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Democracy

Starts in Industry

By T-BONE SLIM

Hark ye, then workers: Difference in the package doesn't change the nature of the content. Moots it but little if your slavery comes to you neatly done up as a package of piece work; it is slavery. A package of day work is slavery. A package of unemployment is slavery and how! Ye have much in common and ye should make common cause against the industrial autocrat that thinks himself omnipotent.

We are for workers as workers in any difficulty and we consider loyalty to workers' worthy object of any and all unions. But we feel there should be only one union—the very presence of more indicates labor is disloyal to itself. Any division betrays labor as a whole and just so long as labor follows any bell-wether that starts to bleat just so long will there be division and just so long will we be slaves to the machine; for the bell-wether numbers are many, many as their trails lead to widely separated slaughtering pens.

Labor should stand pat for once and throw out an anchor. Present day industrial autocrat cannot make the proposition of wage slavery stick. No dictator or government can make industrial autocracy stick. No wars or rumors of war, furore to instill uncertainty in Labor's mind can make the proposition of exploitation stick.

It boils down to this:

Political democracy gets its nourishment from industry and when industry is autocratic the nourishment is contaminated in kind and political democracy cannot prosper on that kind of food.

Political democracy cannot prosper alongside industrial autocracy for long and dies young. "The good die young . . ." There they are nonchalantly cutting their competitors' windpipe commercially without due process of law and at the same time skinning labor. And then they expect political democracy to flourish in that atmosphere.

But industrial democracy can flourish without politics, autocratic or moderated. Industry being nurse it will run the depravity out of politics whatever its name may be—provided industry is democratic. They will get religion with their milk.

So long as industrial autocracy remains, form of political state is immaterial—in the end it will assume all the features of its more powerful industrial rival.

The foolosophy that in some miraculous manner freedom shall be born of dictatorship in the throes of its numerous and varied maneuvers is, to say the least, fantastic. It is as fantastic as to expect Barnum's lioness to give birth to a lamb. It simply don't happen. Freedom is born of democracy in industry and consideration within and without. And it improves with practice.

Big time financiers have fastened themselves to the railroads and are sucking the very life blood out of them. Keeping them always poor, always inefficient, always hollering

for help. Why write a book about it. It can be put in one sentence: If the railroads don't get help soon the bankers will starve.

There might be something to this idea that charlatans were sent in to make gestures of industrial unionism in order that dynamic unionism may be discredited in the eyes of the more susceptible workers.

The idea was precipitated upon an unsuspecting country with a great show of pomp and panoply, supported by parasites press equally divided between the old and the new, the craft and industrial; industrial unionism is possible only under democratic rank and file rule.

Mute the lyre, therefore, fellow workers, and permit no shadow to fall upon the noble prestige of industrial unionism. I am skeptical of those "gestures" because I am an American, even so as these "gestures" are American "grandstand." The resultant unionism, therefore, is of mushroom growth, overnight, (chamber of commerce stuff) and plenty of toadstools present posing as golden pheasants.

Drop back into your shoes boys and build your industrial union. No new worlds are being built tailor made. It's a slow and painful process and each novice is tried in the fires of struggle—no guile or hypocrisy is present; membership built industrial unionism grows up pure as the lily in the dell, no weak sisters in the fold, no rye in the wheat field. This is because they, the membership, do the choosing . . . It is because they build on a certainty; there is no division. They are sure. Straight ahead, as she looks!