

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 10, NO. 219.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1910.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

CONFIRMATORY SIDE-LIGHTS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

LAST week, in an article headed “The Civic Federation on Top,”¹ and while the so-called Socialist party press, in chorus with the bourgeois press, were acclaiming with joy the “solidification” of the Western Federation of Miners with Mitchell’s, or Mitchell’s proxy Lewis’s United Mine Workers, the warning was issued in these columns to the workers of the land that the “solidification” move engineered by the Moyers, Mahoneys, O’Neills, in short, by the head officers of the W.F. of M., was a move against the rank and file of their organization; the finger was pointed to the fact that the turbulence of the rank and file of the W.F. of M., a turbulence that frequently breathed the revolutionary breath of proletarianism, drove the small bourgeois officers the W.F. of M. into alliance with their fellow class folks, the small bourgeois officers of the Mitchell concern, and drove them to seek shelter under the yoke of Top-Capitalism, organized in the Civic Federation, where the Mitchell small bourgeois “Union” officer had already found and enjoyed shelter.

Again—

In the course of the last two months authentic facts galore were reproduced in these columns, all of which answered the question, What is the matter with the Socialist party?—a question that had sprung up all over the S.P. camp even before the elections of 1909, and which, after the elections, at sight of the melting “membership,” together with the collapsed “vote,” once so boastfully paraded, wrung from the chest of Mr. A.M. Simons the admission and answer: “The S.P. has become a hissing and a by-word with the actual wage-workers of America.”

Now then—

Upon both subjects—the one regarding the meaning of the “consolidation” of the W.F. of M. with the U.M.W., and the other regarding “What is the matter with the

¹ [“The Civic Federation on Top.” *Daily People*, January 28, 1910—R.B.]

S.P.?”—unexpected light is thrown by a signed article from William D. Haywood, and published in the New York *Volkszeitung* of the 2nd the current month.

In that article, after arguing that the convention of the United Mine Workers has wasted most of its time over trifles, while it side-tracked the important issue of how to prevent the shocking mine catastrophes that are recurring with grewsome frequency from Pennsylvania to Colorado, Haywood says:

“And upon the Socialist party also, in its character of a party of Labor, rests a full measure of responsibility for these mine catastrophes. Never did the S.P. take steps to enlighten the members of the United Mine Workers upon the disgrace of contracts with the aid of which the Socialist members of the Unions are shackled and gagged”; and, as an illustration of what such agreements import, Haywood cites an agreement, now in force between the mine owners and the District organizations of the U.M.W. in a region where mine explosions are frequent, and which runs as follows: “The business administration of the mines and the disposition over the employes is left exclusively in the hands of the Mine Owners’ Association. The United Mine Workers shall in no wise abridge these rights.”

Small wonder that the small bourgeois officers of the W.F. of M. draw near the dittos of the U.M.W.; small wonder that the overlordship of Gompers, the first Vice-President of the Civic Federation, is attracted to such folks; still smaller wonder that the S.P., which connives at, and throws the mantle of Socialism over bourgeois misdeeds to the injury of the proletariat, “has become a hissing and a by-word with the actual wage workers of America.”

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N.B.—We imagine we can hear someone ask: “Did you say that Haywood article appeared in the *Volkszeitung*?”—Yes.—“In the *Volkszeitung*? one of the, S.P. papers that has been shouting ‘Hoop-la!’ and has just been singing ‘Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay!’ at the ‘great Socialist progress made at the late convention of the U.M.W.’?”—Why, yes. “In the *Volkszeitung*, whose man Jacob Franz, before he was gathered to the bosom of Abraham, used to fill the *Neue Zeit* of Germany with thrilling articles concerning the class-consciousness of Mitchell’s set, and, thanks to which articles, Mitchell was hailed by the Socialists of Germany as ‘Genosse Mitchell’?”—Yes, indeed. “But how can that be? Or is the *Volkszeitung* ‘coming our way’?”—The

answer is very simple—once in a while the *Volkszeitung* feels, compelled thereto by the S.L.P. press, to hold correct language. Whereupon having “burnt a candle to St. Michael,” the paper feels forthwith free to “worship St. Michael’s dragon” by holding language that will enable it to draw its hand back with some cash, dropped into it by the dragon. That dragon has many shapes—one time it appears in the shape of a “Label Committee”; another time in the shape of some labor fakir, like Niedermeyer, about to abscond with his Union’s fund, and wanting a “puff”; another time the dragon assumes the shape of a fat Baumann advertisement to hush up some installment-plan iniquity; and so on. Like the Devil this dragon can and does assume any number of shapes.

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Uploaded January 2011

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