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EDITORIAL

SELF-STRANGULATION

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IT will not be the fault of the young and unthinking enthusiasts—we have in mind the honest, not the dishonest Hayes-Carey-*Volkszeitung* crooks—who are seeking to bore Socialism into the unions from within, if their efforts are crowned only with confusion worse confounded; and if, thereby, both the honest and the dishonest pure and simplers are rendered less accessible to the teachings that their class needs for its emancipation.

Superstitions, erroneous habits of thought, must either have their heads staved in, or they must be flanked. There are only these two strategic manoeuvres open. The Socialist Labor Party maintains that both methods, and not one alone, are needed. Accordingly, pursuant to the first method, which may be termed “boring from without,” the Party set up the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, and pursuant to the second method, it stirred every workingman, whose trade conditions compelled him to be in a pure and simple union, to “bore from within.” Others, however, rejected the “boring from without” and adopted the “boring from within” only. Obviously, the posture of these rendered the flank movement policy imperative upon them. Are they following it? No! Their course is half flank and half front movement, and thereby defeats both.

What is the—again we have only the honest element in mind—first objection raised by a pure and simpler to a motion that his union endorse a party of Socialism? It is this: “No politics in Unions! We endorse neither Republicans nor Democrats, why should we endorse Socialists?” The “borers from without,” THEY may stave in by a front move the head of the superstition that underlies this objection, THEY may move the endorsement of a party of Socialism; not so, however, the “borers from within.” Their strategy is that of flank-movements: for them to demand the endorsement of a party of Socialism is to disable themselves

from carrying out their flank movement—whereby much good work could be done.

The idea underlying bona fide “boring from within,” is that it does not “arouse hostility,” it gives honest ignorance no handle against the “borer.” To assail the honest pure and simpler’s ears with a motion to endorse a party of Socialism not only arouses his of ignorance born hostility, but it furnishes him with a gratuitous handle that he can brain the “borer” with. That handle is the argument in bar that politics are excluded from the Union. An instance in point is furnished by this month’s convention of the Colorado State Federation of Labor.

The “borer from within” is himself responsible for his own discomfiture. Resolutions galore are introduced into Unions—on low tariff, on high tariff, on free silver, on the gold standard, on trusts, on anti-trusts, etc., etc. Not a simpler rises to bar them with the anti-politics clause. He cannot. Why does not the “borer from within” take a lesson from that? He surely ought to perceive the cloven hoof of the Republican or the Democratic, in short, of the capitalist party, beneath the folds of such resolutions. Why does he not offer substitute resolutions from the standpoint of working class interests? Why does he not knock down these resolutions with the masterly arguments that Socialism furnishes? If he did, weaponless would be the hand of the honest pure and simpler: the weapon of “no politics in Unions” could not then avail. All that the “borer” would have to contend with would be the simpler’s economic ignorance, and there the latter’s unconscious interests will silently plead in his ears on the “borer’s” side. Whatever virtues may lie in “boring from within” would then be verified, and the day would be drawn nearer when the “borer from without” and he “from within” could coalesce into a mighty force and jointly knock the fakir down and out by a combined front attack.

As things are going on, bona fide “boring from within” is strangling itself. Pity!

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

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