

EDITORIAL

THE BASIS OF UNITY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE reports that come in from the recent strike zone in New Jersey, where the I.W.W. led the proletariat in their demands against the employer, contain the information that members of the Socialist Labor Party and members of the Socialist party are, in some instances, seen working harmoniously, side by side, on the I.W.W. acre; and, in other instances, are at daggers drawn.

This was to be expected.

Upon the identical Marxian principle that “only the Trades Union is capable of setting on foot a true political party of Labor”—upon that same principle only the true Union can furnish the bottom for the unity of the political movement. Wrongfully constructed Unionism can never do that. It can only help to scatter the political, the same as it tends to scatter all other actions of the Working Clan.

The A.F. of L. can not accomplish the feat. Itself a “house divided against itself”—a house in which even the inmates are perforce contracted into scabbing upon one another—the A.F. of L. keeps the whole proletariat divided, hence its reflex can only spell “scatter,” on the political, as on all other fields.

The Chicago or Anarchist “I.W.W.” can, for similar reasons, not unite Labor’s forces. Anarchy brings with it its methods. The methods of Anarchy are fatedly individual. “Sabotage,” or any of its constituent parts,—theft, damage, physical force, and even killing—is inevitably an act that excludes mass action. Mass action, when revolutionary, must operate in the open. To operate in the open a revolutionary mass is forced to shield itself with legality. The instant legality is discarded for illegality, as Anarchy does, that instant the act must be prepared in the dark, hiddenly, and carried out sneakingly. The rat-hole is the meeting place of illegality. Of course, the rat-hole excludes the masses, hence whatever method Anarchy resorts to likewise spells “scatter.”

It is otherwise with the I.W.W. Constituted with the express goal of overthrowing the Capitalist Social System, the I.W.W. focuses the proletariat into ONE class organized into ONE Union: hence, the I.W.W. shuts its doors and windows, and double bars and bolts them against the causes that compel the scattering of forces in the A.F. of L. Constituted with the express goal of climaxing the series of political revolutions, which mark the Era of the Class Struggle, and rearing the Industrial or Socialist Republic, the I.W.W. rejects all the weapons that are typical of the Stone Age of the Labor Movement; hence the I.W.W. shuts its doors and windows, and double bolts and bars them against the dynamite bomb, or any of the other individualistic acts of Anarchy, the ultimate consequences of which ultimately spell “scatter” to the forces of the Movement, politically and otherwise.

Neither upon the ground presented by the A.F. of L., nor upon that presented by the Chicago, or Anarchist so-called I.W.W., is political unity conceivable. That the I.W.W. is the only ground, upon which such necessary unity is possible, is revealed by the reports from New Jersey, and other places.

The cheering spectacle presented by the S.L.P. and S.P. men who are laboring shoulder by shoulder behind the guns of the I.W.W. recalls the circumstance that it was in New Jersey that the first Unity Conference took place between S.L.P. and S.P., and that from that conference went forth a Manifesto, the chapter of which on “Unionism” is reproduced elsewhere in this issue as timely reading.

The basis of Socialist political unity is class-conscious Unionism.

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