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EDITORIAL

PRECISELY SO!

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Rossland, British Columbia, *Miner* for August 7 contributes a double-barreled bit of evidence on the scabby character of fakir-led pure and simple Unionism. Its evidence covers well two points that have more than once been in these columns.

It has been shown in these columns by repeated instances that the character of a Trades Union is ascertainable from the character of its officers. That the Russian, or the German, or the French army is a body, the rank and file of which is made up of workingmen, and yet it is not a workingman's organization. Being officered by the members and representatives of the ruling and labor fleecing class, those armies are engines of capitalism, run by the lieutenants of capitalism, and there in the interest of capitalism. Similarly with the Trades Unions. The make-up of the rank and file is not enough to determine their character. How are they officered? It is the answer to that question that tells whether such organizations are "Labor Organizations," or otherwise. And by instances innumerable it has been shown that the officers that pure and simple Unions allow to be fastened upon them are the agents of capitalism, who turn the Union from its rank and file purposes to the purposes of the capitalist class. Accordingly, it has been shown that wherever the Unions are officered by labor fakirs the employer likes it, despite the noise of seeming exceptions to the rule.

In the second place it has been shown that such organizations are necessarily harmful to Labor. They are harmful in that they make the Union a buttress of capitalism, and they are harmful consequently, in that they keep the rank and file with blinkers on and head curbed to the ground, so that the working class is disabled from acquiring that oversight of the field that is requisite to intelligent action. All this has been shown before. The Rossland, B.C., *Miner* now brings further proof.

It reproduces from the Toronto *Globe* an article by R.C. Clute in which the

questions and answers are given from an interrogatory put to a leading employer of labor, one Samuel M. Robins, general manager of the Vancouver Coal Company at Nanaimo, with over 1,400 men under him. The closing question and answer clinch the whole set. They are:

Q.—“Then, if I have apprehended you right, far from dreading the Unions, WHEN PROPERLY OFFICERED, you regard them as a BENEFIT TO CAPITAL.”

A.—“Precisely so.”

Yes, precisely so!—There is nothing for the capitalist class to dread from the Unions when “properly officered.” And what “properly officered” means in the capitalist mouth may be inferred from the opinion that such Unions are “a benefit to capital.” Precisely so.

The labor organization officered by the Gomperses, the O’Connells, the Arthurs, the Boyces, the Mahons, the Shaffers, etc., etc., may at times become troublesome, despite all the efforts of these Labor Lieutenants of the capitalist class. But there is nothing in them that the capitalist need dread; they are bulwarks of capitalism, beneficent to it.

The emancipation of the working class must lie over the prostrate bodies of these scabby labor fakirs and all those who give them aid and comfort.

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

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