying word “leanings” was obviously Mr. Trachtenberg’s way of manifesting his reluctance at acknowledging that Lenin had regarded the S.L.P. as revolutionary), subsequently it changed and had become anti-revolutionary, or, as these delightful Anarchist Romanticists put it, “counter-revolutionary.” The point is that in this official edition of Lenin’s works it is acknowledged that the S.L.P. was revolutionary, even to the point of compelling

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the editor, the Anarcho-Communist Trachtenberg, to fall in line with that admission. The proof is, therefore, conclusively established that whatever Lenin may have thought of the S.L.P. in 1915 or 1916, already by 1917 he had considerably altered his opinion.

It is perhaps not amiss in this connection to add that Mr. Trachtenberg at that very time was an active and important member of the Socialist party—the very group then so unsparingly denounced by Lenin, Mr. Trachtenberg having even gone so far as to act as official counselor to the social democratic reformers in the S.P. who were delegates to the Unity Conference between the S.L.P. and the S.P., held early in the year 1917. The writer has still before him a vivid picture of the sleek Mr. Trachtenberg sitting next to the equally sleek James Oneal (now editor of the S.P. organ, the *New Leader*), whispering advice and information to Mr. Oneal while the latter was engaged in a laborious effort to prove that the reform S.P. was right and that the revolutionary Marxian S.L.P. was wrong.

Since reference has been made to Alexandra Kollontai, it is just as well, for the sake of the record, to add a bit of interesting information about the lady and her encounter with the S.L.P. when she was visiting in this country in 1915 or 1916. Alexandra Kollontai called at the National Office of the Socialist Labor Party (as did Trotsky and Bucharin later) and I had a long and interesting conversation with her. The impression is now of a vivacious, excitable lady, apparently deadly in earnest, but very emotional and decidedly alien in her viewpoint. She assured me that the Socialist Labor Party was regarded by the European left wing movement (by which undoubtedly she referred to her associates, including Lenin) as being *the* revolutionary party in the United States, and that she and her associates were under no illusions as regards the opportunist and reform character of the S.P. She commended the Socialist Labor Party highly on its revolutionary integrity and attitude, particularly toward the War. Her sole complaint was that the Socialist Labor Party did not take advantage of the reform issues that were projected by capitalist reformers and self-seeking politicians, her point being that such reform measures should be used as points around which to rally the working class. When I asked her directly to cite an example of such rallying points, she mentioned the Workmen's Compensation Act, which shortly before that had been enacted into law. I pointed out to her the reactionary character of this Workmen's Compensation Act, and that her contention was identical to that of the reform S.P., but apparently she failed to grasp the point. Her observation was a revelation of the attitude of even

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revolutionary Socialists in Europe as regards American conditions and their total inability to understand that in this, the most highly developed capitalist country on the face of the earth, the issue was clear and plain, one between capitalism and Socialism, permitting of neither intermediary stages nor toleration of the injection of reform issues and palliatives.

Subsequently Alexandra Kollontai communicated with me several times from Norway, and always in terms implying complete recognition of the fact that the Socialist Labor Party was the only revolutionary organization in the United States.

While it is satisfying to know that Lenin recognized that De Leon of all modern Socialists was the only one to add to the science of Marxism, it is, nevertheless, largely immaterial what Lenin did, or did not, think of the S.L.P. Unlike the S.P. and Communist party reformers, the S.L.P. can stand on its own feet. It does not need the endorsement of any European Socialist. The S.P. and the C.P. do. They could not exist without the moral or financial support of the movements in Europe, which they, in keeping with other simian characteristics, so slavishly attempt to imitate. The S.L.P. admittedly does not see eye to eye with Lenin on many important points. His backward environment prevented him from grasping the full significance of fully developed capitalism, especially in America, though he did see much farther than any other European Marxist of his time. Hence, his conceptions were often colored by the tactical needs of semi-feudal Russia, especially in the period before the Russian Revolution.

The charge of “sect” and “sectarian” comes with poor grace from a crowd which is nothing if not sectarian. What is the essence of sectarianism? It is to divorce oneself from realities; to cling to dicta and pronouncements originating in circumstances totally different from those to which the sectarian intends to apply them. The anti-reform and pro-Industrial Union program of the S.L.P. springs directly out of the soil of industrial America—it is the logical reflex of ultra-capitalism. The program of the Anarcho-Communists is an importation from abroad. It is an attempt at applying here, with painful literalness, the tactics of backward Russia, an attempt which, whenever tried, naturally met with failure, not to say disaster. The charge of sectarianism fits the naive conglomeration of “revolutionary” romantics, whose hearts and minds (if any) are in Russia, while their feet trample underfoot realities (including Marxian science) on the soil of up-to-date United States.

