

EDITORIAL

## A MAKE-SHIFT SOCIALIST CONGRESSMAN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A**T first blush it may seem senseless to say that Senator Tillman, in the absence of a straight-out Socialist in Congress, is performing good Socialist work.

It has been said that Jay Gould did more for Socialism than a thousand Socialists put together. Similar utterances are heard with regard to Rockefeller. That is true, in a sense. Without these men, without their work of concentration, Socialism would have no ground to work upon; no ground from which to proceed; no ground upon which to make a forecast, and direct an agitation. All this is true. But the work of the Goulds and Rockefellers differs radically from the work of a Tillman. The work of the Goulds and Rockefellers no Socialist could undertake. The role of a Tillman it is quite conceivable for a Socialist to perform. The Huxleys and Haeckels of three hundred years ago spoke in the language of the Montaignes and Bacons of those days. In so far as their civilization furnished the facts on which to stand, they uttered the views of to-day in the covert language that alone rendered those views safe to utter at that time. An important arm in the Socialist arsenal is the arm of exposing the fraudulency of capitalist class affectation of virtue. This specific work Tillman is performing to perfection, under shelter of the capitalist guns.

Taft made some speeches in the South redolent of philanthropy and “square deal” for the Negro. Tillman thereupon promptly jumps on Taft in a manner that no Socialist could.

“I am not opposed to Negro education at all,” says Tillman, “provided it is of the right kind.” And what may that “right kind be”? Tillman says: “The only instrumentality available to disfranchise the Negro in South Carolina was to require an educational qualification,” hence the “right kind of education” to be

given the Negro must not be of a nature to qualify him for the suffrage, but of a nature to keep him disqualified, because “we never intend to be governed by the Negro, whether educated or uneducated.”

Here it is all in a nutshell—capitalist double-dealing towards the working class.

Suggest to the Tillman class that the Negro emigrate from South Carolina and they will grow enraged. They need the Negro. The Negro represents Labor. How to keep him and induce him to stay Tillman discloses. It is the identical trick used by the Northern capitalists towards the “hordes of Europe and Asia.” They want them, but only as aliens—a status to which they seek to reduce the whole working class, native and foreign, through a variety of lures. Tillman discloses one of the lures; he also discloses the scheme. He raises a corner of the curtain; what that reveals gives an idea of what is not revealed.

That Tillman is not trying to do Socialist work is granted. All the same he is doing pretty well as a make-shift Socialist Congressman.

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

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