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EDITORIAL

AN ESSAY ON REASONING.

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ELSEWHERE in this issue we publish an article entitled “Brewers and Party Politics,” from the Cleveland, O., *Bakers’ Journal* of last February 7. The article is constructed upon what is technically known as the “Pure and simple” basis. Its calm reasoning, its fairness of presentation, and its, up to a certain point, relentlessly correct logic are refreshing. Possibly, the article would be logical up to the end of the subject. But unfortunately it breaks off just where it began to be interesting.

The *Bakers’ Journal’s* line of argument is:

“Indorsement of a political party by a Trades Union means party politics within it.”

Correct! The next link in the argument is:

“Party politics carried on by a Trades Union means that each and every member must vote the full ticket of the indorsed party.”

Correct, again. The next link in the argument is:

“Each one not doing this is a derelict, may justly be called a scab, and expelled from the organization.”

Indeed, a bull’s-eye of correct reasoning! Then follows the climax of the *Bakers’ Journal’s* unflinching logic. It concludes, reasoning along this line, that every “clean-out” in such an indorsed party would have to effect a corresponding “clean-out” of “political scabs” in the Union. At this point, however, the *Bakers’ Journal* drops argument, and simply strikes a pro-Pure and Simple attitude.

Next in importance to convincing, the thing for opponents to do is to understand

each other. The *Bakers' Journal* evidently understands exactly the rationale of the Trades Union policy of the Socialist Labor Party. The purpose of this article is an endeavor to induce the *Bakers' Journal* to disclose the rationale of its own Trades Union policy by taking up the thread of its argument, where it broke off, and continue the same to the rounding point.

The *Bakers' Journal* recognizes that every “clean-out” in a political party is bound to be followed by a corresponding “clean-out” in an indorsing Trades Union. Hence its objection to party politics in Unions. What are the conclusions to be drawn from the objection? In other words, what is its rationale?

On the subject of politics the human race divides along two lines:

1st—Politics are VITAL;

2d—Politics are TRASH.

Does Pure and Simple Unionism fall in with the view that “politics are trash”? If so, one of two things must follow:

Either the Pure and Simple Union holds that poverty may be alleviated, but can not be abolished, and that, as things are they have always been, and will substantially continue to be, until the millennium arrive,—in which case, by what right does such a Union claim standing in the Labor Movement? Why not join the Salvation Army?

Or the Pure and Simple Union holds the Socialist view regarding Capital and Labor, the irrepressibleness of the conflict between the two, and the mission of the Working Class to abolish Capitalism,—in which case, why does not the Union drill itself for “physical action,” and, like the bona fide Anarchist, frankly preach that doctrine? Is Capitalism to be knocked down by “absent treatment”?

Does, on the contrary, Pure and Simple Unionism fall in with the view that “politics are vital”? If so, then this other must follow inevitably, to wit: The Pure and Simple Union must dominate the political manifestation of Labor{—}to it alone are “clean-outs” allowable. In other words, the solution of the Labor movement is to strangle itself: People do not join unions but to get or keep jobs; Capitalism, by reducing ever more the relative number of the hands needed and thereby increasing the relative supply in the Labor Market, renders permanent membership in the Unions an impossibility to the vast majority of the workers; the overwhelming majority of the workingman voters

being found in the “clean-outs” as “scabs” or otherwise, the Union-dominated political party of Labor is scuttled before started. To be still conciser: Pure and Simple Unionism is a “Labor Jollier” to Labor’s undoing.

We do not mean to speak or reason for the *Bakers’ Journal*. Neither shall we decide for it which of these several alternatives is the rationale it stands on. But one of them is its pedestal. All the same, whichever it be, dead opposite stands the pedestal on which is reared the S.L.P. views of what a Union should be.

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