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EDITORIAL

TRAUTMANN AND CANTRELL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AT about the same time that William E. Trautmann, until recently a leading official of the Anarcho-Syndicalist Chicago I.W.W., addressed his open letter, a copy of which was published in these columns, to William D. Haywood, of the same organization, Edwin Adams Cantrell, also a prominent officer, but of the Socialist party, resident of California, finding the columns of his own organization closed to his substantiated charges, published in seven successive issues of the *Los Angeles Times*, April 28–May 4, a series of letters for the information of Socialists in particular, the Working Class in general.

That Bakouninism—the awakening of what is generally called “the bad passions in man”—lay in embryo in the Chicago 1908 gathering where an “Overalls Brigade,” consisting of females as well as males, claiming to be a “convention of the I.W.W.,” struck the political clause from the I.W.W. Preamble, and, to the orchestration of “Hallelujah, I’m a bum!”, hysterical panegyrics of theft, and the slugging of unguarded men, unfurled the banner of Anarchy,—that Bakouninism lay in embryo in that gathering was well known to the Marxist. He proclaimed the fact, and foretold what was to follow. And now comes Trautmann, whom it required an overdose of the evil to enlighten and disillusion, and, furnishes detailed information from the inside:—

The keeping of “agents provocateurs” in detective agencies by the headquarters of the Chicago I.W.W.; the inciting of members to respond to the call of Sheriffs for special deputies, which “I.W.W. deputies cracked more heads of the foreigners than on picket duty than the regular police,” as in Akron, O., the arousing of popular sympathy by such “capitalist brutalities” to strikers, and the consequent flow of moneys supposedly for the strikers; the misappropriation of the funds by the Volun-

teers” (formerly they were called “Overalls Brigade”), while the victims rot in jail, as in Rhodesdale, O.; the sabotaging of friendly shelter generously though unwisely granted by Socialist Labor Party men; the jeering and sneering at all ethical motives as forces for Working Class emancipation; “if need be assassination” in store for those who stand in the way of an element whose song is *Hallelujah, I’m a Bum!* and whom Marx characterized when he said: “The most despicable is the miserable slave who brags of his chains”; the existence of an “Inner Circle” which, drunk with imagined Rule within grasp, dictatorially dictates these felonies and thereby illustrates Bakounin’s theory of leaders “with the devil in their bowels”;—these and many more details, Trautmann now furnishes.

On the other hand, that pure and simple political so-called Socialism is a close kin of Civic-Federationized and Militia-of-Christized A.F. of L. pure and simple Unionism; that such “Socialism” and such “Unionism” dovetail into each other, and that of the embrace of the two not corruption merely is born, but also a brood that speculates upon the Labor Movement with methods often undistinguishable from Bakouninistic felony;—that was likewise known to the Marxist, and he likewise proclaimed the fact, and foretold what was to be expected from the tactics, structure and practices of the Socialist party. And now comes Cantrell, whom it took a Harimanic-Irvine overdose of the evil to disenchant and enlighten, and furnishes his quota of detailed information:—

A Catilinarian conspiracy, centering in Los Angeles and with ramifications outside of the State, of S.P. officials and A.F. of L. dynamiters and the pursuivants of these to capture public office for private plunder; the attempted exploitation of popular, especially Labor sentiment, and consequent pence, by chicane journalistic false cries, such as the Shoaf Affair; the wholesale misappropriation of the funds thus raised; and, last not least in significance, the foregathering of an “Inner Circle,” also drunk with the anticipation of Rule, exercising in advance autocratically despotic powers over the membership;—these and many more such details Cantrell now furnishes.

The letters of Trautmann and Cantrell are singularly supplementary of each other. Each, pursuing its special line, furnishes a mass of specific evidence of conditions, the existence of which Marxism warned were fatedly unavoidable in bodies

like those of the Chicago I.W.W. and the S.P., but the detailed and specific manifestations of which it took time to develop, and were not, until now accurately and publicly known.

There is this in favor of the Movement in America: Whereas in other and older countries the infant diseases of the Revolution sprang up first, hence took long to run their course and be diagnosed, in America, the diseases run their course more swiftly—the development unquestionably aided by fearless, unterrified, self-restrained and unceasing Marxian propaganda and critique.

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