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EDITORIAL

THE HAMILTON MANIFESTO.

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GOALS determine methods. According as a goal is clear the methods to reach it will be correct. The goal of unity among the forces that make for the Socialist Republic is a goal that can meet with approval only. If such a goal is clear, the methods will adjust themselves accordingly. It should seem from these premises that nothing could be easier than the adoption of the correct methods towards a goal such as “Unity”—a goal the mentioning of which should suffice to appeal to all right-minded men, and exclude all others. Unfortunately, the poverty of language overthrows such a fascinating theory. “Unity” means different thing to different minds. To different minds a number of things are implied by the word “Unity”; from different minds the same things are excluded; and this happens from the circumstance that the Socialist Republic does not mean the same thing to all minds.

It may be objected, that although the concept of the Socialist Republic may be different to different minds, according as these understand the law of social evolution, nevertheless all these minds are at one, absolutely at one, in one thing, to wit, the abominableness of the capitalist regime. Could not Unity be effected on such a plank? It can not. Take an illustration from history.

The scores of evangelical movements were all agreed, absolutely agreed upon the intolerableness of the Roman Catholic regime. Yet “Unity” among them was ever found impossible—that is to say, it was found impossible so long as there was any vitality in them. Actual or practical Unity among them was not effected until they had become what Edmund Burke correctly called them, “volcanoes burnt out.” In other words, they united when there was nothing left that was worth uniting on. Why? The so-called evangelical movements were essentially political revolts of capitalism against feudalism; revolts of a system of freedom against the feudalic

system of blind submission. An economic order in formation has many aspects. The multiple aspects of the bourgeois uprising manifested themselves in multiple creeds. The competitive spirit of capitalism was reflected in a multiplicity of “religions.” When capitalism had sufficiently crystallized into a social system the bottom dropped from the dissimilarity of the creeds that it gave birth to. Then, and not before, did they stop quarreling. In short, all attempts at unity between the evangelical creeds, before capitalism had reached a minimum of solidity, resulted in intensified disunity. To sum up that experience, unity is out of question on a negative.

Experience also teaches a positive lesson. The test of the ripeness of men to unite for a revolutionary purpose is the sense that their parties, or organizations, are nothing more nor less than vehicles of conveyance. So long as men are as “identified” with an “organization” as an oyster is to its shell, their intellects, governed by their private interests, are not above the oyster. Ripeness for Unity proclaims itself in man when his readiness to unite never will stop to consider what bearing the Unity will have upon his own organization. The Labor or Socialist Movement of the United States has recently furnished a striking, and, therefore, instructive lesson on this head. When the I.W.W. was organized the posture of the S.P. was: “What will become of our organization?” This was an illustration of how instinct rises above actual knowledge. The average S.P. man is unconscious of the fact that the S.P. goal is purely political—an Executive, Legislature and Judiciary composed of Socialists instead of Capitalists. This notwithstanding, instinct quickly told him that the I.W.W. implied a negation of his goal, whereupon he, or his press with his submissive acquiescence, fought the I.W.W. Whereas, the S.L.P. man, whose goal is not a political but an industrial government, hailed the I.W.W., although, as a consequence of the I.W.W. posture, the success of the I.W.W. meant the ultimate disbandment of the S.L.P. into the political reflex of a ripened I.W.W. The S.L.P. man cared not what became of his conveyance. His eyes were fastened to the ideal for which his party was and is bound to remain a conveyance, until the new political conveyance is ready for him to “change cars” in.

Our Hamilton Comrades’ Unity Committee is, at this stage, alone equipped with the necessary information to decide whether the material that they represent

is ripe for Unity. They alone can tell, by the light of the two beacons, named above and taken from history, whether they represent oysters or men. This office will have to abide the event, the result of which will be read in the absence, it is hoped, of the type that rears on its hind legs and refuses “to be bossed”—an unerring sign of the ununitable quality. Only oysters, men never, claim independence from Reason; only men, oysters never, recognize with gladness dependence upon Logic.

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