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EDITORIAL

INDUSTRIALISM.

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A BISBEE, Ariz., correspondent writes:
“Shortly after the so-called 4th convention of the I.W.W., the *Industrial Bulletin* had two articles, one entitled ‘The Intellectual Against the Worker,’ claiming to report the argument of delegate De Leon at that convention, the other entitled ‘The Worker Against the Intellectual.’ In the latter article St. John maintains delegate De Leon is wrong in stating that we should organize according to the *special tool* used: rather do we organize according to *industries*. I should like a word of explanation on such a matter.”

At the time, a number of articles—reportorial, editorial and Letter-Box answers—covered the field quite extensively. The general subject is, however, of such permanent interest as to deserve being taken up systematically.

The two articles in the *Industrial Bulletin* referred to are essentially loose, confused and incoherent. This was the consequence, partly, of the false position that St. John was, by that time, well aware he had allowed himself to be wheedled into; partly, no doubt, of his lack of grasp of the subject.

Industrialism is a trefoil that constitutes ONE leaf; it is a term that embraces three domains, closely interdependent, and all three requisite to the whole. The three domains are Form, Tactics and Goal. The Goal is the substitution of the industrial for the political government: another term for the Socialist Republic; the Tactics are the unification of the useful labor of the land on the political as well as the economic field; the Form concerns the structure of the organization. Each of the three domains covers an extensive field, being the gathered experience of the Labor, or Socialist Movement. It is next to impossible to handle properly any of the three departments without touching the others. Unavoidably they closely dovetail with one another. The specific question raised by our correspondent concerns mainly the

first department—Form, or Structure. To the extent that it can be treated separately the treatment will be here undertaken.

In the matter of Form or Structure Industrialism is a physical crystallization of the sociologic principle that the proletariat is ONE. From the fundamental principle of the oneness of interests of the proletariat arises the ideal to be obtained—their solidarity; and that shatters all structures reared upon the theory of Craft Sovereignty. It shatters that theory as completely as, upon the political field, State Sovereignty was shattered in the country. It does so for parity of reasoning. Whatever the State lines, the separate States are but fractions of the whole Nation. Whatever the craft lines, the separate crafts are but fractions of the whole Proletariat. Consequently, however different the nature of the occupation, the work done, and the conditions of work, the useful labor of the land is ONE NATION, hence, must be organized as ONE UNION.

The Industrialist principle of ONE UNION, on the ground of ONE NATIONSHIP, excludes, as a matter of course, the jelly-fish conception of oneness. The oneness of the high structure of the human being is a different oneness from that of the lower jelly-fish. As the structure of the human being implies parts and co-ordination of parts, so does the structure of Industrialism, a concept born of the higher development of modern society, imply divisions and sub-divisions. The field upon which Industrialism operates warrants the parallel with a modern Army. One though an Army is, it has its separate divisions and sub-divisions. These are also imperative to the Industrialist Army—it also has and must have its companies, battalions, regiments, brigades, divisions. The important question then arises, What fact traces the lines that are to mark these several parts from one another?

At first blush this question looks complicated. It is not. At the first convention of the I.W.W. the element of complication was thrown in by the craft vanities of several crafts men. The lead in this sinister direction was there taken by David C. Coates in the interest of the typographical craft. Despite all his efforts to tangle up the convention [See stenographic report], and despite the general unpreparedness of many of the delegates, the efforts failed. The convention took a broadly correct position, which the second convention completed by definite specifications. At the last, the so-called fourth convention of the I.W.W., the element of complication was

again injected into the matter. The effort that time, however, did not, as at the first convention, proceed from any viewpoints affecting Form, or Structure. The Form, or Structure, arguments were merely pretexts, required to cover the purpose of the element who packed the convention against the organization, by seating delegates not entitled to admission and unseating others entitled to a seat. The purpose of this element had not Form, or Structure, in contemplation. It had Tactics in contemplation—the substitution of Anarchist for Socialist methods. What the line of demarcation is among the several parts of the Industrialist Army is determined by the FACTS IN PRODUCTION. The central principles in the determination flow from the facts that dictate the Form, or Structure, of the corps designated by the second convention as the “Local Industrial Union,” and correctly so designated seeing that, although the “Local Industrial Union” does not comprise the whole organization, but is only a part thereof, nevertheless its structure typifies Industrialism.

