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EDITORIAL

BAD NEWS FOR THE UPSTART FAKIR.

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THE fakir of ten years ago is not the sole fakir of to-day. Ten years ago he was the only thing; but that was when an even sleeker article than himself had not yet stepped upon the stage. The name of "fakir" was, in those days, applied only to men active in the Union Movement of Labor, but only as representatives of the Capitalist Class in the Unions. Of course these men lied, of course they were frauds, in short, of course they were fakirs. But there was one redeeming or, rather, palliating feature about them, and that was that, being so wholly identified with the Capitalist Class, whose lackeys they are, they entertained an earnest contempt for all theories that claimed to be able to raise the workingman. Imbued from the crowns of their heads to the soles of their feet with the capitalist idea that the Working Class is neither capable of emancipating itself, nor fit to run society, the former fakir interpreted the prevalent ignorance among the workingmen as an inherent quality of the worker. Starting from such premises and adjusting his "principles" to the material interests that went hand in hand with them, the fakir of ten years ago was, and his kindred down to to-day continues to be, an open foe of Socialism.

It took the appearance of the sleeker article upon the scene to bring into relief this virtue, as in a way, it may be called, the virtue of sincerity in the stupidity of the olden fakir. The sleeker article could not, it is true, not even to save his life, give a correct definition of Socialism or of any of its tenets, but he realizes that Socialism is a powerful thing, claims to be a Socialist, plagiarizes the arguments made by Socialists which he handles as a fence and sets himself up, as a "Socialist", to compete with the olden fakir for graft. What he is after the olden fakir was not dull enough not to perceive; but the olden fakir hoped to be able to utilize him as an antidote to the Socialist Labor Party, and, above all, hoped to satisfy the fellow with

a crumb. With the {passage of} time the olden fakir saw his double mistake: the Socialist Labor Party was not antidotable, and the recent upstart would not be satisfied with crumbs: he had started for the many-sided graft of the olden fakir and was tugging hard for it. Among the favorite grafts are fat committeeships, secret and otherwise, on strikes, and delegateships to conventions. Thus grafting both upon pure and simpledom and upon Socialism the upstart fakir sailed along for a while, until, like the jackdaw in {the} fable, he finally got into trouble—the Socialist pilloried him, and now the olden fakir is “onto” him and going for his scalp. The Ironworkers’ organ, the official organ of the Ironworkers’ Unions {sic} in the building trade and controlled by the olden fakirs, issues this ukase against the upstarts:

“See to it that no Socialist is sent to a central body or to a convention as a delegate. This may seem arbitrary advice at first thought, but when we consider the fact that we are endeavoring to combat insidious and unscrupulous foes, whose very existence in our ranks is a constant menace to us, we should stifle all such thoughts and use the big stick effectively.”

This is bad news, bad as can be to the upstart fakirs. Only they sought to compete with the older ones for jobs in pure and simple Unions. Their only chance of success has been destroyed by the indestructibility of the Socialist Labor Party, and now they have become unqualified nuisances to the olden fakirs, so unqualified that the graft of jobs that they were after is to be taken from them. Poor upstarts in fakirism!

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

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