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EDITORIAL

PARKER'S CLOVEN HOOF.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ON the 14th of this month, Harry Parker, of the Philadelphia branch of Gompers's Cigarmakers' Union, delivered at the Beer Emporium of the Socialist party in this city, called by the S.P. "Labor Temple," an address to the Leit-Motif of the "highly deplorable condition" in which the aforementioned Cigarmakers' Union finds itself.

Up to a point Mr. Parker's address was soundly S.L.P.—truthful in the statement of facts, correct in the conclusions drawn.

The speaker alluded to the fact that three-fourths of the cigarmakers were out of the Union; that the reverse of progress characterized his Union; that, while thousands were frequently organized during a strike, they dropped out of the organization immediately after the strike.

Nor did the speaker stop there. While, it is true, he slurred over the Tampa affair of 1901 in which the officers of his Union performed the ignoble task of officiating as Farley herders of strike-breakers against the Resistencia Union;—while, it is true, that in that particular he switched off from the direct forthright of S.L.P. propaganda, and thus failed to put his finger upon the Civic-Federationized and Militia-of-Christized policy of his Union's officials, to which his Union's "highly deplorable condition" is to be ascribed;—while all this is true, it is nevertheless true that he quickly switched back again to the correct S.L.P. tracks. The speaker pointed out the harmfulness of the craft system of organization; he admitted the fact that "the officers of the International Union, unfortunately, do not keep step with the general economic development"; and "above all" he recognized the necessity of lowering the dues.

So far so good. So far, Mr. Parker showed that the training he had received in

the Socialist Labor Party, before he bolted the Party to follow the fortunes of his fellow Philadelphia cigarmaker, the now overthrown “moral and incorruptible” J. Mahlon Barnes, into the Socialist party, was not wholly lost. But the effort must have been too severe a strain upon Mr. Parker, to be kept up indefinitely. Before he ended he betrayed the cloven hoof of his A.F. of L. anatomy. He condemned the action of the girls in the cigar factories who, instead of joining his Union, and paying dues to its sick and death benefit fund, formed organizations of themselves, into which they contribute their dues which they administer to their own ends. These organizations Mr. Parker satirized as “Marriage Organizations.”

Here we have the cloven hoof A.F. of Hellism brazenly exposed. Itself, it turns itself into a “Coffin Organization,” yet sneers at “Marriage Organizations.”

Far more legitimate, in the ranks of Labor, are “Marriage Organizations” than “Coffin Organizations.”

“Marriage Organizations” tell of Health triumphant; “Coffin Organizations” tell of triumphant Disease.

“Marriage Organizations” are buoyed up with the chimes of Joy; “Coffin Organizations” are weighted down with the dirge of Doleful Dumps.

“Marriage Organizations” thrill with Life; “Coffin Organizations” are palsied with Death.

“In Marriage Organizations” the emblem is Hope; in “Coffin Organizations” the emblem {is} of Despair.

The language in “Marriage Organizations” is that of present and future Virility; the language of “Coffin Organizations” is that of “graves, worms, epitaphs”—and “stiffs.”

Whatever side-show a Labor Organization may indulge in, or digress to, one side-show it can neither indulge in, nor digress to, but at its peril—the side-show of a “Coffin Organization.” The Labor Organization that does that reads itself away from the firing line, and back to the hospital in the rear. The Red Cross of the Ambulance has no place in a bona fide Union.

Coffin-Organization Harry Parker’s break was luminous. It discloses at once the impossibility of prolonged tight-rope dancing in Labor Philosophy;—it also dis-

closes the inevitableness of clownish capers on the part of speeches that are delivered in Beer Emporiums, and are used as pretzel to promote trade in the interest of mortgage-holding brewery firms.

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