

REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

II

In this article will be considered some of the chief causes of the failure of the I. W. W. dual organization program.

First. The universal and indiscriminate condemnation of non-I. W. W. labor unions as worthless and incapable of evolution.

The I. W. W. was organized, and still organizes, on the theory that all American non-I. W. W. labor unions, A. F. of L. and independent alike, are not labor unions at all nor even capable of becoming such. It is asserted that they are capitalist institutions and must be supplanted by a new and revolutionary organization—which the I. W. W. claims to be. Having been kindly given a monopoly on the labor movement by a bunch of theorists at the first I. W. W. convention—most of whom unquestionably didn't know even the names of half of the labor unions they were so sweepingly condemning,—the I. W. W. claims jurisdiction over the whole working class, and is organizing unions indiscriminately in all industries regardless of the existence of older unions in these industries.

It claims to be the whole labor movement. All other unions are interlopers and must disappear as rivals. The I. W. W., alone for some mysterious reasons, of all American unions, possessing the magic quality of being revolutionary.

What a wonderful and original theory, and how absurd and egotistic it is.

This wholesale condemnation of non-I. W. W. into the position of the sole and only possible labor union is the foundation theory upon which the whole I. W. W. dual organization program rests.

And it is a purely arbitrary one as even the slightest investigation shows. Its justification can be found in neither American nor foreign labor movements. On the contrary, it is being given the lie everywhere in labor movements, both here and abroad. In the United States many of the condemned non-I. W. W. unions are making progress—even tho we refuse to see it; and in the labor movements of foreign countries, notably England, one of the great facts being demonstrated is that the course of evolution of labor movements is gradually from the conservative to the revolutionary. Everywhere, where ready-made revolutionary labor organization, a la I. W. W., have been established (German, Sweden, England, etc.) they have proven failures, while revolutionary movements aiming to gradually revolutionize the old conservative labor unions (England, France, Italy, Spain) are all achieving great success.

Many of the unions becoming revolutionary in these various movements have been as conservative as many American unions now under the ban of the I. W. W. These non-I. W. W. unions, and there are many of them, there being 115 in the A. F. of L. alone—are of all types—good, bad and indifferent—and in all stages of growth and decay. Some, like the "Boot and Shoe Workers" and "Textile Workers," are decadent, scabby, yellow unions and apparently doomed to extinction. Others, such as the U. M. W. of A., W. F. of M., etc., are unquestionably unions of much higher types and susceptible to progress. For the I. W. W. to sweepingly assert, as it is doing, that none of these unions can become revolutionary—unless it affiliates with the I. W. W. and so gets permission, is ridiculous. There is absolutely no justification for such a conclusion unless it can be proven that the I. W. W. is endowed with the absolute gift of prophecy.

A New Brand of Patriotism.

Nevertheless the theory still prevails and serves as the fountain from which all the difficulties of the I. W. W. dual organization program flow. It has long since become a sort of official dogma and woe unto the heretic who calls it in question. Logically, because of it, we have erected the I. W. W. into a sort of labor union deity that can do no wrong and without which there can be no good.

We have become I. W. W. patriots; and this patriotism is natural, nay compulsory, for having founded our organization on the theory that all non-I. W. W. unions cannot evolve and that the I. W. W. is the only possible bona fide labor organization, we cannot admit that these unions can

evolve ever so little; for if we do we must admit that they can evolve to any extent, an admission which would do away with our justification for the I. W. W.'s existence as a labor union. Consequently we don't admit such evolution on their part even tho it be patent to all observers.

The American labor movement hasn't yet accepted the I. W. W. theory, and is everywhere exhibiting signs of progress, which we as good patriots must explain away. The recently organized system federations gave us a fine opportunity for such "explanations." We proved it to ourselves, if not to others, that the System Federations—which anybody but a bigot can see are a higher type of unionism—are a step backward for the unions composing them.

The Recalcitrant W. F. of W.

A typical illustration of this I. W. W. patriotism is exhibited in our attitude towards the W. F. of M. Formerly we considered the W. F. of M. a progressive labor union and part of the structure of the future society which the I. W. W. has the exclusive contract to build. This was when the W. F. of M. was affiliated with the I. W. W. But now this is all changed. To us the W. F. of M. is no longer even a labor union, much less a progressive one. It has had its sub-contract to build the mining department of the future society revoked. It has lost jurisdiction over even its own members and like all other non-I. W. W. unions is a target for our condemnation and dual organization tactics. Many of us would rejoice to see it wiped out of existence.

This great change of attitude has been brot about simply because the W. F. of M. has withdrawn from the I. W. W. and affiliated with the A. F. of L. Its membership and form have remained the same and to an unsophisticated observer, it is as much a labor union as ever. But to us I. W. W. patriots consideration of form or membership don't necessarily enter into the determination of whether or not an organization is a labor union. The determining factor is whether or not it is affiliated with the I. W. W. Those organizations affiliated are labor unions, the unaffiliated ones are not. The affiliated organizations are parts of the structure of the new society and not to be dualized. The unaffiliated ones are not parts of the new society and are to be dualized. Very simple—and patriotic. We are applying this gauge to the W. F. of M.

