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EDITORIAL

## BRACE OF SPECIMENS, EVEN “NEATER.”

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**T**HE *Daily People* of last March 1, *Weekly* of March 10, had occasion to exhibit a “Neat Specimen” of Volkszeitung Corporation density on the subject of Trades Unionism, by convicting the man out of his own mouth as incapable of understanding the facts against which he bumps his own nose, consequently utterly unfit for the role of leadership which he presumes to play in the American Labor Movement. The papers of the corporation—*Volkszeitung* and *Worker*—again furnish opportunity to preach the word of sense on the burning question of Trades Unionism by nailing their ears to the pillory of fact, of a fact again quoted by themselves, no less a fact than the words of Marx himself, and which, in their incorrigible density, they quote and seek to palm off upon the unsuspecting readers as arguments against the Industrial Workers of the World and the Socialists who support that organization.

As is well known, the Trades Union attitude of the S.L.P. and the posture of the I.W.W. is this:—The economic organization of the working class is the groundwork for the political party of Labor, the latter being the reflex of the former; according as the economic organization is sound, the working class will be united economically, and that economic soundness and unity will be reflected in the rise of a united party of Socialism. This basic principle leads to certain unavoidable conclusions; the conclusions, together with the principles from which they flow, determine the posture of the I.W.W. and the Trades Union attitude of the Socialist Labor Party. These may be summed up in the following tenets:

First. The economic organization is essential to the emancipation of the working class;

Second. The political movement of Labor is indispensable in the struggle for emancipation;

Third. The available political movement of Socialism must be the direct offshoot from the class-consciously economically organized working class;

Fourth. The political movement, that is available in the struggle for Labor’s emancipation, is in duty bound to recognize its parent and source: “Neutrality” can not be found in its vocabulary: where that word is found, it is evidence of the spuriousness of the alleged political movement; and, lastly

Fifth. There is an obvious connection between the political and the economic movement of Labor—no less and no stronger a connection than there is between the scouts of an army and the army itself: indispensable as its scouts are to an army, so indispensable is its political movement to the integrally, industrially organized working class; as unessential as its scouts are for the army’s final act of battle, so unessential is the political movement for that final act of emancipation which consists in the “taking and holding” of the productive powers of the land. It is “without affiliation” with its scouts that an army delivers battle: “without affiliation” with its political arm the working class, embattled in its industrially constructed economic organization, moves into possession and ousts the capitalist class.

It is unnecessary to pursue, through all its devious doublings, windings, twistings and irrelevancies, the theory of the pure and simple political Socialists, which the A.F. of Hellized Volkszeitung Corporation seeks to impose upon the Socialist party. Suffice it to point out the obvious fact that, as a matter of course, the Corporation is opposed to the posture of the I.W.W. and, consequently, to the Trades Union attitude of the S.L.P. Imagining that it knocks out both, or, rather, intending to convey the idea that it does, and that it brings the testimony of no less an authority than Marx in support of its case, the Corporation trots out—*Volkszeitung* of March 14, *Worker* of March 17—a conversation that a certain Hamann, the treasurer of a Union, reports to have had with Marx in Germany, in the year 1869. We shall make no point of the fact that the two Corporation papers mutilate the Hamann report; nor shall we make any particular point of the fact that the English poodle of the Corporation, *The Worker*, improves upon the mutilation by toning down and even falsifying the language of Marx. We shall let that pass, and, in order all the more completely to expose the attempted swindle upon the public,

take the mutilation as it stands.

The fragment is opened with a question that Hamann reports he put to Marx:

“Is it a prerequisite for the fitness of the Trades Union that it be dependent upon a political organization?”

Marx’s answer follows:

“The Trades Union should never be connected with, nor made dependent upon a political party, if the former is to fulfill its task. The moment that is done, the death-blow is dealt to it. The Trades Union is the school for Socialism. In the Trades Union the workingman is trained into a Socialist, because there the struggle with capital is daily carried on under their very eyes. All political parties, whatever their complexion may be, and without exception, warm up the working class only for a season, transitorily. The Trades Union, on the contrary, captures the mass of the workingmen permanently. ONLY THE TRADES UNION IS CAPABLE OF SETTING ON FOOT A TRUE POLITICAL PARTY OF LABOR, AND THUS RAISE A BULWARK AGAINST THE POWER OF CAPITAL. The bulk of the workingmen have reached the point where they realize that their material condition must be improved, regardless of what party they may belong to. Now, then, the moment the material condition of the workingman is improved, he can devote himself more to the education of his children; his wife and little ones need not wander into the factory; he himself can all the more improve his own mind and see to his physical well-being;—he will become a Socialist without suspecting it.”

