

THE AGITATOR

Issued twice a month, on the first and fifteenth, by THE AGITATOR Publishing Association from its printing office in Home, Wash.

Entered at the postoffice at Lakebay, Wash., as Second Class Matter

Subscription, One Dollar a Year.
Two copies to one address \$1.50.

Address all communications and make all money orders payable to THE AGITATOR, Lakebay, Wash.

Articles for publication should be written LEGIBLY on one side of the paper only.

THE AGITATOR does not bear the union stamp because it is not printed for profit. But it is union, every letter of it. It is printed and published by unionists and their friends for the economic and political education of themselves and their fellow toilers. Much of the labor is given free. On the whole it is a work of love—the love of the idea, of a world fit for the free.

Law, in its guarantee of the results of pillage, slavery and exploitation, has followed the same phase of development as capital; twin brother and sister, they have advanced hand in hand, sustaining one another with the sufferings of humanity.
Peter Kropotkin

REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS

IV.

(In this article is continued the review of some of the chief causes of the failure of the I. W. W. dual organization program.)

THE I. W. W. PLACES ITSELF IN THE POSITION OF A DISRUPTIVE ORGANIZATION.

Disruption is the high crime in every labor movement. Any individual or organization proven guilty of this offense is given short shift in the organized labor circles. This is natural, as unity is the first essential to a successful movement.

The I. W. W., with its weird dual organization program, exposes itself fully to the charge of being a disruptive organization; and our enemies, in whose hands we place this powerful weapon, use it continually with telling effect against us. Just a couple of cases of the numerous ones that might be cited to illustrate this point:

Fellow Worker Freeman, an I. W. W. member of the "Leather Workers on Horse Goods" (A. F. of L.), recently got out a pamphlet violently criticizing this antique union, its methods, Civic Federation officers, etc., and winding up by inviting its members to desert it and join the I. W. W.

The pamphlet caused quite a stir among the disgruntled leather workers, who had long suffered from the evils exposed by Freeman, and Bryan, the president of their union, was forced to write an answer to it. His response was as typical as effective. Stripped of non-essentials, it amounted in effect to:

This man Freeman is a disruptor, a spy, a traitor. He is deliberately trying to destroy our union (quotes Freeman's own words in proof). He is trying to do exactly the same as the M. & M. There must be some connection between them. He should be expelled from the union.

The vast bulk of organized workers can't understand the necessity of breaking up their present unions and joining others, simply in order to change their minds, which is what the I. W. W. proposition amounts to—and are quick to believe such arguments as Bryan's. Labor fakers using them are placed in the position of defenders of their unions and the I. W. W., in so favoring them, is aiding to perpetuate what it is attempting to destroy.

An Instructive Incident.

Fellow Worker Jaekel recently had an account in "Solidarity" of a typical and instructive incident that occurred last fall in Chicago. I will give the substance of it from memory: The cooks were organizing into the A. F. of L. Jaekel spoke at one of their meetings. He gave them a talk on industrial unionism, advising all hotel and restaurant workers to unite and act together. His talk was very well received. He was followed by Fellow Worker Moreau, who roasted the A. F. of L. as a bunch of scabs, etc., and advised the cooks assembled to get into the I. W. W. A commotion ensued and a motion was made to throw the disrupting I. W. W. out of the hall. It was carried and executed.

This incident should be full of lessons for us. It illustrates clearly the popularity of the two programs of the I. W. W. Our first and successful

one, viz., propagation of industrial unionism, presented by Jaekel, was well received as usual. Our second and unsuccessful one, viz., dual organization, presented by Moreau, was absolutely rejected—also as usual.

This hostility of organized workers for our dual organization program as typified by the I. W. W. is well known to our speakers, and in talking to such they usually evade mentioning it to them, confining themselves as much as possible to our other and more popular program.

How to Get Subs.

This line of tactics is well illustrated in the method of the champion sub-getter for "Solidarity." According to B. N. Williams, he makes a specialty of getting subs from organized workers. He carefully conceals from prospective subscribers that "Solidarity" is an I. W. W. paper. One of his devices being to artfully cover with one hand the letters I. W. W. in Solidarity's title when reading some selected article on the front page. He has learned from experience that many organized workers will readily subscribe for Solidarity on the strength of its advocacy of industrial union principles, who couldn't be induced if they knew it to be an organ of the ostracized, disruptive I. W. W.

This evil reputation of the I. W. W. has been a severe handicap to it. It can be expected to last as long as the dual organization program which produced it does.

THE I. W. W. FLAGRANTLY VIOLATES THE PRINCIPLE OF THE MILITANT MINORITY.

In every group of human beings, be it Y. W. C. A., A. F. of L., I. W. W., M. & M. or what not, there are to be found a certain few individuals who exercise a great influence over the thoughts and actions of the rest of the mass. They are natural leaders and maintain their leadership through their superior energy, courage, intellect, oratorical power, organizing ability, etc., as the case may be.

