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EDITORIAL

“PFUI!” “SCHANDE!”

By DANIEL DE LEON

BORIS REINSTEIN, one of the members of the Socialist Labor Party delegation to the International Congress at Stuttgart, just returned to America. On his way to his Buffalo home Reinstein called at this office and gave a rapid verbal report, preliminary to a fuller one in writing, of his activity on the continent since the adjourning of the Congress.

Reinstein visited Austria, parts of Southern Germany and Switzerland. He spoke in several places, meetings being arranged for him in Vienna and especially in Munich, where large posters announced his coming. Reinstein limited himself to the question of Unionism in America—a subject to which the European, Continental as well as British, is becoming alive with pronounced intensity. Reinstein addresses “fanatically” uncovered the criminal acts of pure and simple craft Unionism. As his illustrations fell heavy and hard upon the startled ears of his audiences, not a man of whom left from beginning to end; as the “un-fanatical” acts of the A.F. of L. were successively exposed; as the criminal conspiracy between the capitalist class and their labor-lieutenants were laid bare;—as this process proceeded, cries of “Pfui!” (“Fie!”) “Schande!” (“Shame!”) went up from all parts of the halls.

The German comrades, from whose breasts the cries of indignation were wrung, little knew, as yet, that their condemnation attained not the American labor fakir only. It attained also the political reflex of the American labor lieutenants of the capitalist class—the pure and simple Socialist party politician. Surely, the receiver and enjoyer of stolen goods is no better than the thief himself. No more can the praise-singer of and rounder-up for the fakir be any better than the object of his song, or the beneficiary of his “bruiser’s” work. In Europe, especially the continent, Unionism may be backward, but hardly corrupt and corrupting as capitalist craft Unionism has become in America. Laboring under the delusion that the word

“Unionism” means elsewhere what it means in Germany, the German comrades were found to be ideal ground for the pure and simple political Socialist party man to keep in the dark concerning American conditions, to be used as a dumping ground for the falsest, the most misleading, the most viciously mendacious articles about “the magnificent proletarian work” done by these bulwarks of American capitalism. The consequence is that the German opinion concerning Unionism in America has hitherto been utterly absurd—how absurd may be judged from the circumstance that Mitchell was called “Comrade” out there, and Gompers is considered a Socialist.

The “Pfui!” “Schande!”, now beginning to be heard in Germany, against the traitors to the working class in America, on the economic field, will eventually, if not sooner, resound with increased indignation against the traitors to the international working class—the Socialist party conveyers abroad of information so false, that it throws all workers abroad off their guard against the machinations of American capitalism.

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

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