

# DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 6, NO. 322.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, MAY 18, 1906.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

## SHYSTER SOCIALISM.

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**T**HIS week's issue of *The Worker* is illuminated with an article by Thomas J. Morgan, Attorney and Councillor at Law of Chicago, on the proper attitude of a party of Socialism towards Unionism. The article is condemnatory of the Industrial Workers of the World; the gist of it is found in the conclusion that the officials of the Socialist party and its members should support the party's position in its relation to the economic organization of the workers. And what is that position? The Esquire proceeds to explain: "THIS POSITION REQUIRES EVERY MEMBER TO JOIN THE UNION OF HIS TRADE OR OCCUPATION."

Had the Esq. stopped there, then, his Socialism would have been of his usual stamp—the stamp that Adolf Strasser, with one little question, let all the wind, or all the water, out of at the Denver convention of the A.F. of L.—in short the windbag, or the tub without a bottom stamp—or, in still other words, the stamp of Socialism that does not square with facts. Only last month the Silver Bow, Mont., Trade and Labor Assembly triumphantly acquitted the I.W.W. cigarmakers of the place of the charge of scabbing, preferred against them by the Gompers Union, and the acquittal was based upon the principle and fact that the Gompers Union REFUSED TO TAKE THESE MEN INTO ITS ORGANIZATION. The A.F. of L. Marble Workers charges \$200 initiation fee, thus keeping out the large number who have not that amount; the Lithographers demand \$65; other organizations even more; the case has been recorded in these columns of a garment worker, who, not having the initiation cash, was told by Reich, then the chief of the body: "Have you not a coat, d——n you? Pawn that!" Likewise has the document been printed in these columns by which Gompers' Tobin contracted with a shoe manufacturing firm, in consideration of the firm's allowing Tobin to organize its employes, that he, Tobin, would not organize the employes of certain other competing firms. The list

could be prolonged indefinitely. It tells the tale and explains why the bulk of the Working Class is unorganized—the “existing Unions” are not labor organizations, they are caricatures of Trusts, they are Job Trusts, their structure excludes the idea of organizing the Working Class, they raise barriers against the admission of more members than they can conveniently provide for, they thus exclude the majority of the workers from organization. Non-members could not break in with an axe. These are facts. None who ventures to speak upon the subject of the attitude of a party of Socialism towards Unionism may ignore them. Accordingly, the Trades Union attitude of the Esq. would amount to demanding from every member of his party the impossible feat of “joining the existing Union of his trade,” notwithstanding the doors are bolted and barred against him. Such a “Trades Union attitude” would be a genuine sample of Morganian Socialism—it does not square with the facts, it is visionary.

But, as indicated, the Esq. did not stop there. Having stated that the position of his party “requires every member TO JOIN the Union of his trade,” the gentleman proceeds immediately to explain what is meant thereby. Says he: “This means THE ENDORSEMENT of existing Unions . . . not the organizing of opposition Unions issuing opposition labels, or denouncing and cartooning their leaders.” In other words to JOIN does not mean to join. The word “join” is used merely as a shyster’s trick to mislead. Seeing that “to join” the Union of their trade would soon be found to be a physical impossibility by the members of Esq.’s party, they are to be lured with the idea that they may “join,” and then, when they try and fail, they are suddenly to be confronted with the interpretation that to JOIN means to ENDORSE; that it means to do everything except organizing themselves—that would be “opposition Union”; that they may not, consequently, issue a label of their own—that would be an “opposition label”; that they may not express themselves upon the conduct of the leaders of the Unions which keep them out in the cold—that would be to “denounce and cartoon” those leaders. In short, to JOIN means to ENDORSE; and to endorse means to bow meekly and submit to have the Juggernaut of Capitalism ride over them, never finding fault with the Unions or leaders who place them at such a disadvantage, and allow their proletarian potentiality for the overthrow of capitalism to go to waste.—And such a course is

soberly proposed as feasible and as Socialism!

Such is the attitude of the Socialist party as recommended by Mr. Thomas J. Morgan. The argument by which the gentleman recommends his conclusion is “38 years’ experience as a factory hand” and “25 years’ active membership” in Trades Unions. If 38 and 25 years’ experience in the Labor Movement has left “workingman Tom” in such dense ignorance concerning the facts of the case and the trend of the Labor Movement, our advice to “lawyer Tommy” is to keep dark as to the much smaller number of years’ experience he has had at law. If 38 and 25 years in the Labor Movement could not enlighten him on that subject, thick enough to cut must be his ignorance on jurisprudence.

Or is it merely a case of shysterism transferred to the field of Labor?

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded March 2009

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