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EDITORIAL

AS TO THE NEW JERSEY UNITY CONFERENCE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

Only the Trades Union is capable of setting
on foot a true political party of Labor.—MARX

THE below letter from a New Jersey Socialist party man, on some of the leading subjects of discussion in the present jungle of the Labor Movement of the land, starts some fine game to take a crack at:

To the *Daily* and *Weekly People*:

The readers of the *Daily People* will no doubt recall my letter upon the question of "immediate demands," a question which I admit was not brought up for discussion at the New Jersey Unity Conference.

As to the resolutions which the N.J.U.C. adopted, I admit that I only agree upon one, resolution three, which calls for the advisability of "recognizing the usefulness of I.W.W.," but only do I agree upon that if it implies the recognition of the I.W.W. as individuals, not the party as a whole, not an official recognition.

Speaking for myself upon the I.W.W., I stand firmly and uncompromisingly for modern industrial Unionism, not because craft Union officials are corrupt; not because they have not within recent years won a strike of any importance; but because craft Unionism is based upon the identity of interests between the makers and the takers; because they do not recognize the class struggle as it should be recognized. They do not seek to eliminate the employer, but, on the contrary, maintain a program for the perpetuation of these industrial Caesars, who have forever, since the dawn of civilization to this very day, waged a war unmercifully upon our class. So it follows that the problem before the working class is how to extract the talons of the industrial Caesars who have them so firmly implanted in the quivering flesh of the workers.

Craft Unions say to the workers: "Above all things be fair." Should they be asked to define "fair" they would no doubt reply: "Do not demand: above all things petition." Speaking of petitioning, E.V. Debs recently stated a fact when he said "imagine a flock of sheep petitioning to a flock of wolves to extract their tusks."

I believe as does Comrade Unterman, that “the difference between modern industrial Unionism and other forms of Unionism is that between science and Utopia. Modern Industrial Unionism, as advocated by the Industrial Workers of the World, is the application of Marxian principles to the economic organization of the working class.”

As for me to expound the principles of Industrial Unionism on the stump of the S.P., that I believe is wrong, because in my opinion Industrial Unionism should be preached on Industrial Union platforms, Socialist Philosophy on its respective platform.

As to the advisability of indorsing the I.W.W., upon that I also disagree. Since the I.W.W. has refused to indorse any political party, why then should the Socialist party indorse them? And then, again, as I understand, they have declared that they would not advise or want any indorsement.

And resolution No. 2 reads as follows: “Resolved, That the A.F. of L. form of organization and its principles are an obstacle to labor.” Should that resolution be carried through, it would mean war unto death—disruption of our organization. No one would regret it more than the Socialist Party, and no one would be more pleased than the capitalist class.

FRANK URBANSKY.
Jersey City, N.J.

Congratulating Mr. Urbansky for coming to time by admitting that the subject of “immediate demands” was not touched upon by the New Jersey Unity Conference and, consequently, could not be, as he claimed in his letter published in the *Daily People* of June 22, *Weekly* June 30, “one of the main arguments against unity,” we shall now take up the several arguments he presents on the real subject of discussion.

Our correspondent now claims it would be wrong to expound the principles of industrial unionism on the political stump of Socialism; he is of the opinion that “industrial unionism should be preached on industrial union platforms, Socialist philosophy on its respective platform.” The trouble with this opinion is that it is a mere conclusion, arrived at and stated without taking the reader into the secret of the reasoning from which the conclusion is derived. The audience that *The People* addresses accepts unsupported conclusions from no man. That audience insists upon knowing the premises from which a conclusion is inferred, in order that itself may verify the premises and judge whether they justify the conclusion. Mr. Urbansky’s opinion may be the soundest in the world. Given, however, in the

unsupported manner that it is given, it is profitless.

The Socialist Labor Party reasons that the Labor Movement is, what Marx called it, “essentially political.” It is this, not because the political ballot is essential to conduct it. If that were the reason, then there could be no Labor Movement in countries where the political ballot is unknown. There could, for instance, have been no Labor Movement in Russia until this year. We know the Labor Movement of Russia preceded the political ballot. The Labor Movement is essentially political for the reason lucidly given by Marx—its triumph implies the political downfall of the capitalist class; it “implies” that; consequently, the political downfall of capitalism is involved in, is a consequence of something else. What is that something else?—Its economic downfall. It is unnecessary to go into the fundamental role played in society by the economic structure. That subject constitutes the “Leit-motif” of Marxian philosophy, and that stands unshaken. It follows from the facts here adduced that the Labor Movement must, first of all, be equipped with the economic organization adequate to oust the capitalist class from its economic stronghold; the Labor Movement must be so equipped everywhere, whether the political ballot is known or not; it follows, furthermore, that in countries that have attained the political ballot stage of development, the political ballot becomes a weapon which the Labor Movement is compelled to incorporate in its economic arsenal. Without the political ballot, and with the economic organization only, the Labor Movement reads itself outside the pale of civilized warfare; without the economic organization, and with the political ballot only, the Labor Movement reads itself inside a corral of mooncalves. Few things are as clear to-day as that the political triumph of the Working Class at the ballot-box will be up in the air unless the Working Class itself can enforce the fiat of that triumph. How is it to be enforced? What is it to be enforced with? Marxism teaches that the enforcement rests with the proper economic organization of Labor. That part of social science that considers these specific questions is an integral part of Socialist philosophy. How integral a part it is of Socialist philosophy may be judged from the words of Marx that head this article—“Only the Trades Union is capable of setting on foot a true political party of Labor.” Our correspondent realizes the necessity of preaching Socialist philosophy on the political stump, and yet he claims it would be wrong for him to preach

