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EDITORIAL

THE DARK LANTERN TURNED ON SNEAK THIEVES.

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A PROPOS of the death in Paterson, N.J., of Joseph P. McDonnell, long known as a “labor leader” in that State, the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* of January 22 says that, about the middle of the seventies, the then Socialist Labor Party set up an English organ, *The Labor Standard* with McDonnell as Editor, and that, shortly thereafter, on “one fine morning, the party awoke to find that the paper, together with all its appurtenances” had vanished; “the same had been secretly transferred to another building, and forthwith declared itself ‘independent’ of the party.” The *Volkszeitung* concludes from this that the paper having “belonged to the party,” therefore “belonged to nobody,” hence the party was powerless, and, consequently, only “those who know not what they are talking about” combat the idea of “legally” incorporated and privately owned party papers.

The People is in position to say, in the first place, that it has inquired into the matter and that, as was to be expected, the principal allegations of fact made by the *Volkszeitung* are false; in the next place, that, even if the allegations were true, the conclusion attempted to be drawn from them will not hold water.

Granted, for the sake of the argument, that the *Labor Standard*, together with its appurtenances, was the property of the Socialist Labor Party, and that McDonnell seized the property overnight and moved away with it,—granted that, for the sake of argument—then there was a case of burglary. Burglary is nothing new or rare. Hardly a day passes but the offense is committed. Yet who would say that, seeing that burglary is committed, “only those who know not what they are talking about” would advise the use of doors, locks and keys? Such a style of reasoning could occur only to the class of people who in Germany are called

“Kameele” and “Kaffern” and who are here known as “Timbooctooers.” The commission of burglary is no argument against precautions to prevent burglary. Not because there are thieves prowling around should one, from the outset, surrender to thieves. Seeing that a party can be cheated by private interests out of its own, all the stronger are the reasons to protect the Party’s interests against burglars.

The facts, however, are different from those given by the *Volkszeitung*. It is not true that the Party owned the *Labor Standard*. The opposite is true. The *Labor Standard* was private property from its inception, and McDonnell was the owner. The Party was the owner of the *Labor Standard* only and exactly in the sense that the *Volkszeitung* party, called by some the Social Democratic or Socialist party, is the owner of the *Volkszeitung* and *Worker*, or of the funds for the muchly promised *Daily Call*. The folks who are appealed to for donations for these papers are told the papers are theirs—so were they told in the case of the *Labor Standard*; but, exactly as in the case of the former papers, the innocents who believed and chipped in were fooled. As fast as any one, not a member of the private *Volkszeitung* Corporation, or of the corporation of the alleged *Daily Call*, parts with his money he has parted with his property, and got nothing in exchange. The said corporations own paper and funds, and can do as they like, without responsibility to the innocents who “believed.” The corporations can suppress what news does not square with their interests; they can mutilate and forge information; they can issue calls for starting hostile parties or rings within the party; they can convert the funds to whatever purpose suits them—exactly as the *Volkszeitung* Corporation has done and is doing, and no outsider can interfere. This was the case with the *Labor Standard*. What McDonnell did is exactly what the *Volkszeitung* Corporation, and all other private corporation{s}, does {do?} and will do. The innocents who found themselves “helpless” and looked as if they had awakened from a dream when McDonnell did what he liked with the *Labor Standard*—those innocents are a mirror for the latter day innocents of the *Volkszeitung* or Socialist party to see their own startled faces in.

Cold is the comfort that the schemers, who seek to appropriate a party of Socialism for their private pockets and nasty schemes by the certain manoeuvre of privately and “legally” owning the party’s press, will find in the history of

McDonnell's *Labor Standard*. That history is a dark-lantern that flashes its light square into the faces of these schemers. It exposes them red-handed.

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