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EDITORIAL

SPOOK SEANCES IN CAPITALISM.

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To anyone, possessed of a modicum of penetration, the utterances, whether vocal or written, of the “pure and simple,” or old style, Trade Union officers are ample evidence that the key to which these gentlemen attune themselves, even in their economic conduct, is held in the hands of their employers, the capitalists. The conclusion that would follow upon the recognition of this fact; the bold, aggressive policy, that such conclusion would peremptorily dictate, causes many an otherwise good but weak man to seek explanations that may enable him to avoid the conclusion, and thereby escape the trouble of adopting the resultant policy. These good friends are “done dirt” by the *Locomotive Firemen’s Magazine* for last December. On its pages 506, 507 and 508, it publishes officially, editorially, statements that remove all occasion for inferences, and complacently assert the ugly naked fact.

In that issue of the *Magazine*, the Editor announces “a radical change of policy”: the organ of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen is henceforth to be “a conservative publication.” Why? Listen:

“At the recent convention of the Brotherhood, when the present Grand Master announced his intention of retiring from the position, without authority from the present Editor the latter’s name was mentioned by some for the position of chief executive of the Brotherhood. The best friends the present Editor had among the delegation said to this proposition: ‘His course in the *Magazine* has made it the best book published, but at the same time he has ANTAGONIZED RAILWAY OFFICIALS BY HIS COURSE; we don’t want a man whom the general managers would begin a war on just as soon as he is elected.’”

And on what lines did this Editor “antagonize” the fleecers of his fellow craftsmen? Did he antagonize them, perchance, by fooling with that wicked political line, or that “un-American” principle that Capital and Labor are irreconcilable enemies,—a line and a principle that no “true Trade Unionist” should touch, and

that only the “Union wrecking” New Trade Unionists take up? No! He “antagonized” the fleecers of his fellow-craftsmen by promoting exclusively the special economic interests which this Old Style Trade Unionism claims itself to be the special and only guardian of. Listen again:

“It has been said the present Editor has ‘sacrificed’ himself and his future interests to his ‘aggressiveness.’ It was said: ‘By your uncompromising support of the interests of locomotive firemen, and YOUR AGITATION FOR INCREASED WAGES FOR LOCOMOTIVE FIREMEN AT A PERIOD WHEN PROSPEROUS CONDITIONS AND INCREASED TONNAGE WOULD WARRANT SUCH INCREASE OF WAGES, you have incurred the displeasure of every railway official who has read the Magazine.’”

In view of all this, the Editor of the *Magazine* concludes that it is but just for him to quit “sacrificing himself” by any such headlong course of “aggressiveness,” as he was found guilty of; henceforth, presumably, he will groom himself for the chief executiveship by a “conservative” conduct.

Language does not convey thought plainer than the language officially quoted in the *Magazine* as having been held at the convention of locomotive firemen. The brigand crew of railroad princes that, not satisfied with holding down to a pittance the workingmen who produce all the wealth on which it riots in luxury, also rides rough-shod over the laws of the land and turns the railroad beds of the nation into a veritable charnel field for the railroaders,—that brigand crew controls the language of the organs of the Old Style Unions of its employees, it dominates the minds of their officers, it dictates their qualification!

The officers strained through the loins of the Old Style, or British, or “pure and simple” Trade Union are but sorry imitations of the spooks that issue from the medium’s cabinet at materializing seances. The theory of the performance is that the spook draws all his or her (its, for short,) “power” from the medium, supposed to be boxed in the cabinet. The spook, accordingly, can, only at its own peril, stray too far from the cabinet: it must always gravitate thither, keep in touch with the “power” within, take its cue from it. A spook that takes the bit in its own mouth is a dead spook,—not infrequently landing in prison, on the charge of “raising money under false pretences.”

Exactly so with the officials of that British abortion, Old Style Trade Unionism. The “power,” with them, is the Capitalist{;} they themselves are but the timid spooks, which he allows to float and gently pirouette forward. To him they must

look for inspiration, from him they must look for support; never may they stray off too far from his “vibrations,” and, if they do, they must speedily retrace their steps, as in the case in point, or—like the incautious spook of materializing seances, land in jail, as the **Hugh O’Donnells**, for the contradictory temerity of rebelling against the consequences of the very Capitalist System that they uphold, and in the mechanism of which “pure and simple” Unionism is but a wheel.

Let the poltroon cower before Pure and Simpledome; let the brainless idolater bow down before a superstition and Mumbo-Jumboic dogma. The man of physical, moral, and intellectual fibre spurns the attitude of either. The “pure and simple” organization of labor is a child of capitalist thought; it has become a pet of capitalist interests. All the facts throng to the bar demanding its destruction in the interest of the Working Class, and its substitution with the class-conscious Union,—the **Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance**.

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

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