

THE VOICE of the PEOPLE

(Formerly "The Lumberjack.")

Education

Organization

Emancipation



Freedom in

Industrial

Democracy

Published Weekly by National Industrial Union of Forest and Lumber Workers, Southern District.
Office of Publication:
335 Carondelet Street, New Orleans, La.
COVINGTON HALL, Editor.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

Yearly, United States	\$1.00
Six Months, United States	.60
Foreign, Yearly	1.50
Bundle Orders, Per Copy (In Canada)	.02 1/2
Bundle Orders, Per Copy (In United States)	.02
Single Copies	.05

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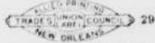
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Entered as Second-class Matter July 5, 1913, at the Post Office at New Orleans, La., under the act of August 24, 1912.



EDITORIALS

THE QUESTION OF DECENTRALIZATION.

(4)

Strike Funds.

Recent events show that our short strike theory does not work well in practice; that strikes stretch into months in spite of us, and that, in consequence, better arrangements must be made to finance them than now exist. The question of strike funds is a live one and may well give us pause. Shall a national strike fund be established and placed under control of the G. E. B., in accordance with centralist principles, or other methods be used? Let us first consider the proposition of a national strike fund under the control of the G. E. B.

It is as true of labor unions, as of other organizations, that whoever controls the finances controls the union. The French and German movements furnish striking examples: In the French movement the local unions retain about 75 per cent. of their income, giving their national office about 25 per cent. In the German (Socialist) movement the proposition is reversed, the local unions retaining 25 per cent. and giving their national office 75 per cent. The result of the French system is that the local unions have the necessary funds to carry on important local work, such as strikes, propaganda, etc. They don't have to beg permission and funds from some far off and unsympathetic committee. The locals are free and the movement is able to correctly express itself. The result of the German system is to throw their local unions absolutely under the control of their national committees, who naturally use their power to further their own interests. So poverty stricken are the local unions that they can't initiate a strike movement or even hire an organizer without the sanction of their national committees. Consequently the movement, instead of taking the natural course of the French unions, is warped and prostituted by a few dictators into an adjunct of the Socialist Party. Innumerable instances might also be cited to show how the American craft union national committees similarly coerce the local unions through their control of the funds.

In view of these facts, would it be advisable for us, by giving it custody of the strike funds, to place the control of the power to strike altogether in the hands of a G. E. B. that must necessarily be incompetent and might easily be corrupt? Already, according to the constitution, the G. E. B. has most dangerous powers in this respect. Let us briefly review them:

(1) Declaration of strikes. The G. E. B. has full power to call out any part of the organization it sees fit to in support of a strike. Consequently, to maintain its prestige, the G. E. B., in case of unendorsed strike, would be forced to use its power to prevent sympathetic strikes. Labor history is full of instances of such action. And, as the G. E. B. has full control of all organizers, the official papers, and "the entire affairs of the organization between conventions," etc., its opposition would have a tremendous, if not decisive effect.

(2) Financing of strikes. The G. E. B. has the power to levy strike assessments "if it sees fit." This gives it the authority to starve out all unendorsed strikes. What guarantee have we that it would not use this power when we see other G. E. B.s constantly using it in the craft unions? Again, no funds shall be given from the Defence Fund (a rudimentary strike fund) without the sanction of the general organization—which means, if anything, that the G. E. B. has charge of this fund.

(3) Settlement of Strikes. The G. E. B. has the power to pass on all strike settlements before they are valid. This means the G. E. B. will be able to dictate the terms of the same—otherwise it won't endorse it.

Thus in the inaugurating, financing and settling of strikes the G. E. B. has almost complete control. To give it charge of the strike funds would make this control complete. If the G. E. B. has so far failed to use its wide constitutional powers it is because

all our strikes to date have been spontaneous local uprisings preceded by but little organization. A machine had not yet had time to form.

Needless to repeat that to put the G. E. B. in complete control of strikes would be to invite certain disaster. It can't, therefore, be given charge of the strike funds. Some other plan must be adopted. Doubtless the best extant is that in vogue in the German Syndicalist unions. This plan is briefly as follows:

There are no national strike funds. In case of a strike the local unions involved send to the national secretary full details regarding their membership, etc., and ask for a national assessment, whereupon the national secretary, without further ado, assesses the general membership accordingly. He has no authority whatever in the matter but must levy the assessment. The assessment is voluntary. But those bodies not paying it are not given financial support when they in turn strike. To prevent wildcat strikes and impositions on the general membership each local union, to be entitled to the national assessment, has to maintain a strike fund equal to one week's wages of each of its members. Only when this fund is exhausted is a striking local given the national assessment.

The excellent feature of the plan is that, besides preventing automatic control of the locals power to strike, it puts the expression of financial solidarity upon a scientific basis. The usual unsatisfactory, haphazard plan of soliciting financial support by a campaign of begging is abandoned. Each union knows that it must do its share if it is to have co-operation extended to it when it needs support. As a result strike dues are paid punctually.

