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EDITORIAL

BERGER—HILLQUIT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT has been often claimed in these columns that the so-called Socialist party is no party of Socialism at all, but a caricature of the mutually throat-cutting bourgeois. As beseems the dignity of *The People*, it has never disgraced the Socialist Labor Party, whose organ it is, by making unsupported assertions. Indeed, one of the reasons for the malignant hatred entertained against *The People* by the S.P. bourgeois is the solidity of the facts, and the unanswerableness of its conclusions. Accordingly, with irrefutable facts to back the claim, *The People* has repeatedly proved that the bourgeois characteristic of “double skinning” is the distinguishing characteristic of the S.P. bourgeois. Like the species Bourgeois Vulgaris, its caricatures in the S.P., on the one hand, use the Working Class merely as a source of revenue, and, on the other hand, are driven, in their bourgeois competition for the skin of the proletariat, into the violent animosities that mark the lovingness of one bourgeois towards another. Here is the latest cumulative proof:

In his *Social Democratic Herald* Mr. Victor L. Berger, of Milwaukee S.P. celebrity for political corruption with the Republican party, has this to say about his comrade, Mr. Morris Hillquit, of New York S.P. celebrity for political corruption with both the Republican and the Democratic parties:

“Comrade Hillquit is a prominent lawyer of New York, making a lot of money and owning a lot of property. And while he is a bright fellow—doing a great deal of work for clothing manufacturers and some for the trade unions—he surely is not the man to speak at a labor meeting for the American proletariat, nationally or internationally.”

Per contra, in the *New York Worker* of the 9th instant, Mr. Hillquit, of New York S.P. celebrity for political corruption with both the Republican and Democratic

parties, has this to say about his comrade, Mr. Berger, of Milwaukee S.P. celebrity for political corruption with the Republican party:

“Comrade Berger is a well-known insurance broker in Milwaukee, making a lot of money and owning real estate. And while he is a shrewd fellow—writing insurance for all subscribers of the *Wahrheit* and some others—he is surely not the man to indulge in violent diatribes in the name of the real American proletariat.”

This is not a case of an underling, indulging in billingsgate against his superior who may have sacked him, or who insists in keeping his “light under a bushel.” Such cases—common in the International Movement, witnessed in Belgium not long ago, more recently in Germany, and not unknown here in America—are not cases in point. The “testimony” produced in such cases is not reliable; indeed, is not testimony at all. The present case is one of peers, both occupying equal posts of eminence—National Committeeships—in their party, and neither depending in any way upon the other for his rank. In such cases the testimony is reliable. The testimony is, moreover, reliable on the principle that testimony against one’s own interest is among the most reliable of testimony. The testimony, in this instance, has all the force of the truths that leap up from the angrily competing hearts and out of the angrily competing lips of shopkeepers in the same line of business and on the same street.

There, no doubt, are honorable exceptions among the rank and file of the S.P. Possibly the “exceptions” are the majority. If they be, they fill no role in the S.P. other than the role filled by the proletariat in capitalist society. It is the capitalist, or bourgeois, who counts; he is “the people”; he is “the party” because he is the dominant force. So are the Bergers and the Hillquits “the party” in the S.P. instance. They alone count because they alone do as they please.

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