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EDITORIAL

MILLERANDISM—“THE GOSPEL OF LOVE.”

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In a recent tour through several cities of Northern France, Millerand,¹ the Minister of Commerce in the French Cabinet, took occasion to condemn the class struggle attitude of the French Socialist Labor Party as a policy of hatred. “The regeneration of the working class,” he declared, “is a work which the government (the existing capitalist government) neglects no effort to bring about;” the class struggle theory he pronounced inhuman; “love not hatred,” said he, “will emancipate the working class.”

Who is there that has not heard the charge made against Socialism, that is to say, bona fide Socialism, that it preaches hatred, that its principle of the class struggle is a principle false in theory and immoral in practice? And who is there that has not heard, in line therewith, the claim advanced that the emancipation of the working class can only be accomplished by the good will of the capitalist class, and that “Love” must be the means used to secure this end?

Millerand’s song has a well-known ring in it, but rarely does it happen that the song brings its own refutation so completely as it does in the instance of this cabinet minister.

Since this very Millerand accepted office in the French Cabinet, the cabinet has either ordered or authorized the cold-blooded shooting of the workingmen on strike on two different occasions. On both occasions the troops were asked for by employers, and were, contrary to law, quartered in the employers’ quarters; and not the least pretense has been made that the workers were using violence. The military force was applied for to intimidate, and did intimidate at the cost of human life—workingmen’s lives. The theory of “Cabinet Government” is that the collective

¹ [In 1899, Alexandre Millerand (1859–1943), a member of the French Socialist Party, accepted appointment as minister of commerce in the Cabinet of Prime Minister René Waldeck-Rousseau. Millerand’s betrayal split the socialist movement in France and led directly to the infamous Kautsky Resolution approved by the International Socialist Congress in Paris in September 1900. For the text of the Kautsky Resolution, see De Leon’s *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress*.—R.B.]

act of the Cabinet is the individual act of all its members, and that the individual act of any one member is the act of all. The Cabinet Minister who refuses to shoulder responsibility for any act of his colleagues resigns; if he does not resign, he approves.

Thus the capitalist theory of the "Gospel of Love" turns out in practice to be the gospel of bullets; thus the aid the Working Class can expect from the capitalist class is ascertained to be brute force to subjugate Labor. It is so everywhere.

The capitalist theory against the class struggle that Socialism preaches, together with the capitalist claim that it is willing and alone able to accomplish the regeneration of the working class is among the most difficult and insidious arguments that the cause of Labor's Emancipation has to beat against. They are difficult to overcome, because of their plausibility; they are insidious for the double reason that they afford added opportunities to the cruel pangs of capitalism by veiling it in velvet, and that they furnish a pretext to the weak among the working class to unbuckle their armor, relax their vigilance, transfer their trust, from their own, to the shoulders of their born, hereditary foe. Whatever progress the cause of Labor's Emancipation has made was made in the teeth of the above false charge and claim, sedulously advanced by the spokesman of capitalism, and as firmly resisted and demolished by bona fide or Revolutionary Socialism.

What the pretence of "Love" on the part of the capitalist class amounts to; what their "Gospel of Love" means; what aid the Working Class may expect from that quarter; and how firmly the Socialist Movement must cling to the principle of the class struggle—all this acquires added significance from the circumstance that this identical Millerand poses as a Socialist, and that his corrupt practices are endorsed by certain elements in Europe that, once revolutionary, have since grown tired of the fray, and by certain other elements here in America, the Armory Building or Kangaroo Social Democracy,² that never was anything but an organized treason to the workers of America.

² [In 1897, James Carey was elected to the city council of Haverhill, Mass., on the SLP ticket. During or immediately after the campaign, however, Carey quit the SLP and joined the "Social Democratic Party" of Victor Berger and Eugene V. Debs. When local capitalists demanded that the city council finance construction of a local armory, from which state militia could be used to break strikes, Carey voted in favor of a motion to build the armory with city funds. Section Haverhill, SLP, promptly demanded Carey's resignation from office on grounds that he had sought and accepted election under false pretences. Carey refused. In 1899, he hooked up with the "kangaroo" element that split the SLP and that merged with the Debs "Social Democracy" in 1901 to form the Socialist Party.—R.B.]

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