

EDITORIAL

## A PRIMARY LESSON TO THE SEATTLE, WASH., “POST-INTELLIGENCER.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE Seattle, Wash., *Post-Intelligencer* has a queer article in its issue of September 27 on the subject of disfranchisement. The article pretends to show that the “alien Socialist” should not be naturalized and, where naturalized, should be disfranchised. Whether intentional or unintentional, the prefix “alien” to the word “Socialist” is misleading. It is misleading because in the course of the argument the objection is directed, not to the “alien,” but the “Socialist.” The argument amounts to this: “No believer in the theories of Socialism who seeks to carry them into effect can, without perjury and fraud, swear allegiance to the Constitution of the United States.”

It is a fact that everyone elected to office must take the oath of allegiance; also is it a fact that every voter takes an implied oath of allegiance. In view here of the conclusion that Socialists should be disfranchised, on the ground that they aim at changes in the Constitution, can mean nothing else than that whoever would change the Constitution, whether in the direction of Socialism or otherwise, should be disfranchised. If this principle is sound, then the disfranchising must commence with the writers on the *Post-Intelligencer*; it is proposing by its scheme to change Constitution and principles. This construction will strike the *Post-Intelligencer* as novel, as absurd. We know that. No sane man, if he is well informed, would ever give the *Post-Intelligencer* credit for knowledge of constitutional law or any of the kindred sciences. As educator of the masses, the national organ of the Socialist Labor Party thinks it not amiss to educate the *Post-Intelligencer*. A public primary lesson administered on the subject will serve a double educational purpose; it will teach this capitalist organ a thing or two, and it will convey information to the masses that will help them to rid themselves of the delusion that these capitalist Editors know what they talk about.

Now, then, pupil *Post-Intelligencer*, rise in you seat and learn:

1. The Constitution of the United States, Art. V., provides, and is wholly taken up with the provision, for the AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION.

2. There was a great man in this country, by name George Washington. He is frequently called the "Father of his country." He wrote letters, private and public. These letters exist to this day. In them he pointed out that this provision to Amend the Constitution marked a new era in the history of government. Former amendments in government had to be done by bloody social shocks; in America, such changes are made possible without shocks, the method of make them being provided for by the Amendment clause, Art. V.

3. There is another public document of great veneration in this country. It is read regularly every Fourth of July. It is known as the Declaration of Independence, and is a cornerstone in the governmental theory that this country's politico-sociology was reared on. It provides that it is the "right and the duty" of a people, whenever any form of government becomes in their opinion destructive of the beneficent ends that governments are instituted for, "to alter or to abolish such government and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

4. There was another great man in the country, Chief Justice Marshall by name. He construed the Constitution repeatedly. He lays down the principle that the Amendment Clause recognizes in the people the right to pull down the present and set up any form of government, and provides the manner how.

5. There was, some time ago a set of brigands in this country, known as "Slave Holders," also called "Copperheads." They held that no change could be made in the Constitution, Amendment Clause or no Amendment Clause (Art. V.), and they pronounced upon that ground the Abolitionists as "traitors," "un-American," "Atheists" and "aliens." (Mark all these words.) The epithets were hurled on the ground that what the Abolitionists wanted required "a change in our sacred institutions."

6. These gentry, presently showed the cloven hoof. He who opposed changes in the Constitution on the ground that no changes may be made, is nothing but a brigand. Scratch him long enough and the brigand will appear. Being scratched long enough, the brigand soon did appear in the Copperhead. He took up arms to protect his brigandage,—and those who held that the Constitution could be changed, mopped the earth with the brigands, many of whose bones lie bleaching to this day

south of the Mason and Dixon line.

Now, pupil *Post-Intelligencer*, you may take your seat, and chew upon the lesson just taught you. We may take you a grade higher some other time.

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