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EDITORIAL

## MORE SCIENCE IN CAPS AND BELLS.

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**A**N epidemic of “scientists,” “philosophers” and “historians” seems to have broken out in New Jersey. It is breaking out over the Socialist party like the rash over a baby. A short time ago we had Lewelling; now we have Oswald—and the English organ of the Volkszeitung Corporation, *The Worker*, is driven to such straits for copy and argument that it has the cruelty to afford the gentleman more than two columns’ space in which to expose himself, and the heedlessness to render Socialist thought ridiculous by the publication of such twaddle.

Mr. Walter L. Oswald dashes into the arena against the resolutions adopted by the New Jersey Unity Conference. He has no use for any of them. They are “unscientific,” they are “unphilosophic,” they are “unhistorical.” Even the “shades of Aristotle” are invoked to give testimony against them. To this perambulating compound of “science,” “philosophy,” “history,” the most objectionable of all the principles laid down by the Unity Conference is the principle that, “without a properly constructed economic organization, ready to take and hold and conduct the productive powers of the land, and thereby ready and able to enforce, if need be and when need be, the fiat of the Socialist ballot of the working class, the Socialist political movement will be but a flash in the pan.” It will not do to merely summarize, or “report,” the critic’s argument against the principle. We would be exposed to the charge of caricaturing, by garbling, the argument. It would not be believed possible that such balderdash could really be palmed off as “philosophy, science and history”; the doubt as to the correctness of the summary would materially interfere with the only object one can have in tackling such “arguments”—to teach Socialism and history by contrast. We therefore shall reproduce the passage in full, paragraph by paragraph. The first paragraph reads:

## I.

Was there a “properly constituted” organization when feudalism emerged from slavery, or capitalism from feudalism? If so, under what name were they organized and under what date? These are interesting questions and our fusionist friends will be adding to the sum total of historical knowledge by giving the information.

When Socialism says “capitalism emerged from feudalism” it means the emancipation of a previously subject class (the bourgeois) from the domination of a previously ruling class (the feudal lord). When Socialism says “capitalism succeeded feudalism” it means that a previous dominant social system (feudalism) was supplanted by another social system (capitalism). The expression “one system emerges from another” implies necessarily the overthrow of a previous system, together with its carriers, by another system, together with its carriers. Thus the Socialist says that “Socialism will emerge from capitalism” meaning expressly that the social system of capitalism, together with its carriers, the capitalist class, will go down, thrown down by the Working Class, whose class triumph will set up the reign of Labor, or the Socialist Republic. Applying these indisputable historic, etc., facts to the clause with which Mr. Oswald introduces the above passage—“was there a ‘properly constituted’ organization when FEUDALISM EMERGED FROM SLAVERY”—it must follow, first, that before the social system of “feudalism,” there was a social system of “slavery”; secondly, that under the reign of the social system of “slavery” the future feudal lords were held as a subject class; thirdly, that the said subjects overthrew the social system of “slavery” which dominated them, and established a new social system, feudalism, with themselves as the ruling class. Either Mr. Oswald’s language means that, or it is a mere jumble of words. If he means that, he means balderdash—nonsense in either case. It is the merest balderdash to refer to a social system of “slavery” as the precursor of the social system of “feudalism”; it is triple balderdash to refer to the lords of triumphant feudalism as the subject class of its precursor, the social system of “slavery.”—Who were the ruling class, under the Oswaldian social system of “slavery,” whom the prospective feudal ruling class overthrew? Obviously the “scientist,” “philosopher” and professor of “history” has been slinging about a sentence that is not only

meaningless, not only absurd, but calculated to inspire awe for his bogus learning by confusing the readers.

With such a performance as prelude of that first part of the argument one is almost prepared for the second and closing portion of the paragraph quoted above.

The “fusionist friends”—the militant Socialists who are striving for Socialist Unity—would, indeed, be following the Oswaldian footsteps by “adding to the sum total of historical knowledge” some choice chunks of balderdash if they claim, or ever claimed, that there was a “properly constituted” organization ready to man the machinery of government when “capitalism emerged from feudalism.” There was none such; none was needed. It is a point upon which classic Socialist literature is emphatic that previous social revolutions were accomplished so soon as the subject class in the immediately preceding social system became equipped with the ECONOMIC POWER wherewith to enforce the revolution. It is a point, which the literature of the militant Socialists who are striving for Socialist Unity in America, has demonstrated exhaustively that, for the first time in the recorded history of class struggles, the Working Class, the revolutionary class called upon to overthrow the present class rule, is WHOLLY STRIPPED OF ECONOMIC POWER. The facts have been adduced, the point has been emphasized, that, whereas, the badge of former revolutionary classes was WEALTH, the badge of the Working Class is POVERTY. Finally, planted upon the principle that RIGHT without MIGHT to back it with is futile, the militant Socialists who strive for Unity in America have proved that, being deprived of the economic power which enabled previous class revolutions to enforce their demands, the proletariat must seek for the needed power elsewhere. Their numbers alone will not do it: the larger a mob, the weaker the lump and the more general the rout. Numbers, however, crystallized and drilled into organization, are omnipotent. The power, needed by the proletariat is the “properly constituted” economic organization. Without that all else is time wasted. Upon these two points—the difference between the bourgeois and the proletariat as a revolutionary class, and the consequent need of the “properly constituted” economic organization of Labor to safeguard the fiat of the Socialist ballot—upon these points is pivoted the Burning Question of Unionism, around these points the discussion has centered. If Mr. Oswald’s prelude was balderdash, this portion of his argument