Is there any comfort to be drawn, from this answer, by the pure and simple political Socialist?

The term “political party” recurs therein several times—one time as a thing that can “warm up the working class only for a season, transitorily,” another time as the “only true political party of Labor,” and in this latter instance it is spoken of as the product “only [of] the Trades Union,” which is expressly stated as being alone “capable of setting on foot” such a “true political party of Labor,” the function of which party, moreover, is characterized as a “bulwark against the power of capital,” by no means as the weapon that can settle the question. It would be to impute to Marx an obvious contradiction, a contradiction that his express words deny, to construe the term “political party” as referring in one place to the identical concept that it refers to at the start of his answer. Marx was no lunk-head. Never did he

contradict himself. He had two distinct “political parties” in mind—the reformers’ party and the Labor party. When at the start of his answer he says that it would be a death-blow for the Union to be at all connected with a “political party” he can not have meant a minute later that it would be equally a death-blow for the Union to be at all connected with that “true political party of Labor,” which he himself says the Union alone is “capable of setting on foot,” or be the economic representative of. Indeed, the answer given by Marx to Hamann, together with other and similar passages in Marx’s works{,} will be noticed to be the corner-stone upon which the Preamble of the I.W.W. is reared, and upon which is planted that passage in Daniel De Leon’s address on *The Preamble of the Industrial Workers of the World* in which, speaking of the political clauses in the Preamble, he says: “In this sentence of the Preamble is condensed what may be called the code of Marxian ‘tactics,’ as distinguished from the code of Marxian ‘economics’; the code of ‘action,’ as distinguished from the code of ‘theory.’” Marx’s position on this head is, on the political subject, the line close along which the I.W.W. hewed its course. That position—“Only the Trades Union is capable of setting on foot a true political party of Labor and thus raise a bulwark against the power of capital”—demonstrates conclusively the correctness of each and all of the five I.W.W. and S.L.P. tenets enumerated above, which culminate with that which denies that the political movement can “take and hold,” deliver the battle, so to speak, and that places the political as the dependent upon and the off-shoot of the economic movement, and not as the all important part of the movement, as the pure and simple political Socialists would make it out.

Equally cold is the blast that blows from Marx’s answer to Hamann into the face of the double of the pure and simple political Socialist—the A.F. of Hellite.

Was Marx, perchance, advocating political scabbery? Was the Unionism, of which Marx said that it would “train the workingman into a Socialist,” the A.F. of Hell article, which structurally excludes the bulk of the working class from its fold, and contracts each craft as a prospective scab upon all the others on the principle of Capital and Labor having reciprocal interests? Was the Unionism that Marx contemplated, as a means to “improve the material condition of the working class,” the A.F. of Hell specimen that has superintended the steady decline of the

workingman in well being, and strewn the country with his mutilated limbs? Was the Unionism, whose posture Marx spoke of as affording opportunity for acquaintance with "the class struggle with capital, by being daily carried on under the very eyes" of the membership, the A.F. of Hell system that dopes the membership with affiliation with the Civic Federation? Away with the dishonorable trick! Marx was the last man to be taken in with the deception of judging a thing by its label—of considering everything a "Union" which it suits grafters to label by that name. The list of things enumerated by Marx as accomplishable by the Union is an inventory that particularizes the anti-Unionism of A.F. of Hellism, and strips it of the mask of Unionism.

And yet such an utterance by Marx—a veritable hailstorm of cracks over the skulls of both pure and simple political Socialism and of its double, A.F. of Hellism,—the press of the Volkszeitung Corporation is dense and crooked enough to attempt to foist upon people as a justification for their corrupt practices. The "Neat Specimen" showed up last month was but a contributor. Even neater is the brace of Editor specimens hereby left with their ears nailed to the pillory of fact.

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