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EDITORIAL

NO “BUNDS” HERE!

By DANIEL DE LEON

READERS of the *Daily People* will have seen in these columns an advertisement by the Wire Frame Makers Union calling a mass meeting on the East Side for the 4th instant. As the announcement set forth, the meeting was to be held under the auspices of the Industrial Workers of the World; it was to discuss the question “of how to raise the trade from its present miserable condition”; and English and Jewish speakers were announced for the occasion. The advertisement was also offered to the Yiddish *Vorwaerts*, a Jewish Social Democratic party paper in this city, and was refused by the same with the statement that the Union in question should join the United Hebrew Trades. The action of the *Vorwaerts* proceeds from the theory that in America also there should be a “Bund”, and it aims at the goal of establishing a “Bund” here. Both the theory and the aim are mischievous to the Labor Movement of the land in general, to the Jewish workingmen in particular.

The “Bund” is a Russian organization of Jewish workingmen exclusively. It is a form of organization whose exclusive Jewish make-up is not a matter of choice but of compulsion. The special, the exceptional Russian conditions left and leave no other avenue open for recruiting the Jewish workingman into the revolutionary Socialist Movement. In Russia, this element stood and stands before the alternative—either remain dumb, driven and slaughtered cattle for the Czar regime, or organize against it upon strictly racial lines. The alternative is and was dread. It implied either complete effacement of the valuable Jewish element as a force in the Russian Revolution, or the almost equally fatal course of founding a revolutionary working class body upon a principle that does violence to a cardinal tenet of Socialism, to wit, the solidarity, the oneness of the Working Class, regardless of race, nationality, religion, or any other previous form of servitude. Of the two alternatives, the Jewish workingman in Russia chose the latter as the

lesser of two admitted evils. This, in condensed form, is the "Bund's" own justification and apology for its existence. In Europe, there are those, Jew as well as Gentile, who do not accept the "Bund's" justification as valid. They claim that one of the very evils given by the "Bund" as a reason for its being—the lumping of the Jewish together as Jews, due to the religious tyranny exercised upon the Jew by the Czar regime—is an evil which the "Bund" would tend to perpetuate rather than to end. Whether the "Bund" or its European opposition is right is a matter upon which the Socialist Labor Party has taken no stand. Both on the International Bureau and at the Amsterdam Congress, the representative of the S.L.P. has kept his hands off. For one thing, the situation in Russia is so abnormal that it requires actual habitation on the spot to acquire the requisite local coloring before determining upon a matter of such practical detail; for another, the whole issue may be considered as locally European, with the men on the spot as best qualified to handle. For these very reasons, however, we are eminently qualified to pass upon a "Bund" movement in AMERICA. Here the thing must be condemned without reservation.

Taking the Russian "Bund's" own official utterances, its hand is forced: fain would it act otherwise, but it can not: it can not because of the backward-barbarous state of things met nowhere but in the Czar's domains. If this reasoning means anything, it means that, even in Russia, the "Bund's" peculiar policy is a policy of transition: it means a recognition of the danger that lies in that policy, and the desire to drop it as soon as possible: it means, in short, the express and emphatic condemnation of such a policy wherever the backward-barbarous Russian conditions have been out-grown. In America they are wholly outgrown. Strychnine is rank poison: under certain pathologic conditions life can be saved only by the administration of the poison. The pathologic condition of Russia may need the application there of the "Bund". In America, the "Bund"-strychnine could only promote death. A "United Hebrew" trades body in America is a Russian "Bund" on American soil. The administration of strychnine to a body that does not need it, and in imitation of the practitioner's administration of the poison to a body that does need it, is a criminal quack practice. The segregation, in America, of Jewish workingmen into "United Hebrew" trades, and the promotion of such segregation, is, where innocently done, the work of stupid quackery, and, where intentionally

done, the work of criminal schemers, bent only upon their private, petty, vulgar profit, at the expense of the American Movement in general, the Jewish workingmen in particular.

Of all races—just because of the special conditions still existing in Russia and making the “Bund” there a necessity—of all races, none so much as the Jewish workingman is liable to be played upon by the capitalist class to his own undoing, and the undoing of his fellow wage slaves of other races. It follows that of all leaderships, upon none more than upon the Jewish leadership is it so incumbent to free their constituencies from the thrall of racial vanity and cohesion. The Jewish spokesman of Jewish wage slaves is, to say the least, criminally negligent when he raises not his voice against the herding of Jewish workingmen in the “United Hebrew” trades. When, therefore, a Jewish *Vorwaerts* is found shooing Jewish wage slaves into imitation “Bunds”, it convicts itself of felony to the American Labor Movement, and of double felony to the wage slaves of its own race: it attests its moral kinship to the nativistically Labor-disrupting and America-hating Social Democratic New Yorker Volkszeitung Corporation, emulous of the latter as a lackey of the Gompers A.F. of L., which is the lackey-in-chief of the Belmont Civic Federation.

The Jewish wage slaves in America must shatter all American “Bunds”; theirs is the duty to shatter these as completely as the Irish wage slaves in America must shatter the Irish anti-landlord organizations set up in America by Irish-American rack-renting landlords. As the latter are schemes of Irish schemers to prey upon the wage slaves of their race in America, the former are schemes of Jewish schemers to prey upon the wage slaves of their own race in America by perpetuating sentiments that have no place here except in the capitalist manuals to manoeuvre the Working Class into separate camps.

No “Bunds” in America!

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

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