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EDITORIAL

RACE SUICIDE? NAY, MURDER!

By DANIEL DE LEON

AN innocent-looking press despatch comes from Chicago to the effect that female stenographers are being broken in on the type machines by the typhotetae in their fight with the Typographical Union. The manifestation of the teachings and effect of craft Unionism, as exemplified by the women who are thus stepping in to defeat their fellow wage slaves, is horrible enough. Yet, if possible, the despatch implies an even greater horror—a downright crime committed by the capitalistic typhotetae. They are destroying motherhood.

The type-setting machine is a death-dealing weapon: it murders the operator: mentally and physically it wrecks him: it keeps the mind at a tension that cannot be sustained for many hours at a stretch without crippling it: as to the body, in particular, the machine poisons it: the inhaling of the fumes that rise from the close-by pot of melted metal directly breeds disease, and lays the foundation for many more ailments. Two hours a day, four at the most, is all that the robustest male constitution could bear with. As matters stand, the mortality among linotype operators has become appalling. If such conditions affect paternity and must deteriorate the race, they are even more baneful to woman: they prevent maternity. The inhaling of chemical gases has been found to be especially injurious to woman. Apart from injuring her physique, it physically unsexes her. Work at the linotype means to woman a blow at motherhood.

The human mind revolts at the increasing iniquities of the Capitalist Class. It coins into gold the lives of the poor; it coins into gold the collapse of the race; and it pursues its felonious career to the hypocritic claim of “patriotism,” “religion” and “love of the family.” Only in the sense that the capitalist himself is a member of the human family can his conduct be translated into “Race Suicide.” But so is the felon who murders a fellow being a member of the human race. His conduct is not called

“Suicide.” He is considered a murderer.

The Capitalist Class at large, the typhothetae in this particular instance, come fully within the category. For murder they should be tried, as murderers they should be dealt with—and will be just as soon as the hastening day shall have arrived when the Criminal Code will be administered, not by the criminal class itself, but by the triumphant people.

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