

Daniel DeLeon, "Wandering Jew" of American Socialism: An Interpretive Analysis

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No student of American socialism or the American labor movement who surveys the twenty-five year period preceding the onset of the first World War can fail to note the significant part played by Daniel DeLeon in major developments. From 1890 to 1914, he dominated the Socialist Labor Party, which until 1898 was the only nationally constituted party of socialism in America. As lecturer, debater, editor, organizer, propagandist, theoretician, delegate to meetings of the Second International, translator of Marxist literature and frequent candidate for public office, DeLeon made his presence felt in virtually all sectors of party activity. Not content to confine himself solely to party work, he also became deeply involved in labor organizations as a forceful opponent of Samuel Gompers' "pure and simple" unionism. Serving as a delegate to the Knights of Labor's General Assemblies from 1893 to 1895, he fervently sought to fashion the Knights into a socialist alternative. Failing in this endeavor, he turned to organizing that alternative himself in the form of the ill-fated Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance. Later he emerged to assume a key role in a somewhat more successful challenge to Gompers, the Industrial Workers of the World.¹

Even greater was DeLeon's impact in the realm of revolutionary theory. As the best-known proponent of DeLeonist Marxism, Eugene Debs "evoked a greater response than has yet come to another American labor radical" in his five campaigns for the Presidency on the Socialist ticket. Moreover, J.B.S. Hardman has correctly noted that "the later radical wings of socialism and of communism in the United States took their cues" from DeLeon, as evidenced especially by the case of Louis Fraina, one of the founders of the American Communist Party. Nor were manifestations of DeLeon's importance and influence as a revolutionary thinker lim-

¹ A useful sketch which provides details of the important events in DeLeon's life and career can be found in William J. Ghent, "Daniel DeLeon", *Dictionary of American Biography*. The best of the more extensive treatments is David Herreshoff, *American Disciples of Marx* (Detroit: 1967), pp. 106-172.

ited to the United States. For example, in the British Isles his writings nurtured the militancy of a young Aneurin Bevan, later the fiery spokesman of the Labour Party's left-wing, and struck a responsive chord among workers in Clydeside and on the Dublin docks. And in the newly-born Soviet Union, V.I. Lenin, upon reading some of DeLeon's pamphlets, was impressed by the extent to which the American's theories had anticipated his own, particularly with regard to the structure of the soviet state.²

However, despite his significance, very little is really known about DeLeon. To be sure, adequate summaries and surface analyses of his life and career have been written, but they have tended to stereotype the man rather than explain him. What has been lacking is an understanding of motivation and causation, and more generally, an interpretive scheme that renders comprehensible a very complex and enigmatic figure. To a considerable degree the problem has been one of sources, which have a feast-or-famine character. Primary material on DeLeon's public career in the socialist movement, as can be imagined from the sheer pervasiveness of his activity, is more than abundant; indeed, his writings alone consist of several thousand individual pieces, ranging from brief articles and editorials to multivolume translations. Having to confront such a confusingly extensive mass of data has caused scholars to retreat too often to simplistic and erroneous generalizations derived from the tendentious observations of DeLeon's contemporaries. The difficulty is compounded by the extreme sparseness of the documentation needed to put the public man in perspective. The "Daniel DeLeon Papers" deposited at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, for instance, do not really comprise a personal correspondence, but rather letters, reports and articles largely written by others and addressed to the Party organ, or to DeLeon in his official capacity as its editor. And reliable information about his childhood, his youth, his formal education and his pre-socialist professional and political involvements is scattered and quite fragmentary.³

² *Ibid.*, p. 186; Arnold Petersen, *Daniel DeLeon: Social Architect* (New York: 1941-1953), vol. I, p. 135, vol. II, pp. 367-369; J.B.S. Hardman, "Daniel DeLeon", *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*; Paul Buhle, "Louis C. Fraina. 1892-1953" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Connecticut); Lenin to N.I. Bukharin, late summer, 1920, in V.I. Lenin, *Lenin on the United States* (New York: 1970), p. 536.

