

The Misrepresentation and Lies of the Capitalist Press (Early July 1905)

The delegates who assembled in Chicago last month in response to the call for the industrial convention were as representative a proletarian gathering as ever met in this or any other country. The task that awaited them was a s difficult, all things considered, as any that eve confronted a body of workers, but they were equal to it and as a result of their deliberations and actions there is now a sound economic working class organization in the field; and although its progress will be beset with difficulties, it will sturdily face and successfully overcome them all and fulfill the great mission for which it has been organized.

From the very first the capitalist papers misrepresented and in fact deliberately lied about the convention. I have it upon good authority that all the Chicago dailies united in instructing their reporters to “knock” the convention wherever possible and in other respects to ignore it. They did even worse than this, in that they resorted to downright mendacity to accomplish their purpose of defeating a body of men who by their records had proved that they were above the corrupting influences of capitalist bribery and whose object it was to unite the working class for their liberation from wage-slavery.

The capitalist organs are all very loyal to the American Federation of Labor for reasons that readily suggest themselves.

To show how the capitalist press treated us it is only necessary to say that at their own solicitation I furnished a statement in regard to the convention and its objects. All the Chicago papers were supplied with a copy of it and *all of them suppressed it*. Not a single line appeared, although the statement was furnished at their own solicitation. Next, they sent reporters accompanied by shorthand writers to interview me in regard to the convention and the work it was expected to accomplish. I took the time to dictate an extended and detailed statement. *Not a single line appeared*. Then again, when I was obliged to leave the convention before adjournment to fill some speaking engagements, these same papers reported that I had left in disgust, which was an unqualified falsehood.

The work of the convention, on the whole, was and is entirely satisfactory to me. It was in point of fact, in many respects, the greatest labor convention I ever attended.

The delegates differed widely in matters of detail, which was to be expected, but upon the great vital principle of uniting the working class upon the economic field in a revolutionary organization recognizing and expressing the class struggle they were one, and the record they made for themselves and their class was in every respect creditable to both their head and their hearts and will bear the severest tests of time.

Of course, there is no disposition on our part to avoid criticism. We expect it and are prepared to meet it. We have taken our stand and all the capitalist class and their cohorts of whatever name cannot dislodge us.

The predictions so freely made before the convention that Debs was seeking an office and that DeLeon would show his fine Italian hand were all designed to discredit the convention, and the fact that neither the one nor the other of these “self-seekers” holds office in the new organization forces these critics to find other reasons for opposing industrial organization in the interest of the working class.

DeLeon did not “capture” the organization and Debs is not “disgusted” with it. Such silly and stupid falsehoods will have no effect on the body of men and women who met in Chicago on June 27th, and who performed their task with such ability and such fidelity to the working class that the organization formed by them, so much needed at this time, will at once appeal to the workers of the land and they will rally to its standard in ever-increasing numbers until it becomes the dominant power on the economic field in the working class struggle for emancipation.

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