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EDITORIAL

THE CIVIC FEDERATION ON TOP.

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INDIANAPOLIS despatches have been foreshadowing the “solidification” of the United Mine Workers of America with the Western Federation of Miners, and the incorporation of the “solidified” body with the American Federation of Labor. The latest despatches announce the appointment of a joint committee of the two miners’ organizations to perfect the “solidification,” and the incorporation with the A.F. of L., and justly announce that the appointment of the said committee leaves no doubt of both consummations.

The announcement is being acclaimed from two opposite quarters as a wise move in behalf of Labor. There can be no doubt of the sincerity, but all the doubt in the world of the wisdom, of one set of acclaimers—the uninformed working masses; there can be no doubt of the wisdom, but all the doubt in the world of the sincerity, of another set of acclaimers—the Top Capitalist.

Fact is the alleged “solidification” spells increased fracture of the limbs of Labor’s body; the “incorporation” with the A.F. of L. spells increased subjection of Labor to the capitalist thumb. In short, the “solidification” “incorporation” spell: “The Civic Federation on top.”

He who knows anything with regard to the United Mine Workers of America knows a number of things:—he knows that, without the check-off system, a system under which the employer acts as Financial Secretary for the Union, the body could not be held together; he knows that one of the boasts of the Union’s officers is the large funds they have on deposit in banks, that is, in spots where capitalist masters can conveniently lay hands on them as loans with which to purchase improved machinery that displaces Labor in mines and elsewhere; he knows that the “contract” system, a system by which one Union can be tied down to work while its brothers are on strike, a system, in other words, that compels mutual scabbery of

Union upon Union, is one of the salient tenets upheld by the body's officers; he knows that, as a consequence of these and kindred tenets, one wing of the Union, the bituminous wing, scabbed it, had to scab it, in fact was made to believe that it gloriously upheld the Cause of Labor when it scabbed it upon the anthracite wing by remaining at work during the anthracite strike. In short, he who knows anything on the subject knows that the United Mine Workers of America is a type of exactly the opposite of Solidified Labor: it is a type of Ruptured Labor.—That much for the U.M.W. of A.

As to the Western Federation of Miners, it has generally enjoyed a reputation for class-instinct, if not for class-consciousness; some have called it revolutionary spirit. Indeed, it cannot be denied that more than one of its constituent bodies deserved the praise. If we look no further, if there were nothing else to look into, the question would come, "Which of the two bodies will leaven up the other; will the U.M.W. of A. drag down the W.F. of M., or will the W.F. of M. draw up the U.M.W. of A.?" Opinion might differ as to the upshot; but Hope might be justified, at least allowed to spread its wings. Unfortunately, there is more that demands looking into than the general reputation of the W.F. of M.

He who knows anything about the Western Federation of Miners also knows a number of things:—He knows that the W.F. of M. was the leading factor to convene the Chicago convention of 1905, which launched the Industrial Workers of the World, an economic organization, broad-based over the whole land, that, recognizing the historic mission of Unionism, called upon the working class to unite upon the political as well as the industrial field, on the political to preach, propagate, agitate for and organize the Social Revolution in the open, and on the economic field to "take and hold," or execute the revolutionary act; he knows that the very following year, the President whom the I.W.W. elected having been convicted not of financial corruption only, but of down-right reaction A.F. of L.-ward, Moyer, Mahoney, O'Neill and others, all of them leading officers of the W.F. of M., and now leading forces in the move to solidify with the U.M.W. of A., took, under various pretexts, a stand against the element which fought Shermanism, and with the aid of various and devious devices succeeded in withdrawing the W.F. of M. from the I.W.W., thus dealing the first open and heavy blow to that promising body. Nor is the knower of

all these things left at sea to understand these things. He knows other things, besides. He knows that at the first, the constituent convention of the I.W.W., the clause, subsequently inserted into the I.W.W. constitution and which limits membership to actual wage-earners, was kept out by Moyer and Sullivan. He knows that these two leading officers of the W.F. of M. candidly stated that such a clause would keep out many of them. These not being secret, but matters of common notoriety, they throw light back upon the U.M.W. of A., reminding the watcher of events that, of the long line of presidents of the U.M.W. of A., few if any have not been themselves owners of mining property, thereby exploiters of Labor on a smaller scale.

A consideration of all these facts together throws light upon the proposed consolidation and incorporation.

The struggles of old between the mine owners, on the one hand, the U.M.W. of A. on the other hand, have not been struggles between capitalist class and working class. They have been mainly struggles between the Top-Capitalist and the officers of the Union; in other words, they have been struggles between large holders of property and the small holders who man the Union. The officers of the Union have fought the employer not as proletarians but as middle class men. Of course, these officers frequently used violent language. Violence of phrases is a feature of the small bourgeois. Did not Gov. Wade of Colorado threaten to ride in blood up to the stirrups of his horse if silver was not "given its rights"? The "disturbed condition of the Labor market" was due, not so much to proletarian interests, as it was due to the small bourgeois interests of the officers. Periodically the class interests of the rank and file would break through the crust of bourgeois notions, which filtered down to them through their officers. This aggravated the situation. To remedy this state of things the National Civic Federation was intended. The "closer relations," established between the officers (small bourgeois generally) and the Top-Capitalist brought the Unions "to order." The bridge over which "peace" came was the small bourgeois Union officer.

Can the "solidification" of the miners be accomplished by a fusion with the Labor ruptured U.M.W. of A.? Obviously, if the answer could at all be in doubt, the fact that the "consolidation" is not to take the U.M.W. of A. from under the yoke of

Gompers, the first Vice-President of the National Civic Federation, but is to place the neck of the W.F. of M. into that yoke removes all doubt.

No wonder the Top-Capitalist press acclaims the “solidification” and “incorporation”—they are wise.

The analysis here made may not be popular. It may be unpopular even among some of the rank and file of the miners. That matters not. We are ready to be told that we try to “dominate.” Every sane man is dominated—if he is not dominated by facts to his interests, he is dominated by facts against his interests. This we know—whether at first popular or not, the word of Socialism can not reach the rank and file by a policy of “howling with the wolves.” To the rank and file, miners and otherwise, the warning is issued that the Civic Federation has come out on top in Indianapolis.

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