³ For a discussion of the weaknesses in the literature, see L. Glen Seretan, "The Personal Style and Political Methods of Daniel DeLeon: A Reconsideration", *Labor History*, XIV, 2 (Spring, 1973), 163-201. Solon DeLeon, Daniel's son, has informed the author that his father did not, as a rule, retain letters or documents (letter, December 9, 1972),

To escape the limitations imposed by incomplete data it is necessary to adopt a unifying interpretive concept as a guide to intelligent surmise. In recent years historians have crossed disciplinary boundaries in search of such concepts, and they have made fruitful use of many borrowings from the social sciences. Less attention has been paid to the possible insights to be gained from the humanistic disciplines, particularly literature. However, it is from a literary theme that an extremely useful conceptual tool for analyzing DeLeon can be taken. That theme is the Legend of the Wandering Jew, which has permeated European folklore and literature in many forms and contexts for about sixteen hundred years. The Legend is based on:

... the tale of a man in Jerusalem who, when Christ was carrying his Cross to Calvary and paused to rest for a moment on this man's doorstep, drove the Saviour away . . . , crying aloud, 'Walk faster!' And Christ replied, 'I will go, but you will walk until I come again!'

Two motifs, the Legend of Malchus and the Legend of St. John, constitute the central threads of the theme. The first emphasizes the resultant suffering and anguish of the offender, condemned as he was, to wander until the Second Coming; while the second stresses waiting, with the implication that redemption may not be far off. In both variants, though, the Wandering Jew commences his journey as an accursed, tormented figure, alienated indefinitely from permanent spatial and temporal referents.⁴

Of special interest to the present study are two forms the Legend assumed in literature in the nineteenth century. One, responsive to the upsurge of nationalism that characterized the age, identified the Wandering Jew specifically with the Jewish people. The other, developed in Eugène Sue's celebrated left-wing novel, *Le juif errant* (Paris, 1844-45), saw him instead as a champion of the proletariat against the depredations of its oppressors, "the rich, the idle, the arrogant, and the Jesuits." Through these forms the interpretive scheme intersects that which it interprets, for Daniel DeLeon was directly and deeply affected, it would appear, by the forces that produced the Jewish people version, and by the content of the Sue novel itself.

The aptness of viewing DeLeon as an incarnation of the Wandering Jew can begin to be appreciated by comparing the personal at-

and on the basis of a large number of inquiries made by the author, it is clear that very few DeLeon letters exist in the manuscript collections of others.

⁴ George Kumler Anderson, *The Legend of the Wandering Jew* (Providence, Rhode Island: 1965), pp. 11, 13-14.

tributes and biographical details of the legendary figure, as he has appeared most frequently in the imaginative writing of roughly the last three centuries, with those of the socialist leader.

The Wandering Jew, typically given the name, "Ahasuerus", is usually "about fifty years old, or at least of indeterminate middle age." DeLeon had a "venerable appearance [which] had no necessary relation to his age. At 35 (according to photographs of that period) he was already . . . grey."⁵

The Jew displays a profound knowledge of history since the Crucifixion; "hence he is ready at any time to step into the role of world-chronicler . . . He is questioned by scholars and always shows more knowledge than they can hope to possess". John W. Burgess, who was one of DeLeon's law school professors and later his colleague at Columbia, described him as "remarkably well-informed," and as a scholar who "knew more international law and diplomatic history than any man of his age I had ever met."⁶

"Into whatever country he may go, he [the Wandering Jew] is able to speak the language of that country fluently." The same was probably true of DeLeon, who was fluent in German, French, Spanish, English, Dutch and the classical languages.⁷

"[Ahasuerus] . . . accepts little or no money and is primarily charitable and abstemious." Waldo Frank reviewed DeLeon's pecuniary position and attitude thus:

. . . frequently not drawing his weekly wage of \$15 or \$20 as editor of *The Weekly People* or *The Daily People* because the treasury could not afford it; refusing pay for his innumerable lectures; refusing to contribute to the capitalist press; declining invitations to Europe because he did not wish to drain the comrades' thin resources; in his tenement . . . sharing . . . the poverty of the people.⁸

To this socialist Ahasuerus:

No honest man . . . and no intelligent man . . . will consider that anything he may have to give to the Socialist movement is a sacrifice . . . When you meet anyone who talks about others making or having made

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 224-226, 248-249, 231-239, 48; Petersen, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 15.