betrays his utter lack of familiarity with the subject upon which he presumes to lecture the “fusionist friends.” To deny the need of “properly constituted” economic organization in order to insure the emerging of Socialism from capitalism, and to place such denial upon the fact that capitalism had no such organization in the days of its revolution, is at this late date, either unpardonable ignorance, or unpardonable presumption on the part of one who ventures to hold so untenable a position. In war, he who dares hold a position not militarily tenable receives no quarter: he is considered a reckless waster of human life. No quarter does he deserve who recklessly wastes the energies of the Labor Movement in such foolhardy warfare as the Oswalds.

The second and closing paragraph of Mr. Oswald’s argument is literally as follows:

## II.

But aside from history indicating the contrary, is there any reason to believe that industrial clubs are essential to transition from capitalism to Socialism? Remember that the workers will be organized in the factory anyway. They are already organized for purposes of production, some doing this, others that, and all working in harmonious relationship. How will the fact that they are also organized outside the factory for the purpose of forcing higher wages from the capitalists—a then passed issue—add to the smoothness with which we change ownership?

Although the balderdash of the clause, with which the first paragraph opened, somewhat prepared one for the jabber with which the paragraph closed, neither opening nor close, monumentally vicious though they are, can match this second paragraph. As thick as mosquitoes over a swamp do the downright stupidities hover of the above chunk of “philosophy,” “science” and “history.”

For one thing, Mr. Oswald does not know that the I.W.W. is not organizing “clubs” but “Unions”;

For another thing, he does not know that two Unions of the same trade, no more than two political parties for identical aims, can live together. One or the other has to go down in the end;

For a third thing he does not know that the I.W.W. is not organizing bodies on the “outside of the factories,” but on the INSIDE;

For a fourth, he seems to imagine that the I.W.W. “clubs” are a sort of handmaid to the Belmont-Gompers craft Unions;

For a fifth, he is blissfully ignorant, (or does he affect ignorance?) of the fact that the craft Unions in a factory are doing everything except “working in harmonious relationship” together. The deluge of facts proving the contrary has fallen upon him like dew-drops on a duck’s back. That molders remain at work when machinists are on strike; that machinists remain at work when packers strike; that motormen and conductors of the identical international Union remain at work, aye, carry the militia against their own fellow Union motormen and conductors when on strike; that only the other day a Belmontist pure and simple high dignitary of the International Typographical Union whined in print at the sight of the pressmen remaining at work when the compos recently struck in this city, and thereby broke the backbone of the printers’ strike—of all these facts, proving how “harmonious” the relationship is of the Craft Unions, the dapper New Jersey “scientist,” “philosopher” and “historical” critic has no inkling.

For a sixth and last thing, he does not know that what he takes for granted is the very bone of contention. The militant Socialists who are striving for Unity in America have heaped mountain-high the proofs that under Craft Unionism the Working Class is not organized, but that it is fatedly ruptured, hence impotent for deliverance. Honorable and intelligent criticism either disproves allegations of fact, or disproves the conclusion, drawn from them. Anyone with sense enough to rattle in a tobacco seed knows that the Working Class are not to-day organized, and never will be, or can be, under Craft Unionism for the simple reason that the gallon-measure of the Labor Movement can never be contained in the pint-measure of craftism.

Finally, Mr. Oswald seems to believe that he clinches his argument with an unsupported reference to the “despotic tactics of Daniel De Leon.” If, as actually happened, a national officer of Mr. Oswald’s own party writes to *The People* stating the place where, the time when, and the witnesses before whom the employe of the Volkszeitung Corporation, Algernon Lee, stated the Editor of *The People* was a Bismarck spy and asks for an answer, and the Editor of *The People* thereupon staves in the head of the stupid slander,—then he is an “intolerable tyrant.” If a

man denies that 2 plus 2 are 4 and maintains that they are 22, and you argue to show him that addition is not a serial, and that 2 plus 2 are not the same as two 2's one after the other—then you are “narrow and intolerant”; if you thereupon take two peas, place them before him, and take two other peas, and also place them before him, and compel him to admit that there are no 22 peas but just 4 under his nose—then your tactics are “despotic.”

Mr. Oswald's “argument” is typical of his species. Such is the caliber of the “history,” the “science” and the “philosophy,” such is the mental integrity of the element that opposes Socialist Unity in America.

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