industrial Unionism from the same place. How can a whole be preached to the exclusion of any of its parts? The feat is impossible. Consequently, what our correspondent would preach is not “Socialist Philosophy” but lopsided philosophy.

The other point made by our correspondent is that, if the resolution pronouncing the A.F. of L. principles and form of organization an obstacle to labor, were adopted by his Socialist party, the consequence would be the dissolution of the party, and that such an event would please no one more than the capitalist class. An error of reasoning and one of fact are knotted together in that statement.

It is false reasoning to make the acceptance of a truth dependent upon whether its consequences will square or not with one’s preconceived ideas. Such was the reasoning of the Jewish church towards Spinoza’s philosophy; such was the reasoning of the Jew and Gentile church towards the astronomic discoveries of Copernicus and such is its reasoning to-day towards the theory of evolution; such, exactly, is the reasoning of capitalism towards Socialism. In all these instances the principles were and are unassailable, yet the acceptance of the truth which they announced and announce interfered and interferes with the comfort of pre-existing notions, and, of course, of pre-existing interests. Intellectual integrity condemns such process of reasoning. We refer our correspondent to the passage in *Woman Under Socialism* where Bebel condignly rakes Prof. Virchow and other German scientists over the coals for stopping short in their own scientific reasoning, lest the logic of their conclusions should force them to accept Socialism. Well, even pathetically does Mr. Urbansky depict the abomination of A.F. of Hellism. Does the gentleman realize that, in recognizing the mischievous effect of A.F. of L. principles upon the Working Class, and in the same breath confessing that the official recognition of that truth by the Socialist party would be disastrous to the party, amounts to a crushing indictment, brought by himself, against the wing of the Socialist party that he trains with?—Incidentally, it is not out of place to call attention to the vindication that our correspondent, however unwilling a witness, himself furnishes of the Socialist Labor Party contention that some form and principle of economic organization will ever be found the economic substance that any party, which claims to be of Socialism, is the reflex of, and is, in fact, dominated by. So true a reflex of the A.F. of L. is our correspondent’s wing of the Socialist party

that, altho' the iniquity of the A.F. of L. is evident to him, he is in mortal dread of having his party officially make the admission. Instinctively he feels it in his bones that if the substance, which his wing of the Socialist party is the political reflex of, is battered, the reflex itself is shattered. Hence also the contortions that another set of Mr. Urbansky's party-men are going through: they affect neutrality, and seek to strengthen their base by shying bouquets at the hideous A.F. of L.

The error of fact in this second passage of Mr. Urbansky's letter lies in the sweeping statement that the dissolution of his party would please none so much as the capitalist class. The fact here implied is that the Socialist party is a homogeneous unit. This is an error of fact. The Socialist party is different things in different places. One instance, the latest of the series, is furnished by the nomination of Wm. D. Haywood for Governor by the Socialist party of Colorado. One need but contrast that act with the nominations of the Socialist party in the State of New York. The party that nominates for its standard bearer the chairman of the Chicago convention which launched the Industrial Workers of the World; the party that nominates the man who declared then, as he has continued to declare, that the A.F. of L. is not a Labor organization but an appendage of Belmont's Civic Federation; the party that nominates the trusted Secretary of the Mining Department of the I.W.W., which Department has just declared war on the A.F. of L. and all the pro-capitalist principles that are therein implied; the party, in short, that nominates a man who conspicuously stands upon, and is suffering for, the Marxian principle that, without the class conscious economic organization of the Working Class their political struggle is a chimera;—such a party is not a unit with that other party that places a John C. Chase A.F. of L. beneficiary at the head of its ticket; that other party, whose candidates consider a pipe-dream the idea of unifying the Working Class on the economic field; that other party that denies the necessity of the economic organization to enforce the fiat of the Socialist ballot; that other party, that is utopian enough to pin its hopes upon the ballot, pure and simple; that other party, in short, that emphasizes at every step its political reflexship of the pure and simple Gompers monstrosity. These two parties are not a unit. The latter is a millstone around the neck of the former; the former is clung to by the latter in order to give itself a veneer of Marxism—upon the same principle

that our blood-thirsty bourgeois applaud revolutionary aspirations abroad while they seek to smother them at home. The capitalist class will have no reason to be pleased at the dissolution of the A.F. of L. wing of the Socialist party. In fact, it would go into mourning at the event—an event as certain as the rise of to-morrow's sun—an event that implies the consolidation of the militant Socialist forces throughout the land.

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

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slpns@slp.org