⁶ John W. Burgess, *Reminiscences of an American Scholar* (New York: 1934), p. 182. DeLeon's intellectual attainments were commonly recognized by his contemporaries, friend and foe alike. J. Schlossberg, "Daniel DeLeon—Fighter for Socialism in the American Labor Movement" (Tamiment Library translation from the Yiddish by Louis Lazarus, New York: 1960), pp. 10-11; Morris Hillquit, *Loose Leaves from a Busy Life* (New York: 1934), p. 45.

⁷ Oakley C. Johnson, "Foreword", to Carl Reeve, *The Life and Times of Daniel DeLeon* (New York: 1972), p. 3.

⁸ Waldo Frank, "The Lesson of Daniel DeLeon", *Commentary*, IV, 1 (July, 1947), 46.

sacrifices, stop him short; when you meet one who makes such a brag himself, put him down as a crook, and give him a wide berth.⁹

“[The Wandering Jew] . . . has a wife and child (or children), whom he must abandon because of the curse.” And DeLeon’s experience corresponds here as well, with the agent of separation being death; his first wife passed away as a young woman and three of his first four children died in infancy.

More generally, DeLeon, like the legendary Jew, was very much a wanderer, even, in a sense, before he was born. His ancestors, Sephardic Jews exiled from Spain at the end of the fifteenth century, made their way first to Holland and then to the Dutch Caribbean possession of Curaçao. Salomon DeLeon, his father and a Dutch military surgeon, continued the tradition of geographical movement, practicing his profession in many places in Europe and South America. Leaving Curaçao at the age of fourteen for an education in Europe, Daniel DeLeon commenced his own meandering course, which led him initially to a *Gymnasium* in Hildesheim, Germany, and later to the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. In 1872 he came to the United States where he lived at a number of addresses in the New York City area and for a brief time in Brownsville, Texas. As a socialist his wanderings took him back and forth across the North American continent several times on lecture tours and organizing drives and as a delegate to the conventions of the Socialist Labor Party, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, the Knights of Labor and the I.W.W. Hence, few close followers of DeLeon’s activities would have been surprised to find him turning up, for example, as a Labor Day speaker in Rockland, Maine, a Party organizer in Independence, Kansas, a socialist lecturer in Los Angeles or an I.W.W. organizer in Tonopah, Nevada. Moreover, he was no stranger to the conclaves of socialists in Europe, representing his party at meetings of the International in Zürich (1893), Amsterdam (1904), Stuttgart (1907) and Copenhagen (1910).¹⁰

⁹ Daniel DeLeon, quoted in Herreshoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-116.

¹⁰ Melech Epstein, *Jewish Labor in U.S.A.* (New York: 1969), vol. I, p. 243; Isaac S. and Suzanne A. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles* (New York: 1970), vol. I, p. 428; Herreshoff, *op. cit.*, p. 108; Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-10; Thomas C. Brophy, “Editorial Notes”, *The Socialist Annual for 1894* (Boston: 1894), 31; Bertha C. DeLeon, “When First We Met”, in Socialist Labor Party, *Golden Jubilee of DeLeonism* (New York: 1940), p. 10; Alfred G. Sanftleben, *Appreciations* (Los Angeles: 1907), pp. 10-16; Herbert T. Shaw, “DeLeon at Tonopah”, *Industrial Union Bulletin*, April 6, 1907; Eric Hass, *The Socialist Labor Party and the Internationals* (New York: 1949).