And so we take our leave of the lying and unprincipled Mendax. He has proved

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himself a worthy product of the Anarcho-reform organization to which he belongs, a large proportion of which is made up of slum proletarians, whom at times it is impossible to distinguish from the agents provocateurs who also infest the so-called Communist party of America. The Socialist Labor Party principles have been vindicated in every important respect. They are the logical reflection of highly industrialized capitalism in the United States. They are based squarely on the realities as they obtain here, and not as they may have obtained in the past, or as they obtain abroad. The S.L.P. stands four-square to the capitalist and reform winds that howl from every quarter. It has armed itself for the fray and is prepared to go through to the end. And that end is clearly outlined as a final combat between the gathering forces of industrial feudalism, on the one hand, and the industrially organized working class, on the other, the latter fully prepared to unhorse the capitalist exploiter and to assume complete control of the productive machine of the nation, thus insuring, without painful transitional stages a la Russia, the complete establishment of the Industrial Republic of Labor, that is, a full-blown Proletarian Democracy.

THE ROAR OF THE SLUM.

*And every boy and every girl
Who joins the, Party called "Communist,"
Is either a loutish, ignorant churl,
Or a mesmerized, wild-eyed romanticist!*

(Apologies to W.S. Gilbert.)

Modern industrial society is a terribly complex thing. So interrelated are the various branches of industry that to disrupt one is to disrupt all—and the disruption is the greater the nearer we get to the very keystone in the arch, the monetary system. A sudden removal of that keystone, and the entire structure collapses. A complete and total collapse of capitalism, politically and in every other way, without a working class industrially organized to take hold and carry on production on a new social principle, would mean utter chaos. It would mean complete social disintegration which would engulf mankind in a major social cataclysm.

A contemplation of such a cataclysmic catastrophe should give the Marxian revolutionist pause. The complexity of the problem, the magnitude of the task, imposes upon the true Marxian a grave responsibility. Thorough and painstaking must be his preparation for the coming revolution; solemn must be his resolve, and sober his thought; deliberate and calm his every act and careful and steady his aim. His anger against the wickedness and iniquities of capitalism must be the cold anger of well-calculated relentlessness, and his passion must be kept in leash by the science that subserves his every move; his faith must be reared on the Gibraltar of facts, and anchored by an inflexible self-discipline. Malice and the lust of revenge (childish and savage motives) are absent from the true Marxian revolutionist, as are cravings for petty personal gain or individual preferment. The true Marxian has stripped from off himself the fetters of his egoistic individuality, and has developed the rich capabilities of his species, i.e., collectivized working class humanity. He has conquered and subdued the savage, the barbarian within himself, and on the ruins of individualistic childhood, of archaic egotism, he has raised a monument of cooperative manhood.

Every Christ calls forth an anti-Christ; the noblest of portraits suggests its own caricature, and true Marxism is plagued with a spurious "Marxism" which in every

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particular respect is the direct antithesis of genuine Marxism. There is but one genuine Marxism, but there are variations of spurious “Marxism.” There is the Social Democratic variety which would foist upon a gullible world its petty bourgeois reformism as “up-to-date” or “sane Marxism.” This variety is largely discredited and universally distrusted. But it has done its best to corrupt the revolutionary movement, and it has borne evil fruit. One of these evil fruits is that other variety of spurious Marxism known in this country as Anarcho-Communism. Being the latest, and most thoroughly in keeping with the anti-social and anarchic tendencies of the present period of social disintegration, it is, like so many “novelties,” seized upon eagerly by the individualists, the cynics, the socially disillusioned, the derelicts—in short, by the slum elements, the silk-hatted as well as the ragged kind. Just as the bandit, who awaits execution, attracts certain sob-sisters who vicariously suffer with him, and who romanticize him, though he be as vulgar as a swine, so this slummist Anarcho-Communism attracts certain elements in society which sense “revolutionary romance” in anything that has the appearance of rebellion, and whose notions of revolution are gathered from the individualistic beginnings of capitalism with its street battles, barricade fights, and escapes through underground tunnels a la Jean Valjean. This element—mostly the “literati”—furnishes the “nice,” the “respectable” front to this vulgar, spurious “Marxism” whose motto is the Jesuitical “The end justifies the means.” But despite “respectable” front and pretences, the real, the truly savage and slummist character, the insanity and imbecility of this spurious “Marxism,” breaks through again and again.