This patriotic attitude on our part will last as long as we maintain our ridiculous theory that the I. W. W. has a monopoly on the labor movement and the revolutionary—as long as we continue trying to build up a name rather than the thing. And if we persist much longer in this patriotic attitude, we may easily suffer the fate of the English J. W. W., which has been swept aside into "innocuous desuetude" by the rapidly evolving English labor movement that refused to conform to cut-and-dried I. W. W. theories. Indeed, the I. W. W. and the labor movement in general as will be shown later, has already suffered from it. All the failure of the dual organization program in the last analysis is due to it. Other causes for this failure are of secondary nature, springing from this original cause.

Second. The I. W. W. lays itself open to scabbery on the part of rival unions.

Another cause for the I. W. W. dual organization program not being a success is that time and again, as in Goldfield, Bonner, Brooklyn, etc., the I. W. W. has been scabbed out of existence by A. F. of L. unions. And there is small promise that the I. W. W. will ever be able to build up a strong membership against these scabbing tactics before which the K. of L., A. R. U. and other unions went down. Being a revolutionary union, the I. W. W. cannot reply in kind, and this seems to be the only method of defence or retaliation.

True, by seizing control of the situation at Lawrence, while the discredited and decrepit old "United Textile Workers" union was asleep, the I. W. W. acquired such prestige that the usual scabbing tactics couldn't prevent its winning the great strike. But this was the result of very fortunate circumstances. Ordinarily such easy victories over A. F. of L. unions cannot be expected.

The A. F. of L. machine is thoroly stirred by this I. W. W. victory and, unless all signs fail, are going to wage a bitter war with the I. W. W. for the mastery of the textile industry; and, as

usual, the advantages are on the side of the A. F. of L. In addition to the usual scabbing tactics, it can depend on the large Socialist element in the I. W. W. textile union for assistance.

This is because the I. W. W. is a direct action organization and so intolerant of Socialists,—that it is only a matter of time until this Socialist element, however large, is forced out of the I. W. W. The A. F. of L. will be the natural haven for it to go to, more especially as it is rapidly falling under the control of the Socialists.

And when the A. F. of L. is finally captured by the Socialists, the I. W. W.'s chances of breaking it up will glimmer. The Socialists will give the A. F. of L. a new lease of life, not by making it revolutionary, perhaps, but by at least modifying it so greatly that it will be next to impossible to destroy it as we propose.

This warfare between the I. W. W. and rival unions is the inevitable result of our dual organization program. These non-I. W. W. unions won't accept our ambitious scheme of organization, and they have no other choice left but to fight. And the blame for this fight rests with us, as we are precipitating it needlessly, simply because we are obsessed with the belief that the I. W. W. has a monopoly on the labor movement.

For years we have scathingly criticized the futility, harm of and absurd causes of the jurisdictional quarrels continually raging amongst A. F. of L. unions; and yet with naive inconsistency, on the strength of the above trivial pretense, we are trying to provoke an internecine war in the labor movement beside which all such heretofore would pale into insignificance. It is to be hoped that the I. W. W. will now see the folly of continuing this useless warfare in which we can hope to gain nothing and in which we are dissipating our scanty strength.

In the next article of this series, more causes of the failures of the I. W. W. dual organization will be reviewed.

NOTES

As we go to press the Magon brothers and other members of the Mexican Junta have been put on trial for "violating the neutrality laws." These variant Revolutionists go penniless into the court, and should they be convicted they cannot appeal for want of funds. Their imprisonment will mean the death of "Regeneracion," the nerves and spirit of the Mexican Revolution. Send funds to Manuel G. Garza, 914 Boston St., Los Angeles, Cal.

The first number of "The Toiler," a magazine of Militant Industrial Unionism, is before me. The principle article is an essay on syndicalism, translated from the German, of that vigorous revolutionary writer, Max Baginsky. Max Dezettel, 1621 Locust St., Kansas City, Kan., is the editor. We welcome you, fellow-toiler, on the stormy sea of labor journalism.

The Locomotive Engineers on fifty eastern railroads, by a vote of 23,000 to 2,000, have decided to strike should the railroads refuse to grant their demands for an increase in wages.

Agents for THE AGITATOR.

Seattle: Lavroff's stand, 115 Prefontaine Place.
Raymer's old book store, 1522 First Ave.
Lynn, Mass.: S. Yaffee, 233 Union Street.
New York City: B. Waselevsky, 212 Henry Street; M. Maisel, 422 Grand Street
New Zealand: P. Josephs, 43a Willis St., Wellington.
England: T. Keell, 127 Ossulston St., London, W. C.;
Guy D Aldred, 17 Richmond gardens, Sheperds Bush, London, W.
Australia: J. W. Fleming, 6 Argyle Place, Carlton Victoria.
Vancouver, B. C.: The People's Bookstore, 152 Cordova St. W.:
Tacoma: Local 380, I. W. W., 110 South 14th St.
Boston: M. Andelman, 291 Tremont St.

For Home—Take the Launch "Hoo-Hoo" at the foot of 15th St., Tacoma, week days, except Saturdays, at 4 P.M.; Saturdays at Point Defiance, 5.30 P.M. Round trip 50c. From SEATTLE (south side the Coleman Dock) every Saturday at 3 P.M. Round trip \$1.

For Sale—In Home. Two acres and a small house, cheap. Apply to THE AGITATOR.