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EDITORIAL

“DISRUPTING LABOR.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE report, published in these columns last week, of the happenings in the Schenectady Trades Assembly,¹ when a half dozen A.F. of L. international vice-presidents foregathered in order to cause the expulsion of the I.W.W. delegates from that body, sounds like the approaching foot-fall of events that may be nearer at hand than many wot. Delegate upon delegate hurled at the foregathered labor-lieutenants of the Civic Federation stinging counts from the indictment that the awakening Working Class has begun to draw up against what they are discovering is the bulwark of their plunderers—the Gompers-Mitchell-Stone pure and simple system of Unionism. The delegates threw up instance upon instance in which the A.F. of L. collected moneys for a strike and kept the cash for its officers to riot in; they threw up instances in which Union constitutions were amended by the misleaders to suit the interests of the employer; they threw up the fact that the A.F. of L. “victories” were lies, it had won not one victory; they declared, with that conscious ascendancy that comes from lofty conviction, “the cause we have taken up is sacred to us; it can never be torn from our lives; the fight is on”; and, warming up with indignation at the sight of the men whom the General Electric Company had evidently fetched to do its work, the delegates cried at the heelers of the Capitalist Class: “The I.W.W. is not a graft affair like the A.F. of L.!” “The A.F. of L. is a tool of the rich and the Civic Federation!” And over and above the din of hisses and cat-calls, the cry could be heard hurled at the most conspicuous agent of the General Electric Co.: “Hold that brute down!” “Say, Leonard, let your dictators speak!”

Of course, all this is the reverse of “harmony” or “peace.” Once there was

¹ [To be appended at a future date.—R.B.]

“harmony” and “peace” in the camp of Schenectady Labor—the proverbial peace and harmony that once “reigned in Warsaw,” and that suited Czardom so well. Nor will it end in Schenectady. The “disruption” will spread; it is spreading—as in Russia, despite all repressive measures to insure “harmony and peace”—until it will have assumed national proportions. And then? What will then happen is foreshadowed in that passage of the Minneapolis address on *The Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World*, where, after enumerating the long list of labor-fakir atrocities the address proceeds:

“Do you know what would happen to the General, who, in face of the embattled foe, instead of concentrating his forces for the fray, were to send first one small division into the field of battle; wait until that was annihilated; then send a second small division; again wait until that was routed; and then send a third, likewise to be wiped out, until his whole powerful army was demoralized and took to flight? Do you know what would happen to that General? He would be grabbed by the neck, court-martialed, and shot in the back for treason. Now, I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet; yet, concluding from the facts that are thronging to the bar, I venture the statement on this 10th day of July, 1905, that the day is nigh when the Working Class of America will court-martial the Gomperses, the Mitchells, the Stoneses, whose generalship is sacrificing the army of Labor—court-martial them for treason to the Working Class.”

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

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