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EDITORIAL

AN OPEN LETTER TO KARL LEGIEN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

TO Karl Legien,
Social Democratic Member of the Reichstag,
Berlin, Germany.

Fellow Socialist—

In his this year's annual report to the Convention of the American Federation of Labor, Mr. Samuel Gompers says (page 16 of the Report of Proceedings, First Day, Morning Session) speaking of you:

“He [that is yourself] made clear to all that in the United States the trade union as represented by the American Federation of Labor is the only one which is bona fide and that any or all antagonism or rivalry should be condemned. He emphasized as of considerable importance the fact that several years ago some so-called radical Socialists of Germany organized ‘Socialist unions,’ and that the congress of the Socialist party of Germany then issued directions that these unions should not be recognized as bona fide organizations and that any Socialist who became a member of a so-called ‘Socialist union’ should be expelled from the party.”

We desire to know whether you did say that “in the United States the trade union as represented by the American Federation of Labor is the only one which is bona fide.”—If you did that, or substantially that, we desire to know whether you were aware of the fact that the said A.F. of L. admits to its conventions fraternal delegates of religious, Protestant and Catholic, bodies, who, as in the instance of delegate Father Dietz, inject not merely the religious, so-called, but the sectarian issue into the counsels of the “only bona fide” trade union in America; and whether you were aware of this other fact, to wit, that the said “only bona fide” union makes capitalist politicians “honorary members”?

We desire, furthermore, to know whether you did say, with or without empha-

sis, that “several years ago some so-called radical Socialists of Germany organized ‘Socialist unions,’ and that the congress of the Socialist party of Germany then issued directions that these unions should not be recognized as bona fide organizations and that any Socialist who became a member of a so-called ‘Socialist union’ should be expelled from the party.”—If you did say that, or substantially that, we desire to know—

1. The year when the said so-called “Socialist Unions” were organized;
2. The year when the Congress of the Socialist party of Germany condemned the said so-called “Socialist Unions,” and ordered the expulsion of any of the party’s members who joined such unions;
3. If such “Socialist Unions” were, indeed, organized, and if the German party, indeed, took such a stand against them, we desire to know whether at that time there was in Germany any such organization as the above described A.F. of L.

With Socialist greetings—

ED. DAILY PEOPLE.

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