

EDITORIAL

UNIONISM AND UNIONISM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

SINCERE thanks are due to the Dress and Waist Manufacturers' Association.

At a season when, usually, employers "lie low" and use "diplomatic language"—the season of strikes, when it behooves that squadron of the Ruling Class, which happens to be in the fray, to exercise tremendous self-control lest their claws peep through the velvet—the season when events furnish cumulating bits of evidence to demonstrate the Socialist principle that there are "Unions" and "Unions," one set being buffers for the Capitalist Class, another set Working Class counter-squadrons to the squadrons of the Capitalist Class—at such a season, the season of the garment workers' strike in this city, the Dress and Waist Manufacturers' Association starts a Bulletin the very first issue of which contains, under the caption "Making a Strong Union" the following blunt statement:

"A strong Union will be a benefit to the Manufacturers, and Members of the Association should make every effort to increase the membership in the Union so that its officers may have complete control of the workers and be enabled to discipline them when necessary."

The Union, said Marx, is the place where the worker is drilled in the knowledge and discipline for the performance of his historic mission—and the lesson is confirmed by sociology and ethnology which establish the principles that indicate the historic mission of the Union to be to construct the constituencies of the Industrial Republic wherewith to overthrow the Political State.

Can such a body have aught in common with bodies which will "benefit" the beneficiaries of the Political State? Can bodies, such as social science foreshadows, and Marx pointedly defines, have aught in common with bodies that are recruited

by efforts of the beneficiaries of the Political State, and of which these beneficiaries thereby become officers de facto? Can the discipline of bodies whose present, for the fulfillment of their ultimate mission, is to prepare them for the function of supplanting the Political State, constituting themselves the constituencies of the Administration of the Future,—can the discipline of such bodies partake in aught of the “discipline” which places the members in “complete control” of officers whose bread is buttered by the very efforts of the beneficiaries of the Political State?

The answer lies on the hand.

To demand respect for bodies, the breath in whose nostrils is the support, the encouragement, aye, and the command, of the capitalist—to demand respect for such bodies under the name of “Unionism” is a despicable juggling with words. The despicableness of the act becomes all the more infamous when perpetrated to the name of Marx and of Socialism.

There are “Unions” and “Unions.” This Truth the Socialist Labor Party has hung out on its battlements—and the sight of the Truth drew and continues to draw upon the S.L.P. the fire of all those whom the Truth did indict, and thereby caused the unmasking of all the masked batteries that were and are trained upon the Working Class.

The thanks due to the Dress and Waist Manufacturers’ Association is none the less due the Association for the stupidity of making the admission that it does. The thanks due to the Association are hereby heartily extended to it.

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