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EDITORIAL

A Case in Point

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Local Assembly 72, K. of L., of Tailors emerged last week victorious from a twelve weeks' strike. The demands, upon the refusal of which it laid down work, were 10 to 15 per cent. increased wages. The contractors and bosses surrendered unconditionally, and the men returned to work, their brows wreathed in well-earned laurels.

"But," we hear the question put from pure and simple quarters, "did you not say the strike is played out as a weapon of warfare? Now you see it isn't."

There are strikes and strikes. The strike of the pure and simpler is bound to end sooner or later in disaster; the strike of a Socialist organization of labor can never bring disaster upon it; it may even result in an essential victory.

The pure and simple organization does not consider conditions; it is built upon exclusive trade lines, hence its range of vision is narrow. In the second place, and above all, the pure and simple organization is a rope of sand; it does not realize, and it frequently even denies that the working class has to combat the capitalist class as its hereditary foe; it looks upon the employer, the buyer of labor, the same as upon any other buyer, and upon the workingman, the seller of labor, the same as upon any other seller; from this fundamental error proceeds inevitably the lack of solidarity, there is, at a pinch, between one pure and simple trade organization and another, and a further disastrous result of that is the inevitable lack of solidarity among the members of one and the same pure and simple union. Being devoid of all class-consciousness, the pure and simpler stands each upon his own pins; the collective sense is absent; the sense of duties owing to others is not there; the sense of aid needed from others does not exist to him; he will break loose at any moment from the rest and make his bargain whenever he thinks the occasion favorable. Hence strikes are difficult to manage. The strongest effort must be put forth by the striking union to prevent the members from becoming scabs.

All this is otherwise with the Socialist union. Its range of vision is wide; it knows when conditions are favorable and when they are not. And, above all, when it goes into a fight, it is animated by the purifying, because sound, spirit of Socialism. Its members know that individualism is a thing of the past; they realize their collective interdependence, to them "solidarity" is not an empty word; they are welded into one by a sense of class-consciousness that nothing can break, and when they move, they move as one man. The scab is an unknown product of their ranks.

If victory, the gaining of the point immediately fought for, is at all possible, the victory will be won by the Socialist union, where the pure and simple body would not have one chance in a hundred. And if victory, the gaining of the point immediately fought for, is impossible, the Socialist union remains strong, while the pure and simple would go almost, if not wholly, to pieces. The principle of the former, being a principle that is bound ultimately to triumph, holds the men together; the utter lack of principle in the latter scatters its members at the first lost skirmish.

Local Assembly 72 is one of the foremost Socialist unions in the country. Hence the opportunity there was just now to wrest an economic victory from their bosses was not muffed. It was clinched, and it will be accentuated at the polls by following up one strike by another, and that the Socialist Labor party's ballot.

[A De Leon editorial transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the Official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.](#)

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