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EDITORIAL

A FALSE STEP.

By DANIEL DE LEON

LOCAL BINGHAM CANYON of Utah, one of the few remaining fragments of the I.W.W., has issued a call for representatives of all bodies of organized labor west of the Mississippi to meet in a convention at Salt Lake City.

The circumstance that Local Bingham Canyon promptly shook from its feet the dust of the “I-am-a-bums” after the late I.W.W. convention is so much to its credit that one is almost tempted to look charitably at the call that it has issued, and abstain from criticism. At the same time, considering that the Local, although it became “independent,” had fibre enough not to be taken in by the above referred-to crew of the “I-am-a-bums,” alias Veiled Dynamiters, it probably is gifted with sufficient mental virility to listen to criticism, and, if it finds the same correct, not to reject sense on the ground that the Local “does not propose to be run by the S.L.P.”

Industrial Unionism—the principle of the Local—is born of the knowledge that no specific craft can go it alone. It is born of the knowledge that all crafts are interdependent, closely interdependent, as interdependent as the several joints of the human body. Socialism teaches that the day was when an artisan could say: “I produced this shoe,” or any other commodity; but that that day has passed. Not a shoe is produced in the land to-day, or bushel of potatoes, or ounce of gold, or watch, etc., etc., that is not the product of the joint useful efforts of the whole land, from Maine to California and criss-cross across the country. So likewise, and by parity of reasoning with the crafts. None are autonomous: all hang and must stand, or fall, together. The offspring of this knowledge being Industrial Unionism, a call for all bodies of organized labor “west of the Mississippi” to unite in an industrial body is a contradiction in terms.

A table is round or it is not; a barrel does not consist of staves, or head and bottom, or hoops only—all of these are needed to make up the barrel. A man, split in

half, ceases to be a man. Whatever that which may gather at Salt Lake City, in response to the call of Local Bingham Canyon, may be or become, Industrial Unionism it can not be—the call itself and the sectional spirit that dictated it stamps it anti-Industrialist.

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

Uploaded by Donna Bills, October 2010

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