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EDITORIAL

“STRIKE THE BALLOT BOX WITH AN AXE!”

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IF such a thing were possible as men, engaged in criminal conspiracy, keeping faith with one another, few, if any, criminal conspiracies could be brought to justice. Hunters of crime bank upon that. Hence the reward speedily offered for betrayal. The conspirators, each judging the others by himself, hasten to secure immunity by “peaching.” Somewhat the same principle holds good with conspirators of stupidity. There is no conspiracy of stupidity imaginable without some conspirator “giving away the snap.” However “cleverly” the leading conspirators may imagine they have woven their web, stupidity being the law of such a web’s existence, someone of them, if not several, will find it impossible to “keep his shirt on.” Off will go the shirt!—and exposed stands the secret.

The despatch from Seattle reporting the capers of the “I-I-I’s,” or “I am a Bum” hallelujahists, illustrates the point with regard to the conspiracy of the pin-heads, centered on Bush temple, Chicago, who sought to transform the I.W.W. into an Anarchistic, bom-throwing concern.

The plump and plain announcement of the purpose was, of course, not to be thought of by the schemers. The purpose was veiled under a tissue of fine-spun theories regarding “political action.” Though the term is one well understood, the schemers sought to twist it out of shape in such way that their real purpose—pure and simple physical force—should not suffer, and yet at the same time shield themselves from detection. Here was stupidity in double dose—apart from the stupidity of conceiving the Social Revolution as the possible fruit of a conspiracy, the stupidity of imagining that all the conspirators would, or could keep the secret long.

It is of secondary importance whether “I-am-Bum” Wilson gave correctly his own and his fellow “I-am-Bum” Walsh’s biography as that of thieves who have

served their terms in penitentiaries. Interesting, in this connection, though the fact be of the glorification of theft, in short, of slummery, the leading fact is the plump and plain advice blurted out by the said Wilson to “strike the ballot box with an axe.”

Off came the shirt so painfully kept on!—It had to come; it did come off.

What was known before to every intelligent, and admitted by every honorable man since the Chicago I.W.W. convention, is now established by the “peaching” done by one of the criminals himself. Hitherto the testimony was circumstantial. Now it is direct.

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

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