Does the same fact, which traces the line between one Local Industrial Union and another in one Locality, also trace the line between the “Trade and Shop Branches” which the second convention designated as the component factors of the Local Industrial Union? It does not. The fact that traces the line between one Local Industrial Union and another in one locality and the fact that determines the boundaries of the component factors of the Local Industrial Union, are different. What facts are these? The answer to this question answers the question, How does Industrialism organize?

The fact that traces the external boundary lines of the Local Industrial Union is the *output*.

Here are two illustrations—one, the printing shop, a concern which turns out an actual product, printed matter; the other a trolley line, a concern which does not turn out any actual product, but fills that necessary and supplementary function in production which consists in transportation. In each instance the *output*—printed matter in one case, transportation in the other—draws the boundary lines of the respective Local Industrial Union.

In the instance of the printing shop, the *output* being printed matter, all the wage-workers, whatever their specialized occupation may be, are, in that locality,

engaged in the same industry. Being so engaged, they belong in one printers' Local Industrial Union.

In the instance of the trolley line, the *output* being transportation, all the wage-workers, whatever their specialized occupation may be, are, in that locality, engaged in the same industry. Being so engaged, they belong in one, in a traction Local Industrial Union.

Before proceeding to the internal construction of the Local Industrial Union, an objection, that has been raised against the external construction of the Local Industrial Union, must be here considered.

Compositors, proofreaders, etc., are frequently found employed in other than establishments the output of which is printed matter: they are found employed in some large textile concerns, they are found employed in electrical, in hotel, in railroad and other establishments. In the traction industry there are electricians, firemen, etc. At the same time, electricians and firemen are found employed in other than establishments the output of which is transportation: they are found at work in hotels, in foundries, in big office buildings. And so all along the line. There hardly is an establishment, yielding a certain output, which does not employ occupations that contribute to some other output in some other establishment. This fact has been seized by the A.F. of L. Craft Unionism as a proof positive of the "absurdity" of Industrialism. "Think of it," these gentlemen have said and even written, "one time a compositor is a 'printer,' another time he is a 'weaver,' in another place he is an 'electrician,' in a fourth place he is a 'restaurant' worker, in a fifth place he is a 'railroader'! As to electricians and firemen, in one instance they are 'traction' workers, in another 'hotel and restaurnteurs,' in a third they are 'foundrymen,' in a fourth 'elevator and janitormen'! How laughable!" And much is the mirth these gentry have indulged in on that score.

For one thing, the foundation for the seeming absurdity is "Craft Vanity,"—a sentiment, which, traced to its source is a denial of the oneness of proletarian interests. For another thing, the only alternative to the "absurdity of Industrialism" is the tragedy of "Craft Sovereignty." The first objection superficial thinkers may be disposed to dismiss as "theoretical." Sound reasoners will be less prone to sneer at a "theory." In this matter, however, the theory can be left aside. Its practical

manifestation is “Craft Sovereignty,” and the practical manifestations of that should be shocking enough to shock the laughter out of the most mirthful Craft Unionist—provided, of course, he is not a labor-lieutenant of the capitalist class. What the practical manifestations of “Craft Sovereignty” are have for several weeks been on the pillory of the Philadelphia strike. The Brewers, the Compositors—not to speak of other “Craft Sovereigns”—all of them Federated with the Traction men, deserted their allies; and, worse yet, Tim Healey’s Powermen, men directly engaged in the output of transportation, remained at work, furnishing power for the strike-breaking motormen and conductors to run the cars. If in the case of the Brewers and Compositors there was the deep damnation of desertion; in the case of the Powermen there was the even deeper damnation of treason from within. The Philadelphia general strike, which but repeats a lamentable spectacle common at all strikes of any magnitude, to say nothing of the disgraceful sights presented with the regularity of clockwork at A.F. of L. conventions, where whole bunches of delegates denounce one another as “scabs,” places the practical issue, or alternative, squarely—either Industrialism, despite its incidental and very limited “laughableness,” or Craft Unionism, despite its permanent and chronically constitutional scabbery—in other words, either a little and far-fetched AMUSEMENT, or a mass of actual TRAGEDY. Industrialism—that form of economic organization that capitalist development dictates—dictates the *output* as the controlling fact which traces the external line of demarcation for the Local Industrial Union.

