

EDITORIAL

THE CHESTERFIELD OF THE REVOLUTION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“IT is manifestly unjust and unfair that an organization which is smaller in the political field than the industrial organizations are in the industrial field should dictate to them the kind of organization they should have.”—So spoke Mr. Robert Hunter at the Socialist party convention in opposition to a proposed recommendation in favor of the industrial form of organization. And the gentleman added that such “dictation,” besides being “unjust” and “unfair” would be “unwise”, also “impertinent”, and the evidence of a “swelled head.”

The theory of this reasoning is pivoted on Modesty. According thereto the pronouncements of a body must be in proportion to its size—the bigger the body the bolder it is justified to be; the smaller, then all the more modest.

We shall not dispute this standard of what may be termed the “good manners revolution.” We never heard of it before, but that is no reason why we should refuse to enrich the store of Socialist Labor Party good manners. We shall give the thing a trial, by testing it by the conduct of Mr. Hunter at the convention.

The S.P. organization credits itself with 30,000 members. That is like a drop in the ocean of the membership of the United States. If Mr. Hunter’s standard of revolutionary “good manners” is lived up to by himself we should find him with his back humped against any proposition to “dictate” to that infinitely larger organization “the kind of political organization it should have.” We should find him practicing “justice”, “fairness”, “wisdom”, the opposite of “impertinence”, and setting the example of the contrary to “swell-headedness” by denouncing as “manifestly unfair”, “unjust”, “impertinent”, and “swell-headed” any attempt at “dictating” to the millions in the land that they organize on the plan of the Socialist Republic. We should expect of this Chesterfield of the Revolution that he coo like a gentle turtle

dove, and purr like a well-behaved pussy. We should expect him, in consideration of the relative smallness of his own organization opposite the 75,000,000 members of the land, at the most to say something like this: “Well—yes—perhaps, it might—if you allow me the freedom—no offence meant!—Socialism—you know—I mean nothing harsh, you know,—is it displeasing?—well—excuse me—I’m sorry—didn’t really mean any thing terrible—but—here is a little tract—it may interest you—has a sweet title —‘Every girl her own Socialist homeopathist’—quite interestingly written—to while away an idle hour—no offense meant—shall see you again.”

But lo and behold, apart from such little discrepancies as “dictating” temperance and anti-immigration, we find Mr. Hunter enthusiastically voting for a platform, which “dictates” Socialism to the 75,000,000 members of the organization of the land!

Is one, in sight of such a spectacle to conclude that, after all, Mr. Hunter is not a Chesterfield, that he is a “dictator,” that he is “manifestly unjust”, and “unfair”, and “unwise”, and “impertinent” and “swell-headed”? Why, bless your soul, no! What, then, is he?

Mr. Robert Hunter is a very nice young man, who should learn that Socialism is the Labor Movement—and then sit down and study the Labor Movement.

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