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EDITORIAL

A.F. OF L., A.L.U. AND S.T. & L.A.

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THE central feature of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, that distinguished the organization from any other trades organization then in existence, was its principle of the inseparable kinship of politics and wages. All the trades organizations recognized the necessity, at any rate the inevitableness of the trades union formation; with the single exception of the S.T. & L.A., however, none other advanced to the point that the solidarity of labor in the shop was worthless for progress unless the same solidarity was displayed at the ballot box.

Before, during and immediately after its launching, the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance was met with strong opposition; and the opposition has rather increased in virulence than diminished. Leaving aside the non-Socialist and the anti-Socialist adversaries, attention is here called only to that hostile element that protests and asserts its Socialism. What was its attitude? what its argument?

The hostile element that asserted its Socialist convictions declared that the theory of the S.T. & L.A. was perfect: without solidarity, labor solidarity at the ballot box, the solidarity manifested on the economic field could accomplish nothing lasting, let alone emancipate the working class. But, claimed this element, the way to bring that about, the way to join the two solidarities into one effective whole, is not to set up a new organization. A new organization, that element proceeded to argue, can not fail to enter into friction with the latter; the friction thus engendered is bound to ripen into conflict; the two will be calling one another "scabs": the final result will be that, so far from solidifying, a new element of disintegration will have been introduced into the ranks of Labor. This hostile element decided to "bore from within." As there was only the A.F. of L., they stuck to or joined it. It is unnecessary in this article to cite the counter-arguments advanced by the S.T. and L.A. Suffice it to say that the anti-S.T. and L.A. opposition, that based its opposition on Socialist

principle, virulently opposed the S.T. and L.A. The term that the opposition compressed its reasons in was the epithet “Union-Wrecker,” hurled at the S.T. and L.A. and at the Socialist Labor Party. To start Unions in opposition to the A.F. of L. was to aim at “wrecking the Unions.” Against that anathema was cried.

So far, so good, until the American Labor Union was launched in the West, and began branching out into the East. Here was an organization that, point for point, and in all general essentials, tallied exactly with the S.T. and L.A. Like the S.T. and L.A., the A.L.U. pronounced the A.F. of L. leadership hopeless; like the S.T. and L.A., the A.L.U. proved the A.F. of L. to be corrupt—the *American Labor Union Journal*, organ of the A.L.U., down to its latest issues, teems with denunciations of the A.F. of L.; like the S.T. and L.A., the A.L.U. united politics with economics, altho’ its politics were not those of the S.T. and L.A.; and finally, just like the S.T. and L.A., the A.L.U. is roundly denounced as “scab” by the A.F. of L. and as a “wrecker of Unions,” and the compliment is returned by the A.L.U., just as it is by the S.T. and L.A. In short, all the reasons why the S.T. and L.A. was said to be opposed by an element that claimed to be Socialist were in existence for opposition from the same quarters to the A.L.U. But the opposition came not. On the contrary, that so-called Socialist opposition to the S.T. and L.A. heartily joined, supports and approves of the A.L.U.

These are facts. Do they present a paradox. Not at all. They illumine another fact, an important fact—the double faced and cowardly qualities of the alleged Socialist opposition to the “Union wrecking” S.T. and L.A.

The facts above drawn up expose the cowardice of the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic party: In the West where the A.F. of L. is not as strong as in the East, those make-believe Socialist revolutionists were not afraid to stand for S.T. and L.A. principles; in the East, however, where the A.F. of L. is stronger and where manly courage is needed, here the self-same make-believe Socialist revolutionists have not the courage of their convictions. They even shout with the fakirs by repeating their stupidities and slanders against the S.T. and L.A.; aye those “Socialist revolutionists” even go, as they did in New Orleans, the full length of supporting a Gompers for re-election.

The double-faced qualities of the said “Socialist revolutionists” appear from the

aforesaid. The double-faced make-up marks their party Ichabod. A political party that has different principles in different latitudes, that in one latitude will run with the hares, in another hunt with the hounds—such a party may be anything it pleases, except a body that can solidify the working class, and lead it to emancipation; such a party lacks the fibre that makes history and marks epochs;—the fibre needed at this juncture. Such a party deserves contempt only.

And it is receiving advance doses of the full dose of contempt in store for and that will overwhelm it.

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