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EDITORIAL

LIKE PRESS, LIKE READERS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

LIKE attracts like, and the readers of a publication are not likely to be on any higher plane than the publication itself. A recent editorial in the New York *Evening Post* stabbing labor in the back under the guise of benignity and fairness draws from one of its readers a letter, published in its issue of the 17th, bemoaning

“closed shop strikes, sympathetic strikes, and kindred labor movements—during which the participants . . . doggedly throw up their work when they are earning good living wages for the support of their families, abandoning their innocent dependents to a life of misery and starvation,” etc., etc.

There is a tricky method of attacking the cause of Labor by quoting unimpeachable facts out of all proper connection. Thus the statement of a Socialist author that the workers are ignorant, enervated and degraded—the very conditions which he recognizes as being due not to them but to their poverty, and which he only mentions in order to help abolish—is gravely quoted by a suave retainer of capitalism as proof positive that the workers are poor because of their “ignorance, enervation and degradation.”

This method of attack has at least the virtue of quoting facts, however distorted. The method of the *Evening Post's* correspondent lacks even that.

Those “good living wages for the support of their families” which he accuses the strikers of “doggedly throwing up”—where are they? Illustrative of the disasters that await him who opposes the march of progress is the fact that the very industry he quotes in support of his day dream—the garment workers—tumbles it about his ears as possibly none other would. In no other main industry has employment become so synonymous with sweating as just in the garment trades. Baby fingers

pulling the bastings out of trousers at 25 cents a day hardly suggest affluence. What those men and women “doggedly threw up” when they struck was a wage which held out only the prospect of starvation.

But even had they thrown up the most fabulous of good wages, and struck in sympathy with others poorer paid, one fails to discern the crime in that. Labor has learned its lesson of solidarity too dear to discard it now at the polite disapproval of the master class. At last it realizes that the term “sympathetic strike” is a misnomer. Sympathy has been defined as “one fellow feeling for another.” A sympathetic strike is not one workman striking for another. On the contrary. It is one workman striking for himself—for what raises his brother’s standard helps raise his own, and just insofar as his brother’s standard is lowered is his own deprived of its underpinning.

Of course the *Evening Post* and the sort of readers it attracts can’t see this. One and the other, they are capitalist class blind.

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