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EDITORIAL

THE SEIDENBERG SPECTRE.

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THE *American Labor Union Journal*, organ of the American Labor Union, published in Butte, Mont., has under date of the 5th inst. the following signed report bearing the initials "M.G.O'M.":

"When Messrs. Thomas J. Kidd, James Duncan and John B. Lennon of the A.F. of L., were in Butte some time since they carefully concealed their opposition to Socialism, and Mr. Lennon in particular, declared that the A.F. of L. was not opposed to mixed political action on the part of the masses. When questioned regarding the politics clause in the A.F. of L. constitution, he answered that it only applied to partisan politics. On being challenged to name a single political principle that did not become partisan the moment it was adopted by a division of the workers, he changed the conversation by declaring that he had been a Socialist for seventeen years, but that the working people of the East were so densely ignorant that it was impossible to do anything with them. This was his excuse for his pure and simple attitude, and he was supported in this by Thos. I. Kidd. With much glee they told of the ignorant foreigners who started a small-sized riot on hearing that McKinley had been shot. They had never heard of any president other than Mitchell, and jumped at the conclusion that it was he who had been killed. James Duncan on being hard pressed in an economic controversy, turned tail and fled, while the crowd shouted after him: 'So that is the A.F. of L. answer to argument.' The impression gained from these men was not of an encouraging nature. Their words and actions seemed to say in most unmistakable terms: The labor conditions of the East are frightful; through my official position in the A.F. of L. I have managed to rise above these conditions, and I am determined to stay on top. If the workers of the East demanded Socialism I would be a Socialist, but they are too ignorant to demand anything for themselves, and I am not taking any chances on my position through trying to lead them. Contempt for the workers and fear of want seemed {to be} the predominating notes in their personal utterances. These men will shape the destinies of the A.F. of L. at their next convention. Workers, how do you like them?"

It was in March, 1898, that the Seidenberg Spectre started on its career. As

then foretold, the Spectre would grow in size and power as it stalked across the land, until the day would come when, having hounded the fakir brigade pets of the Volkszeitung Corporation from one extreme of the land to the other, it would chase them to their deserved perdition. As the above passage from the *American Labor Union Journal* attests, the Spectre is at work, the fakirs on the run.

It was in March, 1898. The Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance had been launched by the Socialist Labor Party. The move was a challenge to the impure elements, that clustered around the Volkszeitung Corporation, to fall in line with honest tactics, or come out into the open. Quoting a favorite citation of Marx, it was a case of "Hic Rhodus, hic salta." The move was successful.

Thitherto, the impure element of the Volkszeitung Corporation, while ever attesting their devotion of long standing to Socialism, regularly stood in the way. It did not object to abstract Socialist propaganda. Like rough words, that broke no bones. But practical enforcement of the class struggle required an energy that they lacked; moreover it affected the business of the Corporation. This was especially the case in Trades Union Matters, the Corporation receiving large subventions from the fakirs. The launching of the S.T. & L.A., forced the hand of these gentlemen. The fight started. Of course it started with their cigarmakers contingent. The S.T. & L.A. having organized an Alliance Local of unorganized cigarmakers, the whole fakirs' brigade threw itself upon that. The fight was in the Seidenberg shop. A trumped up strike was ordered on the shop, and it was "settled," as subsequently proved, under lower wages and worse conditions for the men, but with the S.T. & L.A. Local thrown out.

From that day the Seidenberg Spectre started to stalk across the land. The "victory" of the fakirs was a Pyrrhic victory. The actual, because the moral victory remained with the S.L.P. and the S.T. & L.A. Driven to insane lengths in their efforts to annihilate the S.L.P., the pets of the Volkszeitung Corporation dug their own graves at every turn.

It is now barely five years ago. Never could the "victors" at Seidenberg have imagined that the cause they thought to have stamped out on that battle field would survive, least of all spread so swiftly as to confront and confound them almost at the other end of the land. The S.L.P. and the S.T. & L.A. stand unshaken. Their

teachings have spread. And the Seidenberg Spectre now is tearing in Montana from the fakirs' face the masks under which they have been floating, and throwing business into the Volkszeitung Corporation coffers here in the east. The description given above by M.G.O'M. of Lennon, Kidd and Duncan, their dodgings and their aspirations, is not only a picture well known here in the east, but reproduces scenes quite frequent here.

The Seidenberg Spectre, once affected to be ridiculed and even caricatured by the Volkszeitung Corporation brigade of labor fakirs and betrayers of the working class, is beginning to make them laugh at the wrong side of their mouths—and we are only at the beginning of the end.

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