

EDITORIAL

ULTRAMONTANE RIOT IN BUTTE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

BEFORE us are the issues of the 14th of this month of the Butte, Mont., *Miner* and the *Anaconda Standard*. Both papers, capitalist organs, give lengthy details of the attempted mobbing of C.A. Carlson, a national organizer of the Socialist Labor Party, as he was addressing an open air meeting in Butte on the evening of the previous day.

There is no discrepancy in the reports by the two papers. In all essentials they tally exactly.

Carlson, standing on a soap-box, on which lay some S.L.P. literature, was explaining the class struggle, and illustrated the facts which he mentioned with the conduct of the political parties of capital, lay and clerical. In substantiation of this he took up a copy of Prof. Simarro's review of the clerico-judicial assassination of Francisco Ferrer. What Carlson said at this point is given by the Butte *Miner* more fully than by the *Anaconda Standard*, and in quotation marks:

“The world is divided into two nations. The churches, both Catholic and Protestant, and particularly the former, are always with the rich. I hear men talking out in the crowd and know that they are workingmen who are upholding this system. Why, it was only a short time ago that a wealthy Hebrew donated \$25,000 to the Catholic church so that it might combat the growth of Socialism. Every cardinal, archbishop, bishop and priest in this country is fighting the Socialists to-day.”

It is true that there are but two nations in the world, to-day—the Capitalist Class, which exploits and lives upon the sweat of the brow of the Working Class, and the Working Class, the sweat of whose brow, through unrequited toil, feeds, clothes, houses and fattens the Capitalist Class.

It is true that the Church organizations, whether Roman Catholic or Protestant, side with the rich. The fact is so many-sidedly obvious that all denominations

feel the effect thereof. The Protestant churches are at their wit's end how to replenish their empty pews; while the Roman Catholic churches, altho' boastful of "crowded services," are but too well aware of a serious and increasing leak—a leak so serious from the side of Labor that all the "conversions" of rich women and Presidents' sisters-in-law can not caulk, and that, abroad, is causing monks and nuns to be chased by Catholic countries out of their territories, and in Germany has just lost Cologne to the Clerical party.

It is true that the affinity of organized religion, so-called, with the rich and against the workers is so strong that even a Jew did recently donate \$25,000 to the Catholic church to combat Socialism, that is, the movement for the abolition of wage slavery, and the realization of the Biblical precept "if any would not work, neither should he eat."¹

It is true that in this Crusade against Socialism the Roman Catholic church leads. It is most active. Whether it be at the funeral of a New York Archbishop, or the laying of the corner-stone of a new Buffalo cathedral, or the graduation exercises at a Catholic school, or whatever the public occasion, tirades of various lengths and various degrees of bitterness against Socialism are never missing from the numbers of the program. And, what is more, the Roman Catholic hierarchy is ostentatiously proud of its anti-Socialist activity.

As to Carlson's allegations of fact, they are undeniable. How about Carlson's exercise of the Right of Free Speech? Did he, perchance, abuse the Right?

None more zealously than the S.L.P. man will resist the desecration of Free Speech with attempts to cover up with its name obscenity, scurrility, vileness of utterance, or riotous noise. That Carlson's speech bore none of these ear-marks the *Butte Miner* and the *Anaconda Standard* bear witness to. In orderly manner, and objectively, he was piling fact upon fact, and drawing his conclusions. Nor is this all. Carlson was not a free lance street corner exhortionist. He was the spokesman of a political party—the Socialist Labor Party—addressing his fellow citizens. Carlson was delivering a political speech. The political speech that does not attack opposing political parties may be a thing known in Paradise. It is unknown on earth. It is practised by all political bodies,—the Roman Catholic political party setting the pace, as above indicated, and, what's more, setting the pace against the Socialist po-

¹ [2 Thessalonians 3:10.]

litical movement in particular.

By whichever test—the test of veracity, or the test of the Right of Free Speech, especially by a political party with regard to others,—Carlson’s words be tested, they were eminently legitimate.

And yet, what was the conduct of the members of the Roman Catholic political body, in the crowd addressed by Carlson, in the face of Carlson’s exercise of that most solemn of all manifestations of the Right of Free Speech—political free speech? Did they reveal the benevolence, the charity, the patience of the Nazarene? No! Did they even exemplify the decorum of civilized man at a public meeting, a political meeting, at that? Yet, again, No!

According to the Butte *Miner* and the *Anaconda Standard*, when Carlson reached the end of the passage quoted above, Bart Monahan, described as “a stock broker,” yelled: “If we have any red blood in our veins we will compel this vilifier to move on,” two other worthies{,} McKevitt and Tierney, took the hint. They then acted as “ringleaders”; rushed at Carlson; snatched the book out of his hands and tore it up; and, followed by others of their ilk, they pursued Carlson until they were arrested in their felonious career, and taken to jail.

None more so than, none as much as the organs of the S.L.P. have held high the political right of the Roman Catholic political machine to agitate and propagandize as freely as any other political organization in the land. However abhorrent the Roman Catholic political program, however time-condemned as a scourge to the human race, the working class in particular, civilization demands freedom of political expression, agitation and propaganda. However, the political organization whose products can so misdemean themselves against the Genius of the Age as did the stock-broker Monahan and those upon whose willing ears his guilty words fell, such a political organization, unless it promptly repudiates the felony, gives just ground to see the rack and the stake,—which, whenever it had the power, it used against its adversaries—casting before them their fatidic shadow. Such a body reads itself out of the pale of political bodies; it stands forth, self-branded, a center of riot—a menace to the land.

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