In ideological and organizational terms as well, DeLeon appeared the image of Ahasuerus. Throughout his life he was a compulsive joiner and activist, and his movement in relation to the organizations to which he belonged and the positions to which he adhered often seemed to have a frenetic quality about it. As a teenage student at the University of Amsterdam he went through what may very well have been a very harsh two-week initiation period to become a member of the fraternity-like *Amsterdams Studenten Corps*. Not long after arriving in New York he became involved with a group of exiles as associate editor of a Spanish-language sheet devoted to winning Cuban independence. In the early 1880's DeLeon joined and actively participated in Columbia University's Academy of Political Science, a scholarly body composed of interested law and political science graduates, serving as its president for the 1884-1885 academic year. At about this time he immersed himself in American politics by taking part in the mugwump campaign against the 1884 Republican nominee for President, James G. Blaine, and was committed enough to that faith to later name a son after Blaine's Democratic opponent, Grover Cleveland. By the autumn of 1886, this political wanderer had made his first appearance in a labor-oriented movement, Henry George's campaign for mayor of New York, and, as an activist in George's post-campaign United Labor Party, he remained a convinced proponent of the single-tax theory for about a year. Disillusioned with George by 1888, DeLeon joined a local assembly of the Knights of Labor. And the following year, enthralled by the utopian socialism of Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, he was among the charter members of New York's first Nationalist club and became one of the Nationalist movement's most dedicated figures during his short tenure in it. DeLeon finally entered the Socialist Party in 1890, where he was to stay until his death in 1914, but his wandering did not really end here. His views on a number of important questions underwent profound and often sudden change in these years, and had the Party not followed him in making corresponding ideological alterations, it is quite likely, judging from his past, that he would have left it to take up membership in yet another political organization.¹¹

¹¹ Johnson, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-5; M.W.H. Schreuder, International Institute of Social History, to author, May 4, 1973; Herreshoff, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-113; R. Gordon Hoxie, *A History of the Faculty of Political Science, Columbia University* (New York: 1955), pp. 41-43; Lewis Hanke, "The First Lecturer on Hispanic American Diplomatic History in the United States", *Hispanic American Historical Review*, XVI, 3 (August, 1936), 401; Lester Luntz, "Daniel DeLeon and the Movement for Social Reform, 1886-1896" (un-

Propelling DeLeon in his somewhat erratic course over geographical, organizational and ideological space was, it seems, the painful awareness of a "curse" upon him, and in this he shared the plight of his folkloric analogue. The curse was, as he appeared to perceive it, his Jewish identity, the burdensome "Legend of Malchus" quality which he probably first sensed as a student in Europe from 1866 to 1872. In this period that saw the unifications of Germany and Italy, Europe seethed with a nationalistic fervor which resolved for many of the continent's peoples a collective identity crisis resulting from the demise of the *ancien régime*. For Jews, however, the era posed formidable problems. Although they benefited from the passing of a medieval order under which they had suffered restriction and prejudice, self-definition in national terms was difficult, because, unlike most other European nationalities, they lacked a distinctly secular culture and had no claim to a territory. Moreover, as a minority residing in the lands of others, they were easily stigmatized as an outgroup, and anti-Semitism often became the companion of national awakening.

It is likely that Daniel DeLeon was deeply affected emotionally by the very real dilemma facing Jews. As the product of a vital Curaçao Jewish community, he probably identified himself fully with Judaism, and for that felt all the more isolated. It is also reasonable to assume that he was especially vulnerable to a feeling of alienation and insecurity at this juncture. Two brothers died in an epidemic three years before he left for Europe, and he lost his father, from whom he had received his early education, the year previous. He did not himself enjoy good health and quite possibly suffered a degree of culture shock as well upon being transported from the Caribbean to the heartland of Europe. And with a sensitivity heightened by his youth and his native intelligence, he would not have been in a position to parry this assortment of blows easily.¹²

Direct evidence of DeLeon's internal ferment over his Jewishness appeared in a two-and-a-half column letter he wrote to *The Reformer and Jewish Times* early in 1879, some seven years after arriving in the United States and ten years before avowing his commitment to socialism. The letter was a rejoinder to a piece in *The Reformer* by Felix Adler, who had argued that Jews should ab-

published M.A. thesis, Columbia University); Arthur Mann, *Yankee Reformers in the Urban Age* (New York: 1966), pp. 12, 20-23. (DeLeon's name appeared too on the membership roster of the Bellamyite Boston Society of Christian Socialists, p. 91).

