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EDITORIAL

## SAILING UNDER FALSE COLORS.

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**T**HE re-election of Samuel J. Parks, the walking delegate of the Housesmiths' and Bridgemen's Union, who is under indictment for extortion, is a phenomenon not half so interesting as another, noticeable on the occasion of the election held by the union. All the reports of the proceedings contain this passage:

“The ballot box was placed on a round table in an enclosure by three long tables placed above the round one, the watchers being required to sit at tables on the outside of the enclosure.”

That is, substantially, the style in pure and simple labor organizations generally, and thereby an illustration is furnished of how completely their minds are dominated by bourgeois, or capitalist governmental theory.

If the capitalist theory of government is carefully contemplated, if its practice is stripped of its phrases, it will be perceived to be founded on the identical principle that animated its feudal and theocratic predecessors—the principle of the inviolability and infallibility of the ruler, and the untrustworthiness of the ruled. In capitalist society, police, constables, militias, armies, watchers, inspectors, and so forth and so on, are there to “police,” to “constable,” to “army,” to “militia,” to watch, to inspect—whom? the officers? the Government? Not at all! They are there to “police,” to “constable,” to “army,” to “militia,” to watch, to inspect the ruled, the governed, the rank and file. The governORS are given a free hand, the governED are looked sharp upon the fingers. The precautions, taken at the above mentioned election of union officers demonstrate the identity of principles enforced in these labor organizations. The circumstances that surrounded this election, the pickle Parks is in, only help to emphasize and bring it into relief.

Had the Housesmiths' and Bridgemen's Union been constructed on the principle that the Labor Movement carries in its folds—the principle of popular sovereignty and magisterial responsibility—neither would Parks be in the hole he now is, nor would the rank and file of the organization be now suffering under the double disgrace of being driven to “vindicate” and yet not being able to do better than furnish a by-the-skin-of-the-teeth vindication. But no. The officers of that and of all pure and simple unions are given a free hand; they do as they please, the precaution of “enclosures” from which to watch is adopted, not towards them and their acts, but towards the rank and file and its acts; and, thus, if due to the frailty of the flesh or whatever cause, the officer goes to the dogs, instead of the rank and file being trained in the democratic virility for grabbing the wrong-doer by the neck and hurling him out, it feels instinctively responsible, seeks to screen and “vindicate” him, and wheels in line with him to place “enclosures” lest evil befall the government.

Nor is anything else possible from Labor Organizations constructed on and conducted by the principle of the “Brotherhood of Capital and Labor.”

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