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SECOND EDITORIAL

ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE A.P.A.

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THE A.P.A.,* or anti-Catholic crusade, in America and the anti-Semitic movement in Europe—Germany especially—offer a many sided commentary upon the state of the capitalist world and mind.

The German bourgeois or capitalist believes that for wisdom there is no bourgeois outside of Germany who can hold a candle to him; our own precious American capitalist, or bourgeois, feels quite certain that none of his fraternity outside of America can come within a forty-foot pole of his “cleverness.” Unfortunately for such “patriotic” pretenses, European or German anti-Semitism and American A.P.A. or latter{-}day Knownothingism help to bring out the fact that, for bat-like blindness and superb dullness, the bourgeois or capitalists of all countries are identical—all of them revealing the identical stunted intellect that buds from the stalk of their vulgar economics.

In Germany the small capitalist and would-be big shark finds his existence becoming daily more doubtful. Dullard that he is, he does not realize that what is crushing him is the large producer, who is enabled to produce more cheaply than himself. He feels constrained to go to the banker, cap in hand, to beg and borrow a loan. He does not perceive that in doing so he is simply tangling himself more and more in the meshes of the very system to which he clings as a bur does to a cow’s tail that would gladly shake it off. Presently he begins to experience the inevitable. Without the additional burden of an interest drawing loan he was unable to get along; that additional burden causes him to stagger still more. At that moment his

* [American Protective Association.]

dull intellect sees everything through the spectacles of rage. Already amply stupid, his rage makes him—if possible—still more so. The banker from whom his class borrows is generally a Jew. “Down with the Jews!” becomes his political device. In other words, he imputes to religion what is chargeable wholly to economics. Incidentally it deserves notice that the American small farmer is many degrees the superior of his European fellow. He knows that the uncircumcised banker is no better than the circumcised one, and with much better aim he goes for the BANKER, whether Jew or Gentile.

How stands the case with our American modern Knownothing? He also is a middle class and would-be big shark; but somehow or other, instead of succeeding in his endeavors to climb upon the backs of others, the bigger capitalists are succeeding in climbing over his back and pushing him down despite all his “patriotic” attempts to ride his countrymen. He looks about for the cause. As it always happens with dullards, he gets things mixed up. The big sharks can produce more cheaply than he and undersell him. Why? For two reasons: First, They have larger capital, better machinery; secondly, because they have a bigger “pull” with the government, and every time their men strike against lower wages, shorter hours or some other cruel scheme whereby the bosses increase their profits by squeezing their men, these big bosses can get the government to let police, militia, United States military or judges, or all of these together, loose upon the strikers and thus compel submission, and thus enforce the bosses’ plan.

The small capitalist is deprived of both these advantages: his capital is too small to compete successfully with the monopolist; and as a result of that, his “pull” with the government is next to nothing; his workingmen can resist his encroachments, his attempts to reduce wages, his attempts to lengthen hours, etc., etc. In his struggle to keep his footing, he loses sight of the power that drives him down from behind with large concentrations of capital, he sees only the successful workingmen before him, united—Protestant, Catholic and Jew, American, Irish, German and Italian—in resisting the encroachments with which he expects to save himself. A united set of workers rises before this would-be big shark as THE cause of his troubles, as THE obstacle in the way of his “patriotic” endeavors to ride his countrymen, and he forthwith schemes a scheme whereby to break the bond that

holds his employes together. A.P.A.-ism is the result. Through that it is expected the Protestant will fall away from the Catholic, the American from the worker of foreign birth, and that the boss will then be able to overcome a disunited opposition.

Unfortunately, however, for European as well as American A.P.A.-ism{,} it can no more save the middle class than a mustard plaster on a wooden leg can raise a blister. There is no salvation for the struggling small producer in methods that smack of barbarism; his only salvation lies on the path trodden to-day by the enlightened proletariat that is marching on towards the Co-operative Commonwealth.

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