

THE AGITATOR

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Articles for publication should be written LEGIBLY on one side of the paper only.

THE AGITATOR does not bear the union stamp because it is not printed for profit. But it is union, every letter of it. It is printed and published by unionists and their friends for the economic and political education of themselves and their fellow toilers. Much of the labor is given free. On the whole it is a work of love—the love of the idea, of a world fit for the free.

An ambassador is a man who goes abroad to lie for the good of his country. A journalist is a man who stays at home to follow the same vocation. Johnson.

REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

VI

Autonomy of Militant Minorities.

The organized militant minorities in the various unions would each have to have full autonomy. They would have to be held together and to united action by common interests, not by empty constitutional provisions or an autocratic G. E. B. a la I. W. W. The necessity for this autonomy is evident.

Each of the many conservative unions, A. F. of L. and independent, would present a different problem. Some would require one kind of tactics, others different ones. The most competent body to decide on the tactics to be employed in a given union would be the militant minority actively participating in the affairs of that union. It therefore should decide in all cases. If, for instance, a union had to be replaced by a new one, its militant minority alone could be depended on to decide when and how to seize the necessary live issue at the psychological moment and launch this new union. The limiting of this autonomy by the centralization of the policies of the various militant minorities into a set program—as the I. W. W. with its centralized dual organization program—has stripped its militants in the various industries of their autonomy in the important matter of dual organization tactics, and is forcing them to use these tactics willy nilly, regardless of conditions in their industries, would result in arbitrary tactics and disaster. The various organized minorities would have to be free to solve their various problems.

Organizing the Unskilled.

Many rebels believe it to be a special function of the I. W. W. to organize the unskilled, now being neglected by the A. F. of L.; and that to change it into a propaganda league would be to deprive these unskilled workers of their organization.

This is a groundless fear. If the I. W. W. were solely a propaganda organization, unskilled workers could organize as well or even easier than now. Militants among unskilled workers would—with the help, if need be, of the national propaganda organizations' funds, literature, organizers, etc.—organize unions of their fellow workers. The question of affiliation would be a vital one to such unions and they would have to be free to decide it as their interests dictated. In this respect also I. W. W. unions are stripped of their autonomy and their policy centralized. They must pay per capita tax into the I. W. W. even tho to do so amounts to suicide.

Many a union—not a few of them I. W. W. unions—have been crushed for refusing to pay dues or per capita tax into the A. F. of L.; others, as for instance the Shingle Weavers, purchase immunity from A. F. of L. scabbery by paying in their per capita taxes. Therefore the unions of unskilled workers would have to be in a position to decide which of the two courses—Independence or war with the A. F. of L. (which organization would certainly demand their per capita taxes), or affiliation with the A. F. of L. and peace with it—would be most compatible with their interests; and to affiliate or remain independent accordingly. Such

unions in organizing wouldn't have to face the strong A. F. of L. opposition they do now.

Conclusion.

By quitting our ridiculous dual organization program and concentrating our efforts on our propaganda program along the lines sketched above, in addition to securing innumerable advantages, we would abolish the four causes I have cited as being chiefly responsible for the failure of our movement to date: First, Each of the many conservative unions would be treated according to its needs instead of all being condemned wholesale as at present. Our disastrous I. W. W. patriotism would disappear. Second, As we wouldn't be a labor union we couldn't be scabbed out of existence. We wouldn't waste our scanty strength in disastrous jurisdictional fights as now. Third, Our propaganda wouldn't be cursed and negated by the stigma of disruption as at present. Fourth, The powerful militant minorities in the various unions now so generally disorganized would be thoroughly organized and exploited. It is true we would acquire new difficulties, but these would be as nothing compared to those we would abolish, and the advantages we would gain—many of which haven't been even touched in these articles.

Our task would be a difficult one, but by no means impossible. Look at the revolution now being caused in the English labor movement (called "impossible" by Debs) by a handful of Syndicalists using "boring from within" tactics. The corrupt and conservative machines now controlling the American labor movement seems strong only because they have no opposition and because it has been part of our stock in trade to consider them invulnerable—the revolt in the I. T. U. is proof of this. Confront these machines with a thoroughly organized rebel machine and they would melt away and their conservative doctrines with them.

We rebels must learn tactics from the despised printers and build a machine as they are doing, but on a larger scale, one designed to take control of the whole American labor movement. Every day we delay makes our task the more difficult, for while we are patriotically quarantining ourselves from the labor movement, the Socialists are busy "boring from within" and taking charge of it. Their well organized machines will be immeasurably harder for us to vanquish than the present decrepit ones. And capture the conservative labor movement we must sooner or later if we are going to have a rebel movement in the United States. As it will never voluntarily come to us, nor is it showing any signs of breaking up. The sooner we throw aside our present idiotic tactics and adopt sane ones the better it will be for us and the labor movement in general.

WM. Z. FOSTER.

