

Industrial Unionism

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INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

BY

Daniel De Leon

ALSO

AN ADDRESS DELIVERED ON
THE SAME SUBJECT

BY

EUGENE V. DEBS

PRICE TEN CENTS

New York Labor News Co.
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upon the capitalist class for a chance to earn a living as long as you allow that class to retain its autocratic hold on industry. If you would attain

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DANIEL DE LEON

Also

An Address on the Same Subject Delivered at Grand
Central Palace, New York, Sunday, Dec. 10, 1905, by

EUGENE V. DEBS

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INTRODUCTION

Since the year 1905, when the Industrial Workers of the World was launched at Chicago, Industrial Unionism has grown into a household word with thousands of workers, and a phrase bandied about and abused in every newspaper, and upon nearly every platform in the land. The great mass, however, of those who use the word so flippantly, have as yet a very vague or incorrect notion of what the word actually implies.

The short statement by De Leon in this pamphlet is one of the clearest explanations extant of the demarkation between craft unionism and Industrial Unionism, particularly as to the form of organization. The real fundamental differences between the two have never been set forth in a clearer and more concise manner.

Debs made his speech in December 1905. It is not, like De Leon's, a lesson in the ABC of unionism. It is not didactic in either tone or method. It is a clarion call to the workers to organize industrially, organize to throw from their limbs the chains of wage slavery.

The speech is a scorching indictment of capitalism, with the hope of final emancipation looming big upon the horizon. The inspiration of that hope is drawn from the organization of the Industrial Workers of the World, launched but six months earlier. At the time of Debs's speech the I. W. W. was the beacon light of those who realized that in order to accomplish their emancipation the workers must be organized class-consciously upon the economic, as well as on the political field. It was under the spell of that inspiration that Debs gave his speech on Industrial Unionism.

Since that time, the I. W. W., a prey to freaks, physical-forcists, and Anarchists of every description, has ceased to

stand for INDUSTRIALISM. It now stands for either pure freakdom, for anarchy, or for syndicalism and local decentralization, with enough truly socialistic elements mixed in to make it a problem with which the true labor movement is obliged to cope.

But the main issue—INDUSTRIALISM—is the same today as when Debs made his speech—only more so. At that moment many of us felt, Debs certainly felt and believed, that the American labor movement had reached the point where the possibilities of organizing the workers lay clear ahead. Today we know better.

The form, tactics, and goal of the first I. W. W.—of the I. W. W. of 1905—have been taken up or rather continued in direct line by the Workers' International Industrial Union. In its educational work this Union is aided by the Socialist Labor Party. The I. W. W. failed in the main because of the lack of this great educational campaign, up to 1905 carried on single-handed by the Socialist Labor Party, and which up to that time had, upon the union field, of necessity been almost entirely of a destructive nature.

Since that time Industrialism has in truth become a household word. But much education as to its true nature is still required in order that the workers may understand how to organize and actually to organize as they understand.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY.

New York, November 1919.

INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM

By DANIEL DE LEON.

I.

In these days, when the term "Industrial Unionism" is being played with fast and loose—when, in some quarters, partly out of conviction, partly for revenue, "striking at the ballot-box with an ax," theft, even murder, "sabotage," in short, is preached in its name;—when, at the National Councils of the A. F. of L. lip-service is rendered to it as a cloak under which to justify its practical denial by the advocacy and justification of scabbery, as was done at Rochester, at the 1912 convention, by the Socialist Party man and International Typographical delegate Max Hayes; when notoriety-seekers strut in and thereby bedrabble its fair feathers; when the bourgeois press, partly succumbing to the yellow streak that not a member thereof is wholly free from, partly in the interest of that confusion in which capitalist intellectuality sees the ultimate sheet-anchor of Class Rule, promotes, with lurid reports, "essays" and editorials, a popular misconception of the term;—at this season it is timely that the Socialist Labor Party, the organization which, more than any other, contributed in raising and finally planting, in 1905, the principle and the structure of Industrialism, reassert what Industrial Unionism is, re-state the problem and its import.