¹² Emmanuel and Emmanuel, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. 449-452; Olive M. Johnson, *Daniel DeLeon: American Socialist Pathfinder* (New York: 1935), p. 10.

stain from Christmas festivities on the grounds that the holiday commemorates their sufferings and the birth of a man not recognized by them as the Savior.

DeLeon fully agreed that the Jews had indeed endured historic oppression, but in his remarks a note of defensiveness mingled with proud ethnic indignation, and a clear perception of Jews as alien wanderers was revealed:

[T]he pyre on which those devoted victims, those stalwart pioneers of a spiritual creed were placed, often blazed . . . [P]etulant, bigoted rage . . . [vented itself] against the unarmed, the defenceless Jew . . . [Yet] amidst eloquent tongues of fire, the Jew asserted the superiority of his convictions and of his race above *the brutalized masses among which he sojourned*, and with his ashes and his own heart-blood recorded his protest against *the surrounding surges of heathenism*. (emphasis added)¹³

However, it did not serve to dwell on injustices "illustrative only of the spirit of . . . barbarism of the age in which they were perpetrated." The problem of the present seemingly was to resolve a gnawing crisis of identity, and to this end he proposed that:

the advance guards of the Jews and Gentiles join hands together, both agreeing upon the sublimity of the character of Jesus . . . while both repudiat[ing] the idea of his Jehovahship . . .

In this fashion the centrality of Christ to the travail of a collective Ahasuerus would be avoided, permitting Jew and Gentile to celebrate Christmas together. Such a theological synthesis, with the identity integration that it implied, was contrasted with Adler's suggestion that the Jews counterpose to Christmas the feast of Esther, which DeLeon described as:

a factitious . . . precarious feast . . . [that] could hardly tend to anything else than to keep alive *painful reminiscences*, and to foment the . . . mutual hatred of races . . . stubbornly disposed on both sides. (emphasis added)

Rather, the Jew should be seen as "one of the elements out of which the future American type is to be formed," and thus he should observe Christmas along with the vast majority of his countrymen, thereby "contributing his share toward ushering in *that longed for era* when hostility between race and race shall cease, and the *amalgamation between them* shall be accomplished" (emphasis added).

¹³ Daniel DeLeon, "Should the Jews Celebrate Christmas?", *The Reformer and Jewish Times*, X, 51 (February 14, 1879), 5.

This ambiguous vision of a basis for a broader and more satisfying self-definition finally crystallized as socialist universalism. Probably of prime significance in the process was Eugène Sue's *Le juif errant*, a work with which DeLeon was certainly familiar and whose influence can be detected in his writings. That he held Sue in especially high regard as an author is clear from the fact of his extensive translation of the Frenchman, his most ambitious effort in this area. Between 1904 and 1911, Sue's nineteen-novel series, *The Mysteries of the People, or A Proletarian Family across the Ages*, was run serially in the Party organ and subsequently published in book form.¹⁴

That he was influenced by the novelist registers most clearly when it is remembered that *Le juif errant's* principal villains are the Jesuits, who are depicted as unscrupulous conspirators closely identified with the rich and powerful enemies of the working class and its benefactor, Ahasuerus. Although clerics of many denominations in DeLeon's day took to the pulpit and the printed page to polemicize against socialism, he devoted particular attention to returning the fire of Roman Catholic spokesmen, Jesuits prominent among them. In *Fifteen Questions about Socialism* (1914), a collection of editorials DeLeon wrote for *The Daily People*, he replied sharply and at length to hostile questions asked in one issue of the Providence, Rhode Island, *Visitor*, a Catholic publication. *Father Gassoniana, or Jesuit "Sociology" and "Economics" at the Bar of Science and History* (1911), a pamphlet comprising nineteen editorials, critically focused on an anti-socialist speech given by Father Thomas I. Gasson. And *The Vatican in Politics*, a posthumously published anthology spanning DeLeon's career in the socialist movement, develops the theme that the Church is little more than a reactionary political machine clothed in religious vestments. Indeed, so suspicious was he of the Church that he fully expected it to be capitalism's last resort when the revolution was at hand:

