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SECOND EDITORIAL

## SUICIDAL UNIONISM— A CARICATURE OF CAPITALISM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**wo letters which were published in our Friday issue throw a light on the swindling proclivities of the shining lights of capitalist society; they also show the pure and simple labor fakir to be a cheap and nasty caricature of that society, imitating its vices and swindles in the clumsy manner of an amateur.

One letter showed how Boston Parasiety<sup>1</sup> got up a ball for the benefit of a hospital; \$11,000 were receipted; the hospital got not a cent; there was a deficit of \$400.

The other told how the Labor Fakirs of the Hartford Central Labor Union held a “labor” picnic; receipts, \$4,600; result: a deficit.

When the “society” swindler gets up an affair ostensibly for “sweet charity’s” sake, he plays on the heartstrings of the well-intentioned but weak-hearted individuals who imagine they are doing good; he also plays on the aspirations of those who seek social prominence via the subscription list of a “charity.” Thus he works the honest fools and the cunning rogues. The gun he uses to bag his prey is labeled “society.”

The labor fakir gets up affairs ostensibly for the benefit of a “labor union.” He plays on the correct but wrongly-guided desire for organization of the well-meaning but short-sighted workingmen; he also plays on the aspirations for political place of the crook who sees a chance of endearing himself to the rank and file by plunking down his contribution. Following closely the example set by the society swindler, the labor fakir emerges from the affair with plenty of advertising, money galore for himself and a deficit for the “union.”

The similarity of the two swindles is not due simply to the fact that the “society leader” and the “labor union” fakir are brothers in crookedness. Undoubtedly, the

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<sup>1</sup> [“Parasiety,” meaning parasitic society, or “high society,” is one of many words De Leon coined to give expression to his ideas.]

labor fakir possesses great power for evil and must be hunted down like the beast he is and destroyed. On this all decent and intelligent men are agreed. But there is a reason that strikes deep into the very foundation of the pure and simple labor union itself for this aping of bourgeois corruption.

The pure and simple “labor union” is not a labor union at all. It is a dead twig on the tree of capitalism. That tree itself has decay at its roots, and this decay first manifests itself in the twigs, of which the pure and simple “union” is one. Cornerstoned on the capitalist doctrine that “the capitalist is entitled to a share,” when that doctrine was riddled by the Socialist truth: “Labor creates all wealth; the laborer alone is entitled to it all,” the pure and simple union either had to line up with the revolutionist and become a living force and a weapon of attack on capitalism, or else remain a buttress of the wage-slave system and become a grotesque imitator of capitalist society, engaging in the same swindles, but on a penny-catching scale. It chose the latter course, hence: \$4,600 receipts; net result: deficit.

Powerless for good because based on a lie, the soil from which grows the corrupt and corrupting labor fakir, a necessary pillar of the wage-slave system, this obstacle on the path of the Revolution must be swept away and a real union based on a living truth be made a shield against the enemy, while the political sword is cutting the way clear for a government by the workers: The Socialist Republic.

The Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance must be built up. The dead twig of fakir-led pure and simpledom must be cut off.

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

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