Capitalism is the last expression of Class Rule. The economic foundation of Class Rule is the private ownership of the necessities for production. The social structure, or garb, of Class Rule is the Political State—that social structure in which Government is an organ separate and apart from production, with no vital function other than the maintenance of the supremacy of the ruling class.

The overthrow of Class Rule means the overthrow of the

political State, and its substitution with the Industrial Social Order, under which the necessaries for production are collectively owned and operated by and for the people.

Goals determine methods. The goal of social evolution being the final overthrow of Class Rule, its methods must fit the goal.

As in nature, where optical illusions abound, and stand in the way of progress until cleared, so in society.

The fact of economic despotism by the ruling class raises, with some, the illusion that the economic organization and activity of the despotized working class is all-sufficient to remove the ills complained of.

The fact of political despotism by the ruling class raises, with others, the illusion that the political organization and activity of the despotized working class is all-sufficient to bring about redress.

The one-legged conclusion regarding economic organization and activity fatedly abuts, in the end, in pure and simple bombism, as exemplified in the A. F. of L., despite its Civic Federation and Militia of Christ affiliations, as well as by the Anarcho-Syndicalist so-called Chicago I. W. W.,—the Bakouninism, in short, against which the genius of Marx struggled and warned.

The one-legged conclusion regarding political organization and activity, as fatedly abuts, in the end, in pure and simple ballotism, as already numerous and lamentably exemplified in the Socialist Party,—likewise struggled and warned against by Marx as “parliamentary idiocy.”

Industrial Unionism, free from optical illusions, is clear upon the goal—the substitution of the political State with the Industrial Government. Clearness of vision renders Industrial Unionism immune both to the Anarchist self-deceit of the “No Government” slogan, together with all the mischief that flows therefrom, and to the politician’s “parliamentary idiocy” of looking to legislation for the overthrow of Class Rule.

The Industrial Union grasps the principle: “No Government, no organization; no organization, no co-operative labor; no co-operative labor, no abundance for all without ar-

duous toil, hence, no Freedom."—Hence, the Industrial Union aims at a democratically centralized Government, accompanied by the democratically requisite "local self-rule."

The Industrial Union grasps the principle of the political State—central and local authorities disconnected from productive activity; and it grasps the requirements of the Government of Freedom—the central and local administrative authorities of the productive capabilities of the people.

The Industrial Union hearkens to the command of social evolution to cast the nation, and, with the nation, its government, in a mold different from the mold in which Class Rule casts nations and existing governments. While Class Rule casts the nation, and, with the nation, its government, in the mold of territory, Industrial Unionism casts the nation in the mold of useful occupations, and transforms the nation's government into the representations from these. Accordingly, Industrial Unionism organizes the useful occupations of the land into the constituencies of Future Society.

In performing this all-embracing function, Industrial Unionism, the legitimate offspring of civilization comes equipped with all the experience of the Age.

Without indulging in the delusion that its progress will be a "dress parade"; and, knowing that its program carries in its folds that acute stage of all evolutionary process known as Revolution, the Industrial Union connects with the achievements of the Revolutionary Fathers of the country, the first to frame a Constitution that denies the perpetuity of their own social system, and that, by its amendment clause, legalizes Revolution. Connecting with that great achievement of the American Revolution; fully aware that the Revolution which it is big with being one that concerns the masses and that needs the masses for its execution, excludes the bare idea of conspiracy, and imperatively commands an open and above-board agitational, educational, and organizing activity; finally its path lighted by the beacon tenet of Marx that none but the bona fide Union can set on foot the true political party of Labor;—Industrial Unionism bends its efforts to unite the working class upon the political as well as the industrial field,—on

the industrial field because, without the integrally organized Union of the working class, the revolutionary act is impossible; on the political field, because on none other can be proclaimed the revolutionary purpose, without consciousness of which the Union is a rope of sand.

Industrial Unionism is the Socialist Republic in the making; and the goal once reached, the Industrial Union is the Socialist Republic in operation.

Accordingly, the Industrial Union is, at once, the battering ram with which to pound down the fortress of capitalism, and the successor of the capitalist social structure itself.