... [T]he great political conflict that is coming to a head is wiping out all intermediary political expressions and is bound to leave extant just two ... types of ... opposing forces—the Socialist political body as the type ... that make[s] for progress, hence, freedom; and the Roman Catholic equally political body as the type ... that make[s] for retrogression, hence, slavery.¹⁵

¹⁴ Oakley C. Johnson and Carl Reeve, *Writings by and about Daniel DeLeon: A Bibliography* (New York: 1966), pp. 7-10. Seventeen of the nineteen were translated by DeLeon, and the others, by his son, Solon.

¹⁵ Daniel DeLeon, *The Vatican in Politics* (New York: 1962), p. 42.

Having established the strong possibility that Sue's use of the Wandering Jew had a major impact on DeLeon, the question of why it might have remains. The answer lies in a closer examination of the details of the French author's treatment of the Jew, which corresponds to the "St. John" variant discussed earlier. As stated by a recent historian of the Legend:

... [Sue's Wandering Jew] sees ... hope for a brighter future for the workers. When that happy day shall have come ... he will be ready to die. In fact ... [he] believe[s] that things have progressed so far, by the time of the final scene, that [he] ... can begin preparations for [his] ... end. He has worked to help the wage slave ... [and] *has so identified himself with the workingman, in fact, that Christ's curse has struck not only him but the workers also, through him. This is how it has been for centuries, but now a new day is coming, and with it the release of Ahasuerus.* (emphasis added)¹⁶

Such would have suggested to DeLeon a compelling mode for surmounting the personal crisis he faced as a member of an international people emotionally adrift in an era of nationalism. It would have rendered specifics for the attainment of that inchoate "amalgamation" objective for which he had expressed a desire in 1879. Like Ahasuerus, he could cast his lot with the proletariat, a nation-less body of historic fellow-wanderers in whom hope for the future redemption of all could be seen to reside. If, in the present, this meant becoming part of little more than an amorphous community of oppression, it was nevertheless involvement in an embracing one of immense proportions with potential for acquiring coherence through revolutionary struggle. A painful Jewish identity would be submerged and lost in the more comprehensive and sustaining identity concept of the proletarian, its final interment awaiting only the "new day" to follow.

There were several manifestations of self-effacement in DeLeon's behavior as a socialist which can be interpreted as resulting from a conscious attempt at complete immersion in the working class. For example, he never held a major national office in the Party, although given his importance in its councils, he certainly could have had one had he wished. As a speaker, he did not cultivate "celebrity" status for himself in the movement, registering impatience at the applause and adulation that frequently attended his impressive platform performances. He made a deliberate effort to break up the naturally scholarly tone of his writing with slang expressions and further sought to underplay his superior educational attain-

¹⁶ Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

ments by protesting against being addressed as “professor” by respectful Party comrades. And, although his family constantly hovered on the brink of destitution, he bore the material impoverishment of his chosen status without complaint.¹⁷

Logically enough for one who may now have perceived himself in new terms, DeLeon went well beyond his earlier ambivalence to deprecate and specifically reject Judaism as a legitimate identity and as a meaningful concept in socio-political discourse. Striving for emancipation “not as man, but as Jew” was in his view a “false posture”, as was “philo-Semitism in general,” for “Semitism” (i.e. Judaism) was not a genuine social entity, being “. . . [w]ithout a principle or mission, unique and born from its own spiritual womb, and without a unique, exclusive ethnic basis . . .” That connoted by the appellation “Semitism,” according to DeLeon, was nothing more than a perverse reflex of Gentile theology without which “the bottom and the bonds on which Semitism stands and that hold it together, fall out and melt away . . .” And in light of this, he held that those who still defined themselves as Jews manifested an aspect “of human nature that finds a morbid delight in glory, even if its halo be borrowed, or even if, at times, the halo may turn into a thorny crown.” Predictably, DeLeon concluded that the only viable alternative was complete identification with the workers, which to him was synonymous with a commitment to the political philosophy that best expressed their aspirations:

