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ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

ONE MORE COUNT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE *American Federationist* for this month has an article by Hans Fehlinger, of Vienna, Austria. The article is entitled: "Trade Unionism in Austria." It is difficult to imagine more poison for Labor's mind in the short compass of one page and a half covered by Mr. Fehlinger's article. It is poison to the workingman in America; it is poison to the workingman in Austria. The article is intended to show a fundamental difference between the source of the organization of Unions in Austria and the source of their organization in America, and to indicate that the Austrian Trade Union Movement is learning from and rising to the elevation of the American article. The reverse of all this is the fact: There is no fundamental difference in the source of the Unions in the two countries: and, so far from the Austrian Movement's rising up to the American, it is the American Trade Union Movement that is coming down to the Austrian level.

Mr. Fehlinger says that, in Austria, "Unions cannot be formed unless they are permitted by the administrative authorities." If this means anything, it means to convey the inference to both American and Austrian workingmen that here the process is different. One instance of many will suffice to refute the inference. That instance just appeals to "hold the stage," and will be acknowledged by all. It is the instance of the Boot & Shoe Workers' Union,—the bogus Socialist, or Social Democratic, or "Tobin Union," for short,—which, just now, is convulsing the shoe district of Massachusetts in the capitalist-instigated effort to furnish scabs, so as to lower wages in the shoe industry. The documents issued to the employers by the officers of the Tobin Union have been published in these columns. Their authenticity is unquestioned. They prove that the Tobin Union is formed with the permission of the employers; that, without such permission, the Union could not exist; and that, the consideration for such permission

is, what it necessarily must be in all such cases, a free hand guaranteed the employer in his exploitation of his employees. What is the difference between the process of Union-formation in Austria and America? In Austria the “authorities” must “permit”; in America the employer must permit. Is there any difference? To the superficial observer there might seem to be a difference. To the conscientious observer the fact will not escape that the American employer controls the “authorities,” consequently, that what happens here is essentially what happens in Austria, to wit, that, in America as in Austria, in Austria as in America, the RULING CLASS IS THE FOUNTAIN HEAD FROM WHICH THE PURE AND SIMPLE TRADE UNION DRAWS ITS PERMIT TO EXIST.

This has not always been so in America. It has gradually become so, until now it is the rule. This fact overthrows Mr. Fehlinger’s opinion that the Austrian Trade Union is developing upward towards the American standard. It establishes the fact that the development is the other way, downward towards the Austrian level. And for good reason: Austria’s capitalist progress has been slow; America’s rapid: the development of capitalism, like the development of all else, is not steadily away from its starting point: it develops away from its starting point up to a certain stage, beyond that stage, retrogression sets in: rapidly developed American capitalism, having reached its zenith, now turns downward again: and thus the spectacle is beheld of American capitalist and Austrian feudal ways joining and kissing. The spectacle does not denote Austrian progress, it marks American retrogression.

It goes without saying that the clapping of the blinkers upon the eyes of the American workingman to prevent him from seeing whither he is drifting, and to puff him up with vainglory{,} is essential to the perfection of the power of American capitalism for its contemplated invasion of Europe. It goes without saying that the trepanning of the workingman in feudalistic countries, so as to superinduce confidence in American capitalism, will render material aid to the American invader. Needless, accordingly, to say that the truth in the case cannot be too emphatically, or too clearly, propounded to the workingman everywhere.

That Mr. Fehlinger, residing on the borders of Asia, should succumb, a victim to appearances; that he should be confused by the social-economic phenomenon of the

day, impute a rising to what is in fact a decline, and thus lend himself a helper to capitalist chicanery against the workingman;—all that may be excused. Unpardonable, however, is the *Federationist* for giving circulation to such misleading matter. It knows better. The Socialist Labor Party has pounded the truth into that journal's skull. When the *Federationist* now gives circulation to the Fehlinger errors, it simply is earning its wages as the mouthpiece of Hanna's "Labor Lieutenants" by throwing dust into the eyes of the American workingman, by helping to spread delusion, both at home among the wage slaves of the domestic, and abroad, among the wage slaves of the international Hanna Class.

Score one more count in the indictment against the American Labor Fakir.

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