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EDITORIAL

AS TO TRAUTMANN'S REPLY.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ROBERT MACKENZIE,
Editor *Industrial Union News*,
Detroit, Mich.

Comrade—

This letter should have been forwarded to you in manuscript with the request for publication in the *Industrial Union News* which you are so ably managing. The circumstance of the *Industrial Union News* being a monthly paper determined me to address you through the columns of the *Daily People*. The subject of this letter should be dealt with on the spot.

I find in Trautmann's reply, made to the open letter which you addressed to him, and published in this month's *Industrial Union News*, a passage that historic accuracy compels me to take immediate exception to. It is this:

“The preamble [I.W.W. preamble adopted in 1905] was solely the creation of one man, and framed long before the convention took place, by Thomas J. Haggerty. Only two small sentences were inserted: ‘without affiliation with any political party’ by Daniel De Leon two days before the convention, and ‘in all industries if necessary,’ at the instigation of Haywood at a friendly talk in Bismark Garden at which Boris Reinstein was present.”

Whether the preamble was the creation of one man, to wit, Thomas J. Haggerty and was framed long before the convention met, I do not know. The statement may be true, for all I know, or care. It is also, and certainly, true that the passage “in all industries if necessary” was inserted at the suggestion of Haywood made on the occasion that Trautmann mentions, after the convention held several sessions. The statement, however, that the passage in the preamble “without affiliation with any political party” was inserted by me “two days before the convention” is seriously defective. The statement is defective in the important respect of time; and it is defec-

tive in the important respect of the insertion having been preceded by an other insertion proposed and insisted upon by me, and mention of which Trautmann has forgotten to make.

The Committee on Preamble was composed of a representative from each of the several groups in the Convention. The original representative of the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance on the Committee was Thomas Powers of Providence, R.I. Two days after the convention had convened, and after the Committee had held several sessions, Powers informed me that he felt indisposed and would withdraw; and he also notified me that "the Anarchists and pure and simplers were running things with a high hand." Knight, the representative of another group on the Committee, corroborated Powers' opinion. The next day, the Convention being in session, the withdrawal of Powers was announced by the S.T. and L.A. delegation, and at the request of the delegation, I was appointed his substitute.

The first time that I saw the draft of the proposed Preamble was when I joined the Committee. The first thing that struck me about the Preamble was the conspicuousness by its absence of any evidence that the important role of political action was understood, or at all taken cognizance of. The instant I uttered myself in this sense the discussion broke loose.

The discussion that ensued was three-cornered. It was conducted by Haggerty who spoke AGAINST political action; by one Sullivan, connected with the W.F. of M, who spoke for the NON-political element; and myself, who upheld the principle of political AND economic action. Moyer said little; he merely growled at me.

I may sum up the discussion with this passage, which I here transcribe from my diary, entered that same night in my room at the Briggs House:

"What on earth is that Sullivan doing at this convention? What brought him here? The man has the stubbornness of the petrified pure and simple craft-Unionist, and the shallow insolence of the pure and simple craft-Union fakir. He thought he disposed of my arguments with: 'That's a difference of opinion.' When I retorted: 'Yes; it IS a "difference of opinion"; so is the principle, "Labor is the sole producer of wealth; the capitalist class is a sponge" a "difference of opinion,"' he looked humorously bovine and disconcerted. The passage which I held up to him in the Manifesto, mentioning the disrupted state of the workers on the political field as one of the evils of craft and pure and simple Unionism, was something teetotally new to the worthy. When, in answer to some bullying remark that he addressed to me, I told him the convention had assembled under the promise made by

the Manifesto, and if he should feel free to break the promise, the S.T. and L.A. delegation would feel equally free to withdraw, he looked like a bully who had been 'called down.'"

The upshot of the tussle was that I obtained the insertion of the words "on the political, as well as" in the sentence which originally read:

"Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the industrial field," etc.; so that that sentence was made to read:

"Between these two classes a struggle must go on until all the toilers come together on the political, as well as on the industrial field," etc., etc.

Immediately upon the adoption of my insertion, the discussion seemed to flare up anew. I perceived that my position was misunderstood; being misunderstood it was suspected of being a scheme to "run the new organization in the interest of the S.L.P." I availed myself of the opportunity to sketch the Socialist posture on Unionism. I quoted the Marxian principle that only the Union, that is the bona fide Union, could set on foot the real political party of Labor; that, hence, no true political party of Socialism could expect, or want, to run the class conscious economic organization; that the exigencies of the situation, which required political action to fight the Political State, thereby decreed the necessity of the political organization wherewith to conduct a fight, the field of battle of which was, necessarily territorial, while the field of economic battle was necessarily industrial. And it was then, as a consequence of the adoption of my first insertion, and in order to underscore the political posture of the S.T. and L.A., that I moved the insertion which Trautmann correctly, tho' disconnectedly, attributes to me—"without affiliation with any political party."

Several other incorrect allegations of fact and conclusions appear in Trautmann's reply, but they are either of little importance, or are rectified by the correct presentation of the part I took in the framing of the Preamble of the I.W.W.

Fraternally,

DANIEL DE LEON.

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