

EDITORIAL

HAYTIANS IN THE UNITED STATES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE passengers from Porto Colombo, Hayti, who arrived in this city on the steamship *Venetia* give a graphic account of the “army,” which, in some localities of Hayti, is turning up with much clatter to carry out the Revolution. It was at Miragoane that these passengers saw this “army” at its fullest and best. One of them describes the sight as follows:

“We saw a couple of dozen members of the army. And such an army. Every man had a red hat, which he highly prized, and that was the extent of his equipment. Some had in addition a pair of trousers and no shirt, while others had a long shirt, but the trousers were missing. Others had some simple garment which reached from the waist about two feet toward the ground. A few had shoes, but the red hat was always there.”

A similar grotesque and ramshackle “army” of the “revolution” is on exhibition in the United States. The term “Industrial Unionism” has grown into a word to conjure by. It is a mighty term, because it implies a mighty thing. But it so happens with “Haytians” everywhere, that they have no eye or sense for the thing itself that is mighty; all their eye and sense is for the show, or the emblem. The “revolutionists” in Hayti have heard about the “Red Cap”—also a term to conjure by, seeing that it implies a mighty thing—but having, like “Haytians” everywhere, no eye or sense for the thing itself, they seize the show, and make a grotesque exhibition of themselves and of the revolution. Likewise their kindred in the United States with the term “Industrial Unionism.”

We have seen, quite recently, one set of them, centering in the officers of the Western Federation of Miners, issue a proclamation under the motto of “Industrial Unionism,” and the body thereof pronounce their particular craft “THE steppingstone to civilization,” and arrogate to themselves the right to overlordship in the Labor Movement;—an exhibition of craft Union backwardness that even Gompersism could not out-do. This bunch represents the “Haytian revolutionists,”

the whole extent of whose equipment is “concentrated” in the “red hat.”

Another bunch there is that also shout “Industrial Unionism,” and interpret the political clause in the Preamble of the I.W.W. to mean the setting up of their own press and their own lecture bureau. This bunch represents the “Haytian revolutionists,” whose equipment consists of the “red hat” and “a pair of trousers in addition, but no shirt.”

A third bunch there is that also shout “Industrial Unionism,” but who are of the opinion that a revolutionary Union need not have a separate organization as a political party, but can itself put up its political candidates, as a Union, and without a separate political organization. The circumstance that a Union recruits its organization, not from a geographic territorial demarcation, but from an industry, and that political candidates must be set up, and agitated for within the geographic boundaries that they run in;—none of such circumstances cuts any ice with this bunch. This bunch represents the “Haytian revolutionists” whose equipment, besides the “red hat,” consists of “a long shirt, but the trousers missing.”

A fourth bunch is seen of “Industrial Unionism” shouters, who do admit the necessity of a separate political organization, but never on a national scale, only eventually, and then only, perhaps, in municipalities. In other words, “Industrialism,” which recognizes the necessity of the integrally national organization of the industries and the impotence of the craft Union folly of localism, is to be advocated politically only in localities, never nationally—is to have a craft Union, not an industrial political expression. This bunch is rather thin. It consists of “Haytian revolutionists” who have a simple garment which reaches from the waist two feet towards the ground,” and nothing else on except the “red hat,” of course.

To every drama there is a farce as contrast; to every tragedy a low comedy. As the sacred breath of the drama of “Revolution” is contrasting itself in Hayti in the grotesque guise of men the extent of whose equipment is a “red hat,” and hardly anything else, so here in the United States the mighty Movement of Industrial Unionism is contrasted with a grotesquely equipped crew, the extent of whose equipment is the red hat of the term “Industrial Unionism”—and, for the rest, almost, if not utter, bareness.

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

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