So far this system has worked well, and the I. W. W., which will soon have to adopt some orderly method of financing its strikes, will do well to study its details thoroughly. No doubt, with some modifications the system could be readily transplanted into this country. At any rate the fatal mistake must not be made of giving the already too powerful G. E. B. still more power in the matter of the strike. The local unions must have absolute liberty to strike when and how they see fit. No G. E. B. can be trusted to direct them.

PAUL DUPRES, Ottawa, Can., Sept. 10, 1913.

THE "DEPUTY SHERIFF."

By Satan.

When God had created Harrison Greywolf Otis, Alden Jackal Blethen, "President" Diaz, Harry Orchard and Ortie McManigal, each after his own kind and each with the soul of a hyena, he said: "What now else can I send down on the planet earth to DRIVE the workers into Revolution? I have done my dearest, but they, the Earth workers, verily they are THE suckers of the Universe." After thinking long and hard God decided he would try an experiment in cross breeding instead of a direct creation. So he penned up a he-hyena and a she wolf and, when they had bred, he took their pups and extracted from them their terrible life or soul-stuff. This soul-stuff he ordered to be given to a drunken devil who had just returned from Earth, where he had won honor as an "expert" in the service of a great Defective Agency, with instructions to return to Earth and inject the frightful dehumanizing virus into the veins of certain of the picked men who the capitalists had chosen from among the workers to do their duty work.

In great joy over the task assigned him, the fiend returned to Earth that very night (which was on the day after "Reconstruction" had fallen in the "Sunny South"), and the next morning men who had gone to bed just ordinary human brutes woke up, endowed with blind tiger courage and honkytonk ethics, to become the white Apache called the "Deputy Sheriff."

THE POWER THAT MOVES THE WORLD.

By W. M. Witt.

"Money moves the world." "Labor creates ALL things." These two phrases are OFTEN used but by MANY people who LITTLE understand them. Money alone could move NOTHING but when centralized and in control of a FEW and used to exploit the workers, who are NOTED for their poverty, ignorance and general stupidity, it becomes a RULING rod.

Money in its final analysis is MERELY a time certificate representing hours of toil performed by the producing class. Strange as it may seem to some, these time checks called money, are NOW MOSTLY in possession of a limited number of parasites. Their title to these checks known as currency, and representing metallic money, is DUE to their INGENUITY in outwitting the workers who SLEEP upon their rights.

The possession of money NO matter how achieved is permissible under the present system which is based on GRAFT, including profit, interest, and rent.

But, "Labor creates ALL things." Therefore, after ALL, it is REALLY labor that moves the world, and keeps "the pot boiling."

COMPLETE organization by the workers into ONE BIG UNION would be the GREATEST force on earth. But unorganized they are as "chaff before the wind" and SIMPLY tools in the hands of the exploiters.

After ALL that can be said or done, money MERELY represents the stored up capital of the working class, which is labor.

The capitalists can NEVER give the workers anything in exchange for their services, because what the capitalists have, or claim to have, ALREADY belongs to the laboring class who produced it.

The so-called wage that the worker receives today is ONLY a fractional part of the values he produced yesterday. Therefore, it is apparent to ALL intelligent workers that they receive practically NOTHING for their toil. This so-called wage is JUST a polite name for physical nourishment sufficient to keep strength in their frames in order that they may be able to create MORE wealth for their Masters. This so-called wage is handed RIGHT back to the class who gave it in exchange for food, shelter and clothing, made NECESSARY by civilization.

When the workers are ALL united or a majority organized into ONE BIG UNION, they can then take a hand in slicing the "cheese" which they AND THEY ALONE produced.

Of COURSE the POOR should expect NO comforts or pleasures on earth. From time immemorial it has been a custom of the ruling class and their henchmen to teach the POOR that their reward awaits them in some future existence, (provided of COURSE), that they do their Master's bidding here below. It's a BEAUTIFUL promise and to those NOT posted, it might assist in making "life's walk EASY."

But, the man or woman who gets NOTHING but that myste-

ous reward has one consolation, and that is, they will NEVER be troubled with indigestion or stomach complications, DUE to excessive indulgence in things that tickle the palate. And they will NEVER have pneumonia caused by a SUDDEN or careless change of dress. On the other hand, they may become SO toughened by hardships and exposure that with the aid of a little nourishment they will be able to eke out a LONG lingering existence.

But poverty is a passport to heaven. If you are the HAPPY possessor of one of these you will find the "Pearly Gates" ajar, and old Peter waiting to THRUST a crown of "jewels" upon your sun-burnt brow. However, my advice would be to not waste your time in day dreams of some "sweet bye and bye" but use your influence in assisting to make SWEETER the ALL important NOW and NOW.