Look at the picture accompanying this article. It is reproduced from a Philadelphia newspaper over a news item headed: “Communists Shackle Girl to Pole as She Leads Protest.” She was chained to the lamppost so that she would have time to shriek her robotlike, senseless gibberish before the police could remove her. She is reported to be seventeen years old. The expression on her face reveals a warped or under-developed mentality. Coarseness and ignorance are stamped on her features. She is typical of the wild-eyed, brutalized, harebrained “Communist youth” which forms the backbone of the Anarcho-Communist movement, and which, on the admission of officials of the Communist party, passes



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through—in and *out*—the Communist party to the tune of 10,000 a year. Ten thousand youngsters trained—not in revolutionary principles, not in organized and self-disciplined efforts—but in the most degrading, anti-social and anti-working class practices. In short, trained as slum proletarian recruits, ready to be used by the reaction when or if it may conceive the moment propitious to call out this “army.”

The picture of this young savage, chained by her own “comrades” to a lamp-post, makes one think of the *Man with the Hoe*: this thing, “stolid and stunned,” “a sister to the ox,” with the slanted brow, in whom is blown out “the light within this brain,” and with “the emptiness of ages” in her face! This is the product turned out by the reactionary and dangerously anti-proletarian Communist party! This is at once a portrayal of educational methods and their result! In such hands are to be entrusted the destinies of a highly complex, acutely sensitized world? Never!

Some day, to paraphrase Marx, the workers must be prepared to reconstitute this world. To furnish a chart and a compass, so to speak, Marx wrought patiently for years and at the expense of his health and worldly comforts. He founded the science of Socialism (Marxism) so that the proletariat might intelligently, and as orderly as possible, effect the great change. He furnished us with the key that opens the door to the Cooperative Commonwealth. He strove mightily to instruct the proletariat and to warn it against the twin evils of capitalist reformism and anarcho-slum proletarianism. In so far as these wild, undisciplined and potential tools of the reaction are concerned, he wrought in vain. They know him not.

One may, however, find a certain symbolism in this young female chained by her fellow-slummists to this lamp-post. Representing savage individualism, i.e., unbridled anarchism, the chaining of this youngster constitutes a tacit, though, of course, quite unintentional acknowledgment on the part of the Anarcho-Communists that the brood of capitalist hell which they are training for future capitalist-imperialist uses, need to be kept chained until their evil mission is fulfilled.

It is said that even the most stupid of animals will learn by actual experience, i.e., through physical pains persistently and violently administered. The Anarcho-Communists, and for that matter the Social Democratic S.P., are in this respect below this animal level of intelligence (or rather stupidity), for the latter is still pursuing the tactics and preaching the doctrine which helped materially to produce a Mussolini in Italy, a MacDonald in Great Britain, and Hitler in Germany. Like

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the typical bourgeois “thinkers” that they are, they will ascribe to the wickedness of a Hitler, of a MacDonald, the cause of the downfall of their Social Democratic brethren in Germany and Great Britain—while busily engaged in promoting the identical principles and tactics that inevitably nurse into being the MacDonalds, the Mussolinis and the Hitlers! And the Communists, instead of benefiting by the terrible experience in Germany, will continue to pursue the tactics which helped to produce Hitler, which, in fact, train the Hitlers (witness the female Hitlerite, in embryo, in the picture), and which, if persisted in, will lead straight to social cataclysm and chaos, or the iron rule of industrial feudalism.

The difficulties confronting the S.L.P. are tremendous but not insurmountable. There is nothing more terrible, said the great German writer Goethe, than ignorance in action. (“Es ist nichts schrecklicher als eine thaetige Unwissenheit.”) But fortunately such ignorance is self-destructive, while knowledge and disciplined training give power, poise and endurance. “Knowledge plus organization equals power.” This slogan still carries with it a truth more potent than all the beating of savage tom-tom of the capitalist jungle. Yet, in the capitalist jungle no sound conveys an omen of greater evil, of greater menace to working class emancipation, than the roar of the slum.

BURLESQUING MARX.

“Imitators are a slavish herd and fools in my opinion.”

—La Fontaine.