SUMMARY OF FORMER ARTICLES

In the other articles Fellow Worker Foster pointed out the basic error made by the originators of the I. W. W., when they duplicated on the economic field what had been done on the political field. On the political field there was no party that even pretended to represent the toilers. So the growth of the S. P. was easy. But on the economic field the A. F. of L. and kindred organizations, while in no sense revolutionary, still they were of the toilers and largely represented their ideas and their efforts to defend themselves from the inraids of capitalism.

It was these organizations, covering every line of industry that the I. W. W. had to contend with, when it entered the economic field to organize the workers. And that the I. W. W. met with resentment and opposition from the old unions is shown by the fact that after six years of effort the I. W. W. is numerically smaller than when it was started.

The old unions regard the I. W. W. as an interloper, an attempt to divide their ranks, to split them up and to cause bitterness and strife where their experience have shown them that only thru close unity and oneness of action can they ever hope to succeed.

As a consequence of this bitter feeling of rivalry the old unionists refuse to listen to the I. W. W.'s real message—that of Industrialism.

Industrialism, the crying need of the hour, and to teach which the I. W. W. was joyously hailed by the Revolutionary element everywhere, failed to reach the ears of the toilers because the I. W. W. presented itself as a labor organization, besides being a propagandist organization.

The I. W. W. then, has a double program, and it is in this double program that Foster see the cause of its failure to reach the masses of union men with propaganda.

Why this dual program? Why organize men who are already organized?

The French syndicalists did not organize unions except where no unions existed. They carried their propaganda into the old unions, rejuvenated and inspired them fired them with the revolutionary spirit; published papers and pamphlets to educate them; routed the politicians and fakers and made the unions of France by far the most potent factors in the labor world today.

Why cannot the I. W. W. do for the American labor movement what the syndicalists did, and are doing, for the French?

The French have shown that the form of organization makes little difference if the membership has the Revolutionary spirit. Why shud not the I. W. W. cease as a labor organization and concentrate all its efforts in the field of propaganda?

Foster gives numerous arguments in favor of this suggestion and an outline of how the I. W. W. could continue as an integral organization for purely propaganda purposes, after showing by various examples and arguments that it cannot succeed on its present line of action.

He shows that the A. F. of L. will not let a rival organization grow, that it feels justified in crushing such an organization whenever it begins to attain strength, by scabbing on it and other means well known to the crafts. He shows the membership of the I. W. W. by entering the old unions and in conjunction with the radical element already there, would form a powerful militant minority that would revolutionize these organizations.

If we follow his arguments closely and weigh carefully the evidence he introduces we will not only be convinced that this is the best way to propogate Industrialism, but that it is the only way the I. W. W. will ever become potent force in the labor world.

If the reader wishes to pursue these articles in detail, enclose 25c. for the future series. J. F.

THE YELP AND THE SNARL

From before the Beginning of Things, conceived in the womb of Time, inherent in inorganic matter and in its vitalization; thru the æons of transpired phenomena; across the ages of Fear and interwoven in all History have the Yelp and the Snarl prevailed. In the straining of cosmic gases were they uttered, and they are uttered by the latest of organic phenomena, Man.

The history of evolution is the history of the weak and nonresistant Yelp and of the rampant, aggressive Snarl.

Not always has it been the "under dog", so to speak, that uttered the Yelp, not always the dominant element that voiced the Snarl. But ever was the Snarl evidence of inherent, if latent, strength. Inevitable, they who snarled were SOON TO BE the powerful. And as inevitably has the Yelp betokened the coming fall.

To day, as always, the Yelp and the Snarl symbolize the inefficient and the strong. What is the wailing of moralists, the bemoaning of the sentimental but the subservient Yelp of weakness! And the maudlin justifiers, they who seek to harmonize their misery with the "right"—what is their note but the Yelp of submission.

They who are opprest by "law" and cry for more "law"; he who is a victim of "virtue" yet craves more "virtue"; one who is enslaved by "honesty" and prays for still greater "honesty", what are they but voices uttering the Yelp!

But, there ARE those who Snarl, whose lives are one perpetual Snarl of Rebellion. Virtue, Duty, Honesty, Morality, these words have no place in their life-vocabulary "Away with your duty, your virtue," they cry, "by them we have been enslaved thruout the ages. Out upon your honesty, that is not for such as we. We will have none of your morality, under cloak of which we are deprived of our "Right" to life. Your "goodness" is everything that we call vicious and vile. Your "virtue" the virtue of villians. Your "morality" is the morality of the maudlin. Your "duty" is the duty of debasement. Your "right" is the right to rob. Away with it, away with it all."

But they who snarl have not lessened or weakened their vocabulary by ridding it of rubbish. They have merely made room for a newer and truer system of expression. In the place of "right" they have installed "might"; "duty" gives way to "self-interest"; in their mouths, "law" becomes "power to oppress". "Morality," only God and the folk that created him know the meaning of the term, and as the snarlers know not its meaning, they know no substitute for a meaningless phrase.

The Yelpers are fat; if not fat of body, they are fat of head. And as they are fat, so are they unclean. They