"DECENTRALIZED LOCALISM."

So the malady (mixed locals) has continued within the I. W. W. until now at the Eighth Convention we find it assuming the form of a conflict supposedly between "centralization" and "decentralization." In reality, this is a conflict between INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION according to the present requirements of capitalist development; and a REACTIONARY LOCALISM, which ignores capitalist development, and would therefore, result in the complete disintegration of the I. W. W. This fact was clearly brought out in the debate at the Eighth Convention, on the proposal to abolish the General Executive Board. These delegates from the mixed locals, for the most part were found to have very crude conceptions of the structure of industrial organization, while many of those from purely industrial unions were able to outline the form of organization, from the branch to the G. E. B. This question of "mixed" locals will be dealt with more thoroughly in future numbers of Solidarity. Suffice it to say, that the Eighth Convention seems to be grappling with this problem in such a way as to admit of its early solution. As it is more deep-seated than the other mentioned "diseases," it may not be possible to rid the organization of it completely at this time. But already the Eighth Convention, at the date of writing, has taken a decisive stand for industrial organization, against "decentralized localism," and we have hopes that it may go to the root of the matter. The separation of purely propaganda bodies from the administrative affairs of the industrial union proper is now seen to be necessary, if our organization is to move forward in its development. The disease of the "mixed" local must be eradicated, in order that the I. W. W. may take a vital hold of the industrial problem, and organize definitely for the overthrow of capitalism and the substitution of the Industrial Commonwealth.

From "Solidarity" (editorial) of Sept. 27, 1913.

COMMENT, by Covington Hall—The retention or abolition of the Mixed Local has absolutely nothing to do with the question of Decentralization, which is FUNDAMENTALLY, an attempt to throw all real power into the hands of the membership at large and to reduce to its utmost limit DELEGATED power. Therefore, the abolition of the Mixed Local could in no way affect nor settle the question now disturbing the I. W. W., and all other organizations functioning for whatsoever class within the body politic.

There is no "LOCALISM" about it, for it is a world-wide issue. Everywhere, in all lands, climes and nations, THE PEOPLE are struggling to take back to themselves their SOCIAL POWERS and are more and more strenuously every day denying the right of "Authority," delegated or otherwise, to say what is and what is not for the general public good.

The "disease" within the I. W. W. is NOT the Mixed Local per se—it is the gigantic machine formation attempted to be foisted upon it in the beginning by the authoritarian socialists who presided at its birth and who immediately left it to shift for itself as best it could when the "ungrateful child" insisted that it didn't need and didn't want the army of wet-nurses that had been so considerably provided for it by its great midwives.

That the I. W. W. must take on the true Industrial form of Organization before it can ever move forward, no thinking man denies, but that Industrial ORGANIZATION and DECENTRALIZATION OF POWER are antagonistic is proven untrue by the French Confederation of Labor, which is, as has long been known, DECENTRALIZED as to POWER but which is probably the greatest fighting working class ORGANIZATION in existence today.

The abolition of the Mixed Locals has no more to do with the question of DECENTRALIZATION than has the abolition of the G. E. B. DECENTRALIZATION deals essentially with the right of the Locals to CONTROL themselves and through their combined wills to run the General Organization, and this right they, being the life of the Organization, the cells on which it rests and must depend—this right they will without any doubt conquer.

The General Officers of the I. W. W. and its G. E. B. have no more right to a vote in the General Convention than I have, and I have none such right whatsoever. They represent no one except themselves and, even under capitalist laws, judges must recuse themselves when a question comes before the court in which they are interested. This right (?) should be taken away from all officers of the I. W. W. and its constituent bodies, for it is a remnant of the "divine right of kings" and has no place in a Democracy.

Then the method of electing and organizing the Convention should be changed to somewhat on the lines in use by the C. G. T., which Paul Dupres gives as follows:

"THE C. G. T. SYSTEM IS TO GIVE TO EACH LOCAL UNION ONE VOTE. DELEGATES MAY VOTE FIVE PROXIES. INDUSTRIAL UNIONS, DISTRICT COUNCILS AND GENERAL OFFICERS HAVE A VOICE BUT NO VOTE. THIS SYSTEM THROWS THE CONTROL OF THE CONVENTION INTO THE HANDS OF THE LOCAL UNIONS, WHICH ARE RECOGNIZED AS THE BASIS OF THE LABOR MOVEMENT."

With a Convention organized on that system, Godamity himself could not organize a governing or any other kind of machine, for SUPREME POWER would always be in the hands of the rank and file, where it should ALWAYS be in a DEMOCRACY.

DECENTRALIZERS, CENTRALIZE your efforts on these creative ideas, and make the old I. W. W. the greatest fighting working class machine on earth! Build up all the Locals and put life and virility in all the City Central Committees and District Councils.

For around the great PREAMBLE we can ALL—UNITE!