There is a fatality which pursues blind imitators of concrete applications of a scientific principle only partly, and most frequently not at all, understood. This fatality causes such imitators to advocate, in absolutely opposite circumstances, means, forms and goals that run directly counter to the principles to which they profess adherence. The explanation of this phenomenon is, of course, that the concrete application of the principle has caught their fancy, fired their imagination, and the resultant ideology has gradually taken possession of them to the point where it becomes, for all practical purposes, a religion to them. Thus, for example, that which in Russia (with its economy of scarcity) is the logical result of the application of Marxism, becomes in the United States (with its economy of superabundance) the negation of Marxism. Not to understand this is to fail to understand the science of Marxism. Specifically, not to understand it is to fail completely in understanding the materialist conception of history. One of the most pathetic spectacles is the act of a would-be Marxist expounding the materialist conception of history, quoting, no doubt, correctly, the very language of Marx, and yet presenting an illustration of the materialist conception of history which constitutes its very denial. De Leon illustrated this type in a brilliant simile drawn from the science of meteorology.

In Western Europe, said De Leon, on the shores washed by the Atlantic, to the fisher folk who live there, and whose forebears have lived there for countless generations, the term meteorological science is unknown and meaningless. Yet, none knows better than these fisher folk what sort of weather is immediately ahead of them, and everyone of them can foretell whether the morrow is likely to bring rain and storms or fair weather, the one or the other determining whether they can pursue their dangerous calling. If a wind blows from the West, these people know that it is going to rain and that there are storms in the offing. Under such circumstances they usually defer going to sea in their boats, unless it be a matter of life and death. On the other hand, if a wind blows from the East, they are reasonably sure that the weather is going to be dry and probably fair, and in such case they feel reasonably certain that they may go to sea and return in safety. Now,

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said De Leon, suppose these fisher folk were suddenly transplanted to the Eastern coast of the United States and planted there without their reflecting upon, or giving heed to the changed location. Suppose a West wind blows, these fisher folk would decide that storm and rain are on the way and that they had better stay home. They would be much disappointed to find that the weather turned out to be dry and fair, and that they had missed an opportunity of bringing home a good haul. On the other hand, if an East wind blew, they would reasonably suppose that there was dry and fair weather to be expected, and they would set to sea in their tiny boats, and perchance get caught in a storm and squall and get drowned. As with these fisher folk, and the principle of meteorology involved, so with Marxian Socialism and the economic and sociologic principle involved. He who forgets the facts that the very opposite conditions of those obtaining in Russia obtain in this country, will get caught in precisely the same manner as were the fisher folk who went to sea and who, in their ignorance of the meteorological principle involved, suffered shipwreck and disaster. The revolutionary Marxian movement would likewise suffer such disaster, cautioned De Leon, if it ignores the sound Marxian principle specifically embodied in the materialist conception of history, and ridiculous indeed is the spectacle of those would-be Marxists who in the United States attempt to apply Marxian science, not in the light of the principles of that science, but in parrot-like imitation of its concrete application to a country which in every fundamental and determining respect is the direct opposite of the conditions in the United States. As De Leon concisely summed up this principle: “The Socialist movement of America will have its tactical moves determined by the sociological topography of the land. A movement that here is molded by the sociological topography of any other country is in the air.”

The fatality pursuing imitators in the field of politics and economics pursues these imitators in the fields of the arts. On the stage, for example, the attempt at portraying the Socialist revolutionary prelude and the culminating act, results in such burlesque performance as the play *The International*, by John Howard Lawson—a play which had a short run in New York City a few years ago. In the field of music we had presented to us (shortly after the Bolshevik revolution at least, and to a considerable extent even now) Russian folk songs—notably, the *Song of the Volga Boatmen*—as the expression of revolutionary sentiment in song. And in the graphic arts we have had, and still have, an almost photographic reproduction of the style and media that have become definitely identified as distinctly Russian.

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The reason for the prevalence of these slave-like imitations is not wholly due to a conscious desire to imitate. It is, of course, also largely due to the weakness of the revolutionary proletarian movement in this country. This weakness has caused enthusiasts to lean on ideas and things foreign—specifically Russian ideas and forms. The latest, and in many respects the most extraordinary, expression of this imitative urge, this tendency to conform to modes *a la Russe*, for example (“Marxism” *a la Russe* being quite the rage among our “literati” just now), is the attempt, on the part of a well known Communist artist, to illustrate Marx’s *Capital*. If there is one work of science that cannot, and should not, be illustrated (except possibly by graphs and mathematical formulæ) it is *Capital*. To attempt the task is, once again, to burlesque a serious performance. Mr. Hugo Gellert is the foolhardy Communist artist who has made this attempt, in the doing of which he succeeds completely in demonstrating the truth of the above declaration, that is, that *Capital* cannot, and should not be illustrated. Contrary to Marx’s dictum that in economics the “force of abstraction” must be relied upon, Mr. Gellert is sure that the impossible can be made possible, and the result is *Karl Marx ‘Capital’ in Lithographs*.

