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EDITORIAL

“DUAL” AND “RIVAL” UNIONS.

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PROCEEDING from the principle that testimony against one's own interest is the most reliable of testimonies, we accept as correct the Chicago, January 12, despatch concerning the Garment Workers strike in that city, published on the 13th of this month by the *Vorwaerts*, the New York Yiddish organ of the Socialist party and the A.F. of L.

The despatch sets forth that the strikers, having rejected one proposition by the employers and having under consideration, at a large meeting at Hodcarriers' Hall, a second proposition in which the employers yielded the point of reinstating all the participants in the strike, “Comrade William Haywood took the floor. He delivered a long and sharp speech attacking the American Federation of Labor, and speaking for a new Tailors' Union, to be built upon a purely industrial plan, not upon the plan of the American Federation of Labor. Before he spoke, the people were inclined to a settlement. But under the influence caused by Haywood's speech the strikers displayed a sentiment against their own agreement, and a dissatisfaction, even a sort of rebellion against their leaders.”

This is prime anti-S.P. and anti-A.F. of L. testimony. Inversely, it is Socialist Labor Party testimony. The facts alleged in the report shatter the A.F. of L.-S.P. false and “Stop thief!” cry against “Dual Unions!” as treason to the Working Class.

The outcry of “Dual Unions!”, raised against any and every new Union in a trade in which the A.F. of L. has previously set up its tent, is a cry that implies a number of falsehoods, all deadly to the Labor Movement.

The cry implies that the A.F. of L. organizes the shops.—The A.F. of L. only disorganized them. Whatever shop the A.F. of L. enters, it there dislocates the proletariat by means of contracts and other devices that disable them from

presenting a united front to the employer, and compel them to scab upon one another. If the A.F. of L. can at all be said to organize, it organizes for the masters, not for the workers.

The cry implies that the A.F. of L. either has organized the trade, or is desirous, and endeavors to do so.—The A.F. of L. deliberately disorganizes the trade. By means of high initiations and kindred schemes the A.F. of L. keeps the bulk of the members of a trade outside of its Unions, turning them into caricatures of Trusts. Whatever trade the A.F. of L. invades it ruptures the corresponding proletariat.

The cry implies that the A.F. of L. is a virile, live organization, and proof of the implication is advanced by its numbers.—The A.F. of L. is a “Coffin” or “Insurance” association. The main thread that holds its large constituents together is the insurance they have paid in, which not to forfeit the A.F. of L. emasculates its membership with mottoes concerning the “Brotherhood of Capital and Labor.”

The cry implies that the A.F. of L. is a Labor Organization.—The affiliation of its leading officers, in their official capacity, with the Civic Federation of Capitalist magnates, and more recently its admission to its national conventions of clergymen, as delegates of “Councils of the Churches of Christ” and as delegates of “Federations of Catholic Societies,” notably large property Interests,—all this demonstrates the A.F. of L. to be an anti-Labor, anti-proletarian, and pro-capitalist concern.

To bow before such “Unionism” is to desecrate Unionism. Not to build “Dual Unions” is to abandon the field to a buffer for capitalism. The stone which the builders are refusing—the unorganized proletariat, and the proletariat disorganized in the A.F. of L.—is the only stone possible to become the headstone of the corner.

The facts alleged in the report from Chicago are welcome symptoms that the persistent work of the S.L.P. is bearing fruit. The superstitious reverence with which obscene Capitalist Interests and the Labor-lieutenants seek to secure for the mere word “Unionism,” and which pure and simple political Socialism abjectly bows to as a monopoly of the A.F. of L., has, as the S.L.P. has long maintained, no hold among the workers: the language of bona fide Unionism, which is Socialism, need but to be uttered clearly and boldly, as was done in Chicago, to evoke the enthusiastic response of proletarians.

The “Dual Union,” long calumniated, is bound to come—it is coming—the harbinger of a bona fide Labor Movement, as yet non-existent in the land.

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