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EDITORIAL

THE PHRASE THAT KILLS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE numerous and remarkable strikes that have been occurring of late, have revived a phrase that belongs in the category of “phrases that kill.” It is this, that strikes represent the awakening of labor.

Was it an “awakening of labor” that caused several years ago the Garment Workers of this city to go out on strike at the dictation of the Philadelphia clothier, who, for the purpose of outstripping a New York competitor that was crowding him, enlisted the services of the labor fakirs in the Garment Workers, and caused them to strike against the New York firm?

Was it an “awakening of labor” that caused, two years ago, several thousand cigarmakers in this city to remain out on strike, fully six months after their leaders knew the strike was hopelessly lost, but yet needed to strike to keep themselves in picket-committee jobs?

Is it an “awakening of labor” that is causing the anthracite miners to indulge the vision of a victory and suffering the trials of a strike, when the whole thing is but a move of the soft coal mine barons to create a market for their goods while utilizing the miseries of the wretched miners to induce them to strike?

Was it an “awakening of labor” when, in this city, the trolley men allowed their hard conditions to be used by Wall street speculators, who incited a strike so as to “bear” trolley stock, and when that was done, left the strikers with broken heads and bruised limbs to surrender unconditionally?

No need of multiplying examples. With the strike and other such manifestations it is as with the egg. An egg is a potential chicken, it is not a certain one. If it is not hatched within a certain period, evolution goes back, and the chicken becomes an impossibility. The labor-fakir-led strike is an egg that is kept from the warmth necessary to lead to the

chick. To-day, with the ample experience back of the people, the strike is not an “awakening of labor;” it is just the reverse. It is an evidence that Labor is slumbering, and slumbering hard, narcotized by the poison that the labor fakir breathes into it.

The sign of an “awakening of labor,” gathered from strikes, awaits the reaching of the masses by that education which the Socialist Labor Party only, together with the Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance, is able to impart, is imparting, and is successfully imparting—as attested by the deep malevolence against both manifested by the modern oppressor, clerical and lay.

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