

EDITORIAL

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC POLITICAL MACHINE AND THE A.F. OF L.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A NEW YORK correspondent writes to say:—

“Do you think it is the fair thing for you to charge the A.F. of L. with being ‘Roman Catholic Political Machinized’ just because the Roman Church has started the ‘Militia of Christ’ in one locality, in Schenectady? I know the Roman Church is a political machine. I find no fault with anything that you say about that. And I am not a blind partisan of the A.F. of L. But I would not say it is Roman Catholic Political Machinized.”

We do believe our correspondent is not a “blind partisan”; but from the facts in the case we conclude he is sufficient of an A.F. of L. partisan to expose him to lose his balance, the moment he hears a charge made against that body, instead of calmly inquiring into the facts. Had he done so he would not say that the *Daily People* charges the A.F. of L. with being Roman-Catholic-Political-Machinized “just because the Roman Church has started the Militia of Christ in one locality.” Our correspondent should have inquired further, and then he would have saved himself the mortification of making a statement that he can not substantiate.

Indeed, it would be unfair to charge the A.F. of L. with being Roman-Catholic-Political-Machinized just because in one locality, Schenectady, the A.F. of L. was being dominated by the “Militia of Christ.” The facts are otherwise.

Not to take up other instances than the “Militia of Christ,” no further back than last month the special reporter for the *Daily People* to the St. Louis convention of the A.F. of L. reported in these columns the admission to the convention of the Rev. Peter E. Dietz as the representative of the “American Federation of Catholic Societies.” Nor was the statement incorrect. On page 10 of the report issued by the

A.F. of L. convention itself, and containing the proceedings of the first day, morning session, the fact is officially entered. And who is the Rev. Peter E. Dietz? The gentleman is the national secretary of the “Militia of Christ,” and acts as a sort of field commander.

The national convention of a body is not a “locality” affair. What a national convention does, especially if the deed is done unanimously, is the act of the whole body. The unanimous act on the part of the A.F. of L. convention—not even its Socialist party members, Berger, the S.P. Congressman; Barnes, the S.P. National Secretary; Max Hayes, the S.P. National Bruiser; included, raising the slightest objection—of seating in its body the field commander of the “Militia of Christ,” the latest political engine of what our correspondent admits is a political machine,—that is a national affair that colors the whole A.F. of L.

When a body that claims to be of Labor, and refuses, as the A.F. of L. did at its Detroit convention, to seat the delegate of the New York Central Labor Federation on the sole ground that one of the constituents of the New York body was the Socialist Labor Party, and that the A.F. of L. allows neither religion nor politics in the Union,—when such a body turns around, seats, as a delegate, a representative of the Roman Catholic Political Machine, and does so unanimously, the conclusion is justified that the body is Roman-Catholic-Political-Machinized. Nor is this the only evidence.

Which is why we said so, and our language is plain.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded December 2011

slpns@slp.org