

EDITORIAL

“SAVING THE A.F. OF L.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

NOT the least interesting portion of the veiled dynamiter Editor James Wilson’s Address to his fellow members of the so-called I.W.W. are those passages that give testimony to the intimate relations that existed, and probably continue to exist, between the I’m-a-bummery and the Socialist {party} press. It is the second instance of efforts from that quarter to “save the A.F. of L.”

Theoretically, there was no need of any admission on the part of any member of the precious S.P. press that its move in 1899, when it ruptured the Socialist Movement of the land, was in the interests of what has developed into a pet of the Civic Federation—the guilds, misnamed Unions{,} that are gathered under the flapping wings of the cackling hen{,} Sam Gompers. The evidences were numerous to prove the fact without any admission. Admissions, nevertheless, are never superfluous in such matters; and the S.P. paper, the *New Yorker Volkszeitung* of September 2, 1909, made the admission.

Theoretically, again, there was no need of any admission by anybody concerned that, the moment a set of men misused the name of the I.W.W. and sought to make it disreputable by identifying it with Anarchy and slummery, the S.P. press—with the notable exception of the press of the Milwaukee Social Democratic party—made common cause with the hideous thing. That also was obvious. All the same, in this instance also, admissions are never superfluous, hence ex-Editor Wilson’s statement is valuable.

The two instances run into each other. The motive for the second instance was identical with the motive for the first—to “save the A.F. of L.”

And cheerful is the fact that the first move was found to require being followed up, within nine years by the second.

First of all, the two moves mark the A.F. of L. unsavable. The only press that

bombards that “bulwark of capital in America,” or that “deadwood,” as the Berlin *Vorwaerts* called it, is the press of the S.L.P. Economic power the S.L.P. press has none; and, in point of numbers, that press is like “a drop in a bucket” when compared with the innumerable Republican, Democratic, Reform and S.P. papers that hold up the end of the A.F. of L., and serve it as a body-guard of bruisers. If then a press that is economically impotent to give or take away “livings,” and, numerically, is insignificant, has the power to endanger so extensively buttressed a thing as the Civic Federation pet, then the conclusion can not be escaped that the said pet is doomed.

Secondly, the two moves demonstrate the tremendous power of sound reasoning. The bulkiest bigness is as nothing, in the long run to the smallest greatness. The soundness of the small S.L.P. with a limited press overbalances all else. In 1899 it was found that that S.L.P. was driving the A.F. of L. to the brink of destruction, and it was found necessary, in order to “save the A.F. of L.,” that the S.L.P. be ruptured. And now, in 1908, the S.L.P. having conjured into existence the I.W.W., the A.F. of L. was again found in such peril that subterranean methods were needed to smash the I.W.W. and set up a veiled dynamite concern by that name with the fond hope of killing the S.L.P. for the purpose of once more “saving the A.F. of L.”

Combining the first and the second facts demonstrated by the move of 1899 and the move of 1908, the S.L.P. can only feel encouraged. It can only feel steeled in its endeavor to lay the necessary foundation for the Socialist Republic—Working Class Militant Unionism; it can only feel confident that the “bulwark of Capitalism in America” is bound to be shattered by the cannonade of S.L.P. propaganda, and its place taken by the bulwark of Socialism—Revolutionary Unionism.

The S.L.P. is irresistible—hence the A F. of L. is unsavable.

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Uploaded May 2011

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