What, now, determines the internal lines of demarcation for the Local Industrial Union? As the FACT IN PRODUCTION that traces the boundary line of the Local Industrial Union is the *output*, the correlated FACT IN PRODUCTION which traces the boundary lines between the component factors of the Local Industrial Union, that is, the Trade and Shop Branches, is the *tool*.

From all that precedes it follows that the Local Industrial Union is a unit composed of a variety of occupations. The article “Notes on the Stuttgart Congress—The Trades Union Issue” (*Daily People*, October 20; *Weekly*, October 26, 1907), cites a charming British delegate, the then Miss Mary McArthur, who had recently visited America, as frantically exclaiming in the room of the Committee on

Unionism: “They [the I.W.W. and the S.L.P.] are mad! Do you know what they want? They want plumbers, and switchmen, and weavers, and coalheavers all in one Local Union to transact their business together! They are m-a-a-d! They are m-a-a-a-d!” Indeed they would be “m-a-a-a-a-d” if the lady were right—and she would be right if the “I’m-a-bummery,” which has since claimed to be the I.W.W., and which spoke through the articles quoted by our Bisbee correspondent, really vocalized Industrialism.

The component parts of the Local Industrial Union are the “Trade and Shop Branches.” These Branches consist of workers engaged in specific work; within each Branch belong all and only those engaged in such specific work. What characterizes their work in each instance? The *tool* used by each.

Sticking to the two illustrations—the printing industry and the traction industry—used before, all the workers who in one locality contribute to the *output* printed matter belong in one Local Industrial Union. The specific occupation of all these workers is, however, not the same. Some are compositors, others stereotypers, still others editors, etc. The specific work in each instance is different, requiring specific consideration. Each specific occupation requires its own organization—Branch. The *tool* used by the individual in his specific work determines the boundaries of his Branch, and the Branch to which he belongs—the workers whose *tool* is the type-case or machine belong in a compositors’ Branch; the workers whose *tool* is the stereotyping apparatuses belong in a stereotypers’ Branch; the workers whose *tool* is the pen belong in a writers’ or editorial Branch; and so forth. Likewise with the traction industry. Different being the specific occupations of the workers who jointly contribute to the *output* transportation, each specific occupation has its own specific business, requiring a specific Branch—the workers whose *tool* is the motor belong in a motormen’s Branch; those whose *tool* is the machinery in the power house belong in a power Branch; and so forth. All the Trade and Shop Branches of each Local Industrial Union, being properly connected by respective representative bodies, constitute the local unit of Industrialism. With the Trade and Shop Branches there is order within the Local Industrial Union; without them there would be Miss Mary McArthur’s bedlam.

For the completion of this sketch, in the descending line of organization, there

remains one organism to consider—The “Recruiting” or “Mixed Local.” This organism is purely transitory. Its members are transient. So long as there are not enough workers in any one specific occupation to organize a Trade and Shop Branch the worker is temporarily housed in a Recruiting Local, from which he is transferred to a Trade and Shop Branch of his industry, just so soon as there are enough of such workers to constitute such a Branch.

How does Industrialism organize?

From the sketch rapidly traced above the answer is, in the ascending line:

1st. By gathering into and keeping in “Recruiting Locals” the individual workers of whose specific occupation there may not as yet be enough to organize a “Trade and Shop Branch.”

2nd. By gathering into “Trade and Shop Branches” all the workers who use the identical *tool*.

3rd. By gathering into “Local Industrial Unions” all the several “Trade and Shop Branches” whose combined work furnishes a given *output*. There can be no “Local Industrial Union” without at least two “Trade and Shop Branches.”

These are the first three stages. The further stages, in the ascending line,—Industrial Councils, National Industrial Unions, and Industrial Departments—are obvious. Their structure, hence, the method of their organization, flows from the structure and reason for the structure of the “Local Industrial Union.”

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