French revolutionists have noted that the most potent of these inevitable leaders in the labor movement are the militant revolutionists, whose vigorous philosophy and tactics, which are those par excellence of the labor movement, coupled with their unflagging energy and courage, born of the revolution, make them invincible in the struggle for the control of the labor movement. These rebels, always far in minority, simply force the great mass of workers in conservative unions into action, and to become revolutionary, whether they will or no in spite of the contrary efforts of "leaders" of other types—Socialists, etc.

To better exploit their power these militants have banded themselves together in the various unions to war collectively on conservative control and influence—to "bore from within," as we abominably express it. These are the famous "militant minorities" which have done so much to revolutionize the French movement. Their power is immense. Let us take the recent French railroad strike, as an illustration of it.

A Lesson from the French Railroad Strike.

Until a couple of years ago the French railroads, dominated by Socialists, were so conservative that it was a common saying that they never would strike again. But a few months after the militant minority had deposed the Socialist dictator, France was shaken by the recent great railroad strike of 50,000 workers. The Socialists deliberately broke the strike by holding the remaining 75,000 railroaders at work. The strikers were forced back to work unconditionally, though the railroads made them many "voluntary" concessions. Three thousand men from all through the railroad service in France—non-striking roads included—were later discharged on the pretense that they were responsible for the strike. But of this number it is very doubtful if one thousand were militant revolutionists, because in the general cleanup great numbers of men were discharged by bosses who had petty grievances against them and seized this favorable opportunity to get rid of them. Hundreds of others were discharged for saying the strike was a good thing or something similar. One thousand is, therefore, a liberal estimate of the number of militants amongst the discharged. And it is to the activities of this thousand militants (more or less) in the conservative unions that this great strike must be charged. Had they separated themselves from the old unions, made themselves into a revolutionary sect and labeled their organization the only bona fide labor union, and "bawled out" the

conservative unions, as the I. W. W. militants are doing, there would have been no strike.

I. W. W. Disorganizes Militant Minorities.

The I. W. W. dual organization program has the effect of disorganizing the potentially powerful militant minorities in all American unions. The explanation is simple: We make rebels of many organized workers and fill them with the patriotic belief that the I. W. W. is the whole labor movement and that their old unions are capitalist institutions, interlopers, etc. They logically conclude that the sooner these unions go out of existence the better, and ordinarily either quit them entirely or at least cease to try to improve them. The double result of this is to absolutely disorganize the militant minorities and to leave the old unions in the undisputed possession of the conservatives and fakers.

Many unions plainly show the evil effects of these unwise tactics. Take the W. F. of M., for instance. According to Vincent St. John, when this union was in the best fighting days, 10 per cent of its members were rebels, but this militant minority were so well organized that they controlled the union and made it willy nilly a real fighting organization. And now, if the W. F. of M. is conservative, it is chiefly because this once powerful militant minority is disorganized and has practically quit fighting to control the union. This disorganization is due to the I. W. W. doctrine that A. F. of L. unions are not labor unions. I have met quite a lot of these old W. F. of M. militants, who believe that the W. F. of M., because it quit the I. W. W., should be wiped out of existence. Let these militants once get this foolish idea out of their heads; let the Haywoods, St. Johns, Healewoods and the numerous other old W. F. of M. militants, now but lookers on, get back into the fight again, organize themselves and the W. F. of M. can readily be made into a fighting organization once more.

The case of the "International Shingle Weavers' Union" is a sample of I. W. W. tactics. This small radical union (about 3000 members) refuses to quit the A. F. of L. and join our church. Therefore, it must be patriotically broken up. And in Seattle I heard I. W. W. men proudly boast that this consummation was near, as "we have got all the rebels so they won't pay dues into it any more."

Truly a great and wise achievement, as the rebels are probably enuf to run the "Shingle Weavers' Union," as they would were they only members of it and organized to do so. But to do this presupposes their getting rid of their I. W. W. patriotism.

The same disorganization of the militant minority exists in the Pacific district of the International Longshoremen's Association. This union is full of rebels and there are hundreds more on the outside that won't come in. They are all disorganized, crying out against the fakers controlling the I. L. A., when if they were on the inside and organized they could get rid of these same fakers in a jiffy. Kean, the district president, realizes this. That is why he raised his cry a few weeks ago against an I. W. W. "boring from within" invasion of the I. L. A.

Rossini, national organizer of the Italian Socialist Federation (I. W. W.), in "le Proletario" (November), quotes an ex-organizer of the U. M. W. A. to the effect that the Italian rebels in the U. M. W. A. could control a "great part" of the local unions if they only would. Being obsessed with the I. W. W. idea they don't even try.

This disorganization of militant minorities is general in the American labor movement. Innumerable instances of it might be cited. It is one of the most evil results of our dual organization program, from which monstrosity it naturally proceeds. It is a potent cause for the weakness of our movement. Indeed, with us destroying the effectiveness of rebels as we are, the wonder is not that the American movement is making such slow progress, but that it is making any progress at all.

WM. Z. FOSTER.

(The next article of this series will be on new tactics for the I. W. W.)

The Martyrdom of Toil

The history of Unionism is a history of martyrdom. The path of progress is strewn with the bones of sturdy, liberty-loving workers, who fought and died in the battle for freedom. Against whom? Always against government, the hired hoodlum and slave-herder of the exploiters, who fatten on the miseries of mankind.