This is not to say that Mr. Gellert’s illustrations are not excellent. Most of them are, and a few are exceptional. But it is ridiculous to call them illustrations of Marx’s *Capital*. They constitute a series of cartoons, portraying this or that peasant or proletarian type, or this or that bloated capitalist type, or this or that concrete incident of life under capitalism. A great many of these cartoons might have been taken from the *New Masses*, or from any one of the numerous liberal or reform journals making a practice of exposing particular instances of capitalist brutality and ruthlessness. Where Mr. Gellert tries to be very precise (as, for example, in his attempt to illustrate Cooperation), he becomes naive. Here Cooperation is illustrated by showing a group of huskies pulling a rope—suggesting nothing so much as the other end of a tug of war! The repeated reproductions of a clock to illustrate surplus value, etc., are utterly pointless, in fact, meaningless. As one of the illustrations to “The Working Day” we see two brawny workers, white and black, back to back, one grasping a pick-axe, the other a monkey-wrench. They are specifically intended to illustrate Marx’s famous observation: “Labour cannot emancipate itself in the white skin where in the black it is branded.”

And so it goes throughout the volume.

Opposite each cartoon is a quotation from Marx. Due, again, to the

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aforementioned fatality, Mr. Gellert had to take his quotations, not from the authorized translation of *Capital*, but from a wretched, one might say a *burlesque, imitation* of the authorized translation, viz., the miserable, and to some extent dishonest, translation of that unscrupulous pair, Eden and Cedar Paul. Only Mr. Gellert's Anarcho-Communist affinities, and his essential ignorance of Marx and Marxian literature, can account for his strange choice in this respect. As an example of the wretchedness (to say nothing worse of it) of this translation, the following will serve. Mr. Gellert quotes from the Paul translation:

“In the United States of America any sort of independent labor movement was paralyzed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the republic. Labor with a white skin cannot emancipate itself where labor with a black skin is branded.”

This crudity is accepted in preference to the beautiful, almost poetic English of the translation approved by Marx's life-long friend and co-worker, Frederick Engels:

“In the United States of America, *every* [original German “jede” which means every, not “any sort of”] independent movement of the workers was paralysed so long as slavery disfigured a part of the Republic. **LABOUR CANNOT EMANCIPATE ITSELF IN THE WHITE SKIN WHERE IN THE BLACK IT IS BRANDED.**”

The part in caps. reads in German as follows:

“Die Arbeit in weisser Haut kann sich nicht dort emancipieren, wo sie in schwarzer Haut gebrandmarkt wird.”

As anyone who understands German can see at a glance, the translation approved by Engels is a faithful and literary rendition, whereas the commercial product of the Pauls (used by Mr. Gellert) is a distortion and mere patchwork.

One may protest against such vandalism in “translation” or adaptation, or against such grotesque and burlesque performance as this attempt at illustrating Marx's *Capital* until one is blue in the face—the grotesquerie and the burlesquing of Marxian science will go on until the United States possesses a numerically strong revolutionary movement based squarely and soundly on the science of Marxism, with its logical and rational application to the historical traditions, political actualities and economic basis of America.

That the Gellert illustrations do not illustrate is reluctantly acknowledged even

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by those who write sympathetically of Communist activities. Thus Mr. C. Hartley Grattan (a “sympathizer” if not a member of the dilettante Communist literati) writes in a review of Mr. Gellert’s book as follows: “Rather frequently the full power of these lithographs is not felt until the text has been read.” Just so—only we should have left out the words “rather frequently”! Without the text no one would remotely suspect that they were intended as illustrations to *Capital*.

Mr. Gellert will probably find sufficient consolation in the fact that his cartoons will sell in considerable quantities, thus bringing to him that reward which (according to his illustrations) should flow to the possessors of brawn and muscle alone. And possibly future editions of Mr. Gellert’s “illustrated *Capital*” may be further improved by having the quotations set to jazz music. Surely, what a Gellert could do graphically, a Gershwin, or even a Berlin, should be able to do “musically”! And eventually we may even witness Marx in comic strips, side by side with “Mutt and Jeff” and other manifestations of “up-to-date” expressionism in American “art”!