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SECOND EDITORIAL

## Development of the Union in America.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he exhibition that the “K. of L.” and the Kurzenknabe brewers are giving of themselves just now suggests a book under the title “The Development of the Pure and Simple Union in America.” Such a work will surely be some time undertaken. To aid the future historian of this subject we shall off and on record some of the facts that may prove most aidful to him.

The Kurzenknabe brewers are pronouncing the “K. of L.” brewers “scabs”; the “K. of L.” brewers are pronouncing the Kurzenknabe brewers “scabs”. From the headquarters of each flamboyant addresses are being issued to the public, each side claiming that the other is no good, etc., etc.

Whence may all this music come? Is either or are both of these headquarters animated by zeal for the working class? Are their mutual charges of scabbery founded, or does one of them lie? Nothing of the sort.

Neither the Jack Hayes-Hicks “K. of L.” headquarters nor the Kurzenknabe ditto is animated by any love for the working class, or by any sense of wrong done to the working class by either. Their attitude is none other than that of hired drummers or “pullers-in” of competing firms, each of whom wants the market for itself, and, consequently, its “pullers-in” have to blackguard each other and run down each others employés.

Some capitalist brewers have found it a profitable way of advertising to say that they are “union concerns”. For this purpose they ORDER their men into the union. So soon as that is done the journal of such a “union” becomes an advertising hand-bill for the shrewd brewer. He is spoken of as a “union” concern; his business is advertised under flaming head lines; and the officers of the “union” are made to see to it that the stuff of the “union” boss is pushed. All this is money in the boss’ pocket, in so far as it is cheap advertisement; that his employés pay for it with their union dues; and that it entails upon him no hardships, on the contrary, he finds that, just as soon as the men

are “organized” by his order, instead of having to deal with each separately, all he has to do is to deal with the precious “union” officer who will keep the men quiet—provided they are sufficiently employed to pay dues on which the officer can live in drunkenness or in idleness.

But “competition is the life of trade”. The brewer bosses are not a happy family. They are competitors. If one gets a “union” to act as his “puller-in”, with the other advantages above mentioned, another set of brewers follows suit; they won’t be outdone in “cleverness”. The result is that this other set gets up a “union” of its own whose officers do for it the work that the officers of the previous “union” do for the other boss. The ultimate result is inevitable. The two sets of “pullers-in” clash, and the air becomes sulphuric with good round English and German oaths.

This is the secret of the row now going on between the Jack Hayes-Hicks and the Kurzenknabe headquarters.

In the midst of this fight of mercenaries, the unhappy working brewers, the rank and file, are the sufferers. They are among the most hard-treated workers and worst paid. Their interests are neglected, their interests were never considered, and are not considered now.

A body of proletarians officered by “pullers-in” for the bosses and paying dues to keep these officers in drink and comfort and to keep alive a “labor trade journal” that furnishes advertisements gratis to the exploiter—such is one of the manifestations of unionism “pure and simple” as it develops in America.

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

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