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EDITORIAL

## THERE IS A LIGHT ABOUT TO BREAK.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE performance of Mr. Joseph Barondess at last Sunday's meeting of the Central Federated Union, served as a fit and speedy companion piece to another performance, that took place within the previous seven days, and in which the gentleman also figured. The two performances not only picture the individual, but, and above all, they picture the lay of the land.

As stated, the theater of the second performance was the Central Federated Union. Mr. Barondess appeared there as an ambassador of the East Side "kosher meat" anti-trust agitation. The body before which he went knows him well. They know he has figured as Anarchist, as Populist, as Social Democrat, at all times as an anti-Socialist Labor Party man, and that in the late municipal campaign he figured as "reformer," being closeted with and quoted by the reform candidate for District Attorney, Jerome. Did these bald antecedents of the man, besides other still more malodorous antecedents that aromate his career, stand in his way before the Central Federated Union? Not in the least. Likes recognized likes. When he stated his mission—a bizarre proposition to hold the bronco of capitalism back by the tail—he was loudly applauded. And when he capped the climax by hurling defiance at the "Reform Administration," and announcing that thenceforth he would fight it with all his might (?!?), the applause was very discriminate. Indeed, likes scented likes. Political adventurers recognized their time. The bogus banner of "Labor," under which the Central Federated Union plies its trade of chicanery and political corruption, spreads its folds to gather in its own, just as a hen spreads her wings to gather in her chicks. Barondess was gathered in.

The other and first performance had for its theater the convention of the Independent Order of Berith Abraham, a Jewish workingman's mutual insurance association. Barondess was a delegate. It was important to his ulterior schemes to

capture an office. He aimed at the office of Deputy Grand Marshall. The delegates were overwhelmingly workingmen. Barondess strutted about the convention floor as the Incarnation of Workingman. But despite all his posing and stage strutting he secured only 70 votes out of over 300 votes cast.

This blow, given squarely in the face of the “Labor Leader” by workingmen, stunned the defeated “hero,” and he sat all of a heap, when suddenly he started up as if stung to the quick. Indeed he was stung. The matter of the association’s printing being before the house, a motion was made that the job be given to one Auerbach, a man well known on the East Side as an upholder of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, and, consequently, an implacable foe of the scab crew of the “Hebrew Typographical Union,” affiliated with the organization of Hanna’s labor lieutenant, James M. Lynch, the President of the International Typographical Union. Small wonder that Barondess felt stung to the quick. What member of the Organized Scabbery does not feel “rattled” at the bare suggestion of the S.T. & L.A.? Barondess, of course, did. Though his eyes were not yet open from the blow he had just received, he sailed in; and there rushed from his obscene mouth that torrent of calumny against the Socialist Labor Party for which the Organized Scabbery is now famous and that constitutes their only stock in trade. “De Leonite scabs” was the burden of the “argument.” Unhappy Barondess! It would have been money in his pockets and in the pockets of his set had he kept his mouth shut. He was now facing, not a Central Fakirated Union, made up of picked individuals from the Organized Scabbery; he was here facing the rank and file in a convention where the tricks of the Organized Scabbery are of no effect. To say that the convention “went for Barondess” is to put it mildly. Delegate after delegate rose and soaked it into him. The gist of the speeches from the members who are not S.L.P. men was:

“We are no Socialists, but we know this: that the Socialist Labor Party is honest. It is an open foe, straight forward and plain-spoken. But you (pointing the finger of derision at Barondess), you and your set, you are crooked. You are ‘friends’ whom nobody can place. You talk one day one way, the next another. You are corrupt. We won’t take your word. The S.L.P.’s word is as good as its bond,” etc., etc.

When the vote was taken, Barondess was left with a cold 7; all the other votes were given against him, and Auerbach got his job! Barondess looked black and blue, his

thrashing was thorough, and via him the whole Organized Scabbery got its drubbing.

And who will say that there is no progress? And who will say that the S.L.P. practical work of unmasking the Labor Leader is not having its effect? Finally, who will fail to recognize in the lay of the “labor-land” that its “Central Fakirations,” though intended to deceive, may deceive the lunk-head politicians, but are fast losing the power to deceive the rank and file of the workers?

The two Barondess performances were worth their weight in gold.

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