

EDITORIAL

THE INDIANAPOLIS DYNAMITE CASES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

SIMILARLY with the defeat of Berger to Congress, the conviction of thirty-eight A.F. of L. labor leaders—many of them, and among these Ryan and Tveitmoe leading, intimate associates of Gompers—as dynamiters, is a blow at the Labor Movement.

Berger—having, however mistakenly, been popularly considered as the representative of Socialism—his defeat could not choose but be popularly interpreted as a set-back to Socialism.

Gompers's A.F. of L.—being, however mistakenly, popularly considered to represent Unionism—the conviction of thirty-eight of its affiliated officials, several of them prominently so, of adherence to and practice of a theory of propaganda and aggression that Civilization condemns, can, in turn, not choose but be popularly interpreted as a set-back to Unionism.

Berger's defeat was, accordingly no cause for jubilation in the camp of SOCIALISM: on the contrary. Similarly, the conviction of the A.F. of L. dynamiters is no cause for jubilation in the camp of UNIONISM: on the contrary.

But all is not told when that is told.

The scientist looks not, at least not at present for the reason of Nature's laws. He knows that if that reason ever will be ascertained, to seek to ascertain now is an utterly barren waste of time. What the scientist does is to ascertain the laws themselves. As in Natural, so in Social Philosophy.

Social Philosophy has ascertained the Social Law that a Ruling Class is a valuable collaborator in the digging of its own grave, and in the training and enlightening of its own undertakers. In the fulfilling of this mission much happens that, for the moment, is a set-back, yet in the end is aidful to the Movement of the Ruled. Indeed, it may be doubted whether any act of the Rulers, however anti-progressive its purpose may be, is not, in fact, aidful to progress, altho', for the time being, the act

may place a severer strain upon the militant “undertakers.” It was so in the instance of Berger’s defeat, as explained at the time in these columns. It is also so in the instance of the Indianapolis convictions.

No sane man rejects “physical force” sweepingly. Marx well designated physical force as the “midwife of revolutions.” But there is “physical force” and “physical force.” The physical force that revolutions demand is not the random blow dealt by rage, by ignorance, or by temperament; it is just the opposite. The physical force that Revolutions demand is the deliberate act of class consciousness. This has education for its prerequisite, and mass for the arm that deals the blow. Any other indulgence in physical force from the camp of a Ruled, hence, of a revolutionary class, is an act that denies its own premises. Such were the acts of the Indianapolis dynamiters.

Unionism proceeds from the principle of Working Class solidarity. Its goal is the overthrow of the Capitalist System. The Indianapolis dynamiters proceeded from different premises, and aimed at a different goal. As craft Unionists, which really means anti-Unionists, the Indianapolis dynamiters war against other branches of their own class; as conspirators against individual capitalists, the Indianapolis dynamiters fire “wild.” Not men, but systems are the foes; and when men must be assaulted it is as the upholders of a system, not as its private beneficiaries. Physical force, as the midwife of revolutions, is a final, a culminating act, the final consequence of previous education and organization, the culmination of mass endeavor;—and that mass endeavor treads the open path of Political Action, the only one on which the Revolution can be organized in the open, because it is the only one on which it can be openly preached.

The Indianapolis dynamiters struck another path. The machinery of bourgeois law has, however unconsciously, ground out, and in a myriad of headlines the bourgeois press proclaims, however unwittingly, the verdict of the Genius of Revolution:

“Retrace your steps, ye who would overthrow capitalism, and impatiently seek for short cuts and by-paths. There is no short cut, there are no by-paths available. There is but one route. It is the broad and sunlit avenue cut and paved by the bourgeois himself, for the politically united and industrially organized proletariat.”

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