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EDITORIAL

THREE BULL'S-EYES.

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THREE distinct bull's-eyes were hit at the fourth session of the S.L.P. and S.P. conference of New Jersey, the minutes of which are published elsewhere in this issue.¹

The subject for discussion was the ownership of the press. The conference placed itself successively on record as “looking upon all papers as privately owned, the property of which is not vested directly in the party”; as “being opposed to all privately owned papers espousing the Cause of Labor”; and, last not least, as “recognizing that the Socialist Movement cannot control a privately owned press,” seeing that “the privately owned Socialist papers can not be controlled by the true proletarian political movement, but that, contrarily, such privately owned papers tend to control the Movement.” The last of these three bull's-eyes, which combined a motion from an S.P. and an amendment from an S.L.P. representative, was the result and culmination of a dramatic scene, in which the mutilated, falsified and, in some instances, even forged publications of the minutes of the conference by the *Volkszeitung* and *The Worker* having been proved, an S.L.P. member of the conference rose in his seat, and holding up the lying sheets, pronounced them guilty of attempting to deceive and thereby to injure the Working Class, while another, an S.P. member of the conference added fuel to the fire of indignation, and threw additional light upon the viciousness of private ownership, by narrating his experience with some Jewish comrades, who, anxious though they were to be informed upon the proceedings of the conference, were in the dark thereon because, as they said themselves, their privately owned Jewish papers suppressed the report of the conference “as they considered it against them.”

¹ [To be uploaded separately at a later date.—R.B.]

Congressman Adamson of Georgia, referring, in the course of a debate, on the 30th of last month, to the power of the press, said:

“Newspaper men are smart and witty, if not always prophetic. Sometimes they are right, always powerful, perhaps more powerful than any class, element, or agency in this country, not even excepting the twelve or fourteen billion dollars and several hundred thousand smart men engaged in resisting the enactment and enforcement of laws to protect the people against the exactions and discriminations of common carriers. Newspaper men can doom to success or failure any measure. They can doom to glory or to shame any man or woman. At the behest of their ubiquitous activity and power millionaires, Senators, Cabinet ministers rise or fall, and even mighty Presidents tremble or triumph according to the attitude of the press.”

It is true. The press is a weapon more potent than machine and dynamite guns. The Revolutionary Movement of Labor—compelled, as no other revolutionary Movement ever was compelled before, to form its lines in the open, under the very fire of the foe—would be simply childishly thoughtless if it allowed that potent weapon to be vested in private hands, exposed at any time to be operated as private interests, whim or malevolence may dictate; and it would be criminally negligent to nurse such a privately owned weapon into power, as into power it would inevitably be nursed in the measure that the Movement threatened the powers that be. Unerring was the instinct of the craft-Union-owned Volkszeitung Corporation in its desperate onslaught to capture, and, seeing it could not capture, to shatter the press of the Socialist Labor Party; unerring was the instinct of the S.L.P. that inspired it to the triumphantly heroic stand that saved its press. So important was this, the “Press Issue,” that it is hard to tell which was the suprema—the Question of Unionism or the Question of the Press-Ownership.

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