Socialism, with the light it casts around and within man, alone can cope with these problems [of racial-ethnic hatred]. Like the sea that takes up in its bosom and dissolves the innumerable elements poured into it from innumerable rivers, to Socialism is the task reserved of solving one and all the problems that have come floating down the streams of time, and that have kept man in internecine strife with man.¹⁸

And if two major nineteenth century forms of the Legend of the

¹⁷ John Timm, “Daniel DeLeon as a Campaigner”, in Socialist Labor Party, *Fifty Years of American Marxism, 1891-1941*, (New York: 1941), p. 26; Bertha C. DeLeon, “The ‘Nineties with DeLeon”, *ibid.*, p. 22; Schlossberg *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3; Herreshoff, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

¹⁸ Daniel DeLeon, *Anti-Semitism: Its Cause and Cure* (New York: 1921), pp. 14-26; Daniel DeLeon, “Preface”, to John H. Halls, *Woman and Her Emancipation* (New York: 1909). So hostile did DeLeon become toward Judaism that he expunged it totally from his past. When asked about his origins, he concocted a fanciful tale about being born into a wealthy, aristocratic Venezuelan family of Spanish Catholic stock, thoroughly obscuring the truth from even his closest friends and associates and never discussing it with his own son (Johnson, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Petersen, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, p. 13; Schlossberg, *op. cit.*, p. 9; Solon DeLeon to author, December 9, 1972).

Wandering Jew illuminate the process by which DeLeon came to the labor movement and to socialism, it is the "Malchus" motif of the Legend which probably best captures the tragedy of his ultimate failure in life. Despite his fervent and repeated efforts to broaden the base of his party and extend its sway into the heart of the labor movement, his last years saw him completely isolated and without influence. Moreover, cruel ironies dogged his path: an antagonist of the Jesuits and the Church hierarchy, he was compared by some contemporaries to Loyola and dubbed a "pope" by others; in flight from Judaism, he found his largest and most loyal following among Jewish workers. As a widely misunderstood and therefore widely disliked figure, DeLeon experienced grave disappointment in personal relationships, often being "forsaken and abused," according to his friend, Joseph Schlossberg, "by men in whom he had full trust, and who had risen to prominence in the socialist movement by virtue of his aid." Nor did his family provide a true sanctuary from the adversity that plagued him in public life: political disagreements with his eldest son led to an irreparable breach, and several of his other children can only remember their father with bitterness for the material deprivation wrought upon them by his total preoccupation with socialist politics. Little wonder, then, that Schlossberg believed "DeLeon died a sad and lonely man" and that "failure hastened his death." Like the classic Ahasuerus and despite the hopes that may have been raised in him by Sue, Daniel DeLeon had to "endure his fate, no matter how terrible his lot."¹⁹

¹⁹ Schlossberg, *op. cit.*, p. 15; Socialist Labor Party, *Disruption and Disrupters* (New York: 1935), p. 16; Rudolph Katz, "With DeLeon since '89", in Socialist Labor Party, *Daniel DeLeon, The Man and His Work: A Symposium* (New York: 1969), vol. II, p. 151; Martin A. Cohen; "Jewish Immigrants and American Trade Unions", (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Chicago); Abraham Meyer Rogoff, *Formative Years of the Jewish Labor Movement in the United States (1890-1900)* (New York: 1945), p. 53; Harry Rogoff, *An East Side Epic: The Life and Work of Meyer London* (New York: 1930), p. 12; Moses Rischin, *The Promised City: New York's Jews, 1870-1914* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1962), pp. 225-226; Epstein, *op. cit.*, vol. I pp. 251-252; Joseph Schlossberg, *The Workers and Their World* (New York: 1935), pp. 88, 192; Solon DeLeon to author, April 13, 1973, February 8, 1973.