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EDITORIAL

## “LABOR LIEUTENANTS” AT WORK.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he International Association of Machinists are just now holding a series of big meetings in New York and vicinity. The ostensible purpose of these meetings is to “celebrate a victory” obtained against the employers. The alleged victory is a concession of two hours’ work a week. The rank and file of the International Machinists who attend, and other machinists who are attracted to, these meetings verily believe that such a victory has been obtained, and are consequently jubilant. The fact is that no such victory has been obtained; the fact is that once more have the efforts of the rank and file to improve their condition suffered shipwreck; the fact is that the employer has once more circumvented his employees and pulled the wool over their eyes; and, most important of all, the fact is that these “celebrations,” these mass meetings, only record another instance where Capital manages to cheat Labor with the assistance of Capital’s “Labor Lieutenants,” the officers and placemen of the Union.

The facts are these: The rank and file of the machinists have been pushing for shorter hours. At first the employers ignored the demand, but the pushing finally became too strong to be ignored. Did the employers thereupon grant the demand? This they would have been forced to do if a large number of their employees were not members of the International Association of Machinists, that is to say, of an organization that is controlled, officered by Labor Fakirs, by “Labor Lieutenants” of the employers themselves. What the employers did was this: They posted a notice by which ostensibly two hours are granted to the men—so far, how beautiful?—; but forthwith, and “moreover that the shortening of time shall not put this shop, by working shorter hours, at a disadvantage in selling our product,” the notice proceeds to make provisions, the result of which is to eat into the time belonging to the men, and this nibbling process is carried to the point of taking back fully  $1\frac{1}{2}$  of the 2 hours granted. The concession thus offered by the employer would amount to only  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour, and everyone knows that such a small difference is soon swallowed

up again. So transparent a fraud on the men could hardly be successful if left to fly on its own wings. The men would see through it. In order to make the fraud successful the services of the “Labor Lieutenants” of the employer became necessary. Theirs was the important work of concealing the fraud; as true lieutenants of the employer in the Union these gentlemen were to puff up the concession as a victory, and, by means of oratory, cause the rank and file to swallow their defeat in the midst of hurrahs of victory.

This is work now being done at the large meetings of machinists that are being addressed by the James O’Connells, the Warners and such other lieutenants of the employer among the workingmen. This is what is actually now going on at these mass meetings.

Of course, the workingmen, whom these lieutenants of the employer are now cold-bloodedly leading into defeat under the allurements of victory, will soon find out. Then they will remember the warnings from the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance men whose voice they are drowning at these meetings, and at whose members they are now uttering vile imprecations prompted by the scoundrel Labor Lieutenants of Capital. That day is bound to come, and to come soon. But, whether soon or late, the Organized Labor of the land—the S.T. & L.A.—can abide its time. The curses now ignorantly hurled at it will be turned to blessings, while the scoundrel Labor Lieutenants of the Capitalist Class, being discovered and standing bare and exposed, will be thrown out of the windows by the men whom they are now selling out.

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

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