

EDITORIAL

## HOW KIRWAN “ANSWERS.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

**R**EADERS of *The People* are aware that what promised to be brisk correspondence between Wm. E. Trautmann, the Gen'l Sec'y-Treasurer of the I.W.W., and James Kirwan, the “acting” Secretary-Treasurer of the W.F. of M.({}) suddenly came to a dead stop about three months ago. It will be well to recall the facts in the case.

Certain moneys, \$9,433.06 cents, had been collected at the headquarters of the I.W.W. for the Defense Fund of Haywood, Moyer and Pettibone. The amount had been sent in full to Kirwan by Trautmann and receipts therefor locked in the safe at the old I.W.W. headquarters. This happened during the months of April, May, June and July of last year.

Subsequently, the I.W.W. convention having overthrown Sherman together with his assistants in the work of scuttling the I.W.W. (treasury and organization) in favor of Gompers's and Mitchell's A.F. of L. and obedient to the behests of the A.F. of L. Socialist party officials, the Sherman plotters took forcible possession of the old I.W.W. headquarters, broke open the safe, removed or destroyed the receipts from Kirwan, and Mahoney, the “acting” President of the W.F. of M., among them, went about in Chicago scattering dark hints that Trautmann had not delivered in full the moneys which he received for the Defense Fund. They confidently asserted “Trautmann cannot produce receipts.”

Trautmann, not yet fully aware of the extent that the A.F. of L.-S.P. conspiracy extended, and shrewdly lying low so as to entrap all the conspirators, let Mahoney and Sherman talk, and wrote to Kirwan, under date of last October 25, courteously requesting a statement of the amounts Kirwan had received from him for the Defense Fund. If Sherman was not in the conspiracy, the statement would have come without further ado. Kirwan, however, under date of October 29, sent

Trautmann an insulting letter in answer. In that letter he repeated almost verbatim some of the expressions that the conspirators in Chicago had been using—insinuating that Trautmann's accounts were not straight. Had Kirwan stopped there he might yet have "saved his pork," and that of his fellows. Obedient, however, to that Providential law whereby criminals are scatter brained, Kirwan construed Trautmann's letter as indication that Trautmann was in a fix. So holding, Kirwan, with an assumption of a good deal of magnanimity, admitted receipt of \$8,433.06—ONE THOUSAND LESS THAN HE HAD ACTUALLY RECEIVED, AND HAD GIVEN RECEIPT FOR, but which receipts he knew were no longer available by Trautmann, for reasons stated above.

The next act in the drama was an open letter addressed by Trautmann to Kirwan. The letter was dated last November 8. In that letter Trautmann gave Kirwan the unwelcome information that he, Trautmann, was not dependent upon Kirwan's receipts to prove he had forwarded the \$9,433.06 in full to Kirwan, and that Kirwan had received the amount. He informed Kirwan that the Chicago Prairie State Bank, through whom the drafts had been forwarded to Kirwan, held the vouchers or the receipts signed by Kirwan; that the Prairie State Bank furnished him, Trautmann, with a statement of the said receipts or vouchers; and that the statement was as follows:

"On April 15, 1906, the sum of \$3,500.00

"On May 14, 1906, the sum of \$4,000.00

"On June 1, 1906, the sum of \$1,500.00

"On July 22, 1906, the sum of \$433.06"

—in all \$9,433.06, or ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS MORE than Kirwan admitted receipt of in his letter of October 29 to Trautmann. Trautmann then called upon Kirwan in that open letter of Nov. 8—"Mr. Kirwan deny if you can that you have received the sum of \$9,433.06 for the Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone Defense Fund!"

No answer came. The silence of the grave ensued. Like a toad nailed to a barn-door Kirwan gave no sound. But the publicly nailed Kirwan did not remain inactive. Following the path so thoroughly beaten by the officialdom of the S.P. and of the A.F. of L., who whenever convicted in public, resort to the tactics of the mole against

the "proletaire rabble" before whom they dare not stand up in public, Kirwan has been "writing letters" in private. Unable to smash the I.W.W. in open fight; aware that the interests of Belmont's lieutenants can not bear the light of day; conscious that the treason, plotted against the interests of the Working Class by the "A.M. Simons, Editors," the Bergers, the Volkszeitung Corporations, etc., has no chance except by the diabolical method of whispered calumny; finally, confident that, in the distracted state of mind of the workers, the surest way to prevent Working Class unity is the police-spy trick of scattering suspicion;—Kirwan, like a Macbethan "rat without a tail" has been "doing, doing, doing." Before us lies the evidence. It comes from Almena, Kans., where the by Trautmann publicly nailed Kirwan has been seeking to stab the same Trautmann in the dark, in the interest of the Sherman, who is equally nailed in public, and who will within shortly be publicly nailed some more with photographic reproductions of letters by himself, vouching for the trustworthiness of men, photographic reproductions of whose affidavits, revealing the police-spy nature of his instructions to them, will likewise be given to the public.

Is such conduct as that of Kirwan and the Kirwans discouraging? Not at all! Such are some of the problems the Movement presents; and it is just such problems that vindicate S.L.P. policy and tactics—the most rigid system of agitation, education and organization, without which the Working Class will ever be exposed to the police-spy tricks; but with which the police-spy will have as little chance as the bacterial microbe has on strong, healthy, sound lungs.

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