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EDITORIAL

A NEAT SPECIMEN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THERE may be those who opine our severity is excessive toward that hereditary foe of the American Labor Movement, the *Volkszeitung Corporation Socialist* (God save the mark!) If any such there be, they both wrong us and injure themselves. They wrong us by imputing to us characteristics incompatible with our motives; they injure themselves by leaving themselves unguarded against an insidious cockatrice.

Ever respecting ourselves first, therefore ever respecting the public that we address, we now again, as ever, adduce our facts before drawing our conclusions. The facts being ascertained to be true, the conclusions may be judged warranted or not by the reader himself.

The *Volkszeitung* of February 16 contains the following semi-anonymous correspondence on the burning question of Unionism:

“Have been taking in the contributions concerning the Industrial Workers. For my part, it strikes me that it would be quite a good thing if those gentlemen were diligently to set themselves to work organizing all that the old and rotten Unions leave on the outside, aye, even keep out through high dues, etc. Only good could come from that, provided these new Unions don’t bring on a crash in the whole Movement, and under no circumstances play scabs. But right there my eyes strike the names—De Leon—Debs.

“Only one of the contributors touched this new boon companionship with kid gloves. To judge by all that, so far, I have heard and seen of it, I want none of it.

“What is Debs, after all?

“With just one exception, I have for the last 22 years regularly voted the Socialist ticket, and blown in many a \$10 bill, without giving my name. But this much I am free to say—so long as Debs and De Leon pull together, I shall not have a penny to spare for the Movement. And I WILL BE DAMNED [this is given underscored and in English in the original] if at the next election, in case Debs is on the ticket, I don’t vote for—yes, for

Tammany—Th.M.”

None can intelligently handle the Labor Movement who has no grasp of the phenomenon of the “Unorganized”, any more than capitalism can be grasped without a grasp of the phenomenon of the “Unemployed”. Indeed, the Social Question slips through the fingers of him who is not perfectly clear upon both phenomena. The “Unemployed” and the “Unorganized” are, respectively, pivots upon which Capitalism and Craft Unionism revolve. Without the former there can be no Capitalism; without the latter no Craft Unionism.

The “Unemployed” enable Capitalism to keep its balance in the midst of the oscillations of the anarchistical planlessness of capitalist production; without the “Unemployed” Capitalism would tumble and shrivel, unable to expand and thus work out its own destiny: The “Unemployed” are the recruiting ground for the capitalist over-lord’s army, whence he can draw his ready re-inforcement of employes, whenever he enters the war-path of expanding his production, and whither he can again dump them the moment he is through.—The “Unorganized” enable Craft Unionism to keep its own balance in even tempo with Capitalism in the midst of the oscillations of the anarchistical planlessness of capitalist production that sway the capitalist backward and forward; without the “Unorganized” the Craft Union vanishes: the “Unorganized” are the recruiting ground for the Craft Union, whence it may draw new members into its privileged precinct when Capitalism is traversing a period of expansion, and whither it can again, by means of high dues and other devices, dump them when Capitalism takes a rest.

The “Unemployed” furnish Capitalism with the appearance of scientific reason and pietistic excuse for low wages: the “Unemployed” are essential to the sacrosanct law of “Supply and Demand”, according to which the capitalist martyr to science may not raise wages, and the capitalist martyr to philanthropy finds justification in furnishing work at starvation wages: without the “Unemployed” the arcanum of capitalist science and religiousness is shattered, and the vulgar hypocrite would stand unmasked.—The “Unorganized” furnish Craft Unionism with a plausible argument for the failure of strikes: as ultimately it is the “Unorganized” who take

the places of the strikers, the “Unorganized” serve the purpose of concealing the fact that it is Craft Unionism itself that really breaks the strikes: the continuance of one organized trade at work in an establishment against which another organized trade is on strike, in short, the scabbery of Craft Unionism upon Craft Unionism would long have stood revealed but for the existence of the “Unorganized”, upon whom Craft Unionism piously and scientifically throws the blame, just as scientific and pious capitalism throws upon the “Unemployed” the blame of raising Supply and Demand and thereby compelling the capitalist to reduce wages.

The parallel may be continued into further details. Enough have been mentioned to bring out the pregnant fact that to organize the “Unorganized” is a “casus belli” with Craft Unionism. Forthwith and without delay, whoever starts organizing “all that the old and rotten Unions leave outside”, draws upon himself the belching fire of Craft Unionism; “the crash in the whole Movement is brought on”; and the tune with which the crash is accompanied is “Scab!” spewed from the obscene mouths of the scabby crew of Craft Union fakirs. Of the many valuable conquests, wrung for the Labor Movement, by the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, this was, by all odds, the most valuable—to organize the “Unorganized” is crime to Craft Unionism; it is a blow at its vitals. He who would undertake the vital task of organizing the “Unorganized” must be prepared for the “crash”, and dauntlessly face the music. He who talks “organizing all that the old rotten Unions leave outside”, without “bringing on the crash in the whole Movement”, especially if he can be mystified by the cry of “Scab”—such a specimen is a mooncalf in the Labor Movement.

Is the Volkszeitung Corporationist “Th.M.” a mooncalf? Would he were! He is worse; he betrays himself far worse. The hare may slip away from the hunter, without disgrace to the hunter; but if the hare runs up the hunter’s legs, and yet escapes being shot; if on top of that, the alleged Nimrod struts about conceitedly; presumes to impose his ignorance upon the better posted; resorts to personal abuse against those who refuse to accept his autobiography, covering “22 years of experience”, as a substitute for skill and knowledge; and even goes the length of threatening to fire upon those from whom he should learn, if the alleged Nimrod thus demeans himself, then besides a muffer at hunting, he approves himself a

dangerous-vicious man who must be treated as such, and ruthlessly exposed. Just so with the Volkszeitung Corporation “Socialists”, of whom “Th.M.” is but a fair specimen. The “hare” actually “runs up the man’s legs” in the matter of the source of the unorganized. He is aware that “high dues, etc.” bar unorganized hordes from the “old, rotten Unions”; he has been 22 years at Volkszeitung Socialism; and yet and notwithstanding, the blockhead prates about organizing these unorganized without “bringing on a crash in the whole Movement”, and yet and notwithstanding he is a timorous dupe to the cry of “Scab!” from the self-same “old, rotten Unions”; and then, adding impudent conceit to blockheadedness, and rapidly moving on to viciousness, this floating derelict of Volkszeitung Corporation Socialism fills his mouth with personal abuse, and winds up pillorying himself, along with his set, with the threat: “I will be damned if, at the next election, in case Debs is on the ticket, I don’t vote for—yes, for Tammany”!

The Volkszeitung Corporation and its incubatees are ignorant of Socialism and blockheads in the Labor Movement, conceited to their ignorance, vicious to their conceit, and to their viciousness ready deserters to the camp of capitalism.

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