

EDITORIAL

## THEY INDICT THEMSELVES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A printed circular has reached this office, dated Tampa, Fla., Nov. 14, 1900, and signed “International Cigarmakers’ Union No. 336.” The circular purports to give the International Cigarmakers’ side of the story in the conflict that has broken out between it and “La Resistencia,” an independent local of cigarmakers in Tampa. Last Sunday’s DAILY PEOPLE published La Resistencia’s statement.<sup>1</sup> It is a great pity that the extraordinary length of the statement now issued by Union 336 makes impossible the giving of it also in full. Unable to reproduce it, we shall mention its salient features. These certainly are worth knowing.

The statement of Union 336 is addressed to the businessmen, but more especially to the cigar manufacturers of Tampa. These are told that Union 336, together with its national organization, the International Cigarmakers’ Union, is a “conservative organization,” whereas La Resistencia is depicted as a revolutionary affair, a body of “malcontents,” presumably, of course, malcontents with the existing social conditions; that Union 336, together with the whole International Union, consists of “American workingmen,” and the inference is allowed to transpire that the La Resistencia body consists of non-American workingmen; the further point is made against La Resistencia that it is guided by “imported agitators”; and finally the attention of the manufacturers is called to the great advantage to them of having Union 336 men for their employees, on the allegation that these men are infinitely more helpless in their dealings with the manufacturers than La Resistencia men would be. The exact language upon this last point is as follows: “This Union must, by its law and constitution, get a general vote of all American Unions of cigarmakers before your factories are closed by a strike”; this Union, consequently, “is a better friend to you than a local Union like the Resistencia,”

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<sup>1</sup> [“Union Wrecking: Cigarmakers’ International Arousing Race Prejudice and Forming Rival Unions.” *Daily People*, Sunday, November 18, 1900. Reproduced on page three. Enlarge to read.—R.B.]

which “can vacate your tables on an instant’s notice,” and thus “damage your best interest.”

Union 336 could hardly have drawn a fuller indictment against itself, along with its Gompers-Strasser-Maroushek-Dan Harris International organization of cigarmakers. Out of its own mouth it stands convicted a body inspired wholly by sentiments, views and principles that are repulsive to Labor, and that can only be a curse to the Working Class.

It is not the voice of honorable Labor that ever breathes race or national distinctions. These distinctions are levers for the capitalist, the exploiter, to wield. The workingman who stirs up these distinctions is a reprobate; the organization of workers that utters such language is a libel upon a Labor Organization.

It is not the voice of virile Labor that ever is heard expressing “contentment” with existing conditions; least of all is it the voice of virile Labor that would ever take from the lips of the fleecers themselves the word “malcontent” with which these ever seek to stigmatize the virile worker, who, chafing under the yoke of capitalism, seeks to emancipate himself. The workingman who applies the word “malcontent” to his fellow wage slave is a poltroon; the organization of workers, guilty of such an act, is a barn of white-livered dunghill-cocks.

It is not, no, never is it the voice of loyal Labor that will make a virtue out of its own weakness with the capitalist, and that will raise the colors of the “Employer’s Interests” above the colors of the “Interests of Labor.” The workingman who hucksters his services with praises of his own “inoffensiveness” to the exploiter is a deserter; the workingman or organization of workers, that would warn the exploiter against the wage slaves who organize in such manner as to be most powerful in their conflicts with Capital,—such an organization is a traitor to the Working Class.

After sinning on these cardinal points, and standing branded by its own irons as a prostituted concern, it can hardly add much to the infamy of Union 336 that even in its cowardly posture, the colors it flies are fraudulent.

Odd, indeed, must sound the charge against the La Resistencia agitator that he is “imported,” when the charge comes from an organization whose Organized Scabbery swarms with such malodorous importations as the Marousheks, the Gomperses, the Strassers, the Dan Harrises, etc., etc., etc. Again, the infamy of Union 336 gains deeper dye—a dye that spreads over the whole International Union, which it seeks to boister itself with—, when its claim is considered that, by the International Union’s laws, “no shop can be closed by a strike without a general vote of all the Unions.” What about Davis’s shop in this city? No such general vote has been taken; indeed, none such is needed; the shop itself voted over-whelmingly

against a strike; and yet it was pronounced on strike by the "imported" agitators, in violation of the actual law of the International Union; and, based on this violation of its own laws, the Organized Scabbery of the International Union have had the effrontery to calumniate the Alliancemen who went {back} to work at Davis's despite the bogus strike.

The organization of labor that is not planted squarely on the class struggle can develop only in one direction,—the direction of a buffer for the capitalist class, run by the Labor Lieutenants of Capital. Pure and simplemindedness is the enemy born of the Working Class: it is twin brother to the Capitalist Class. The statement of Union 336, together with the conduct of the rest of the International Union, furnishes, though merely cumulative, still valuable evidence of this fact.

**UNION WRECKING.**

**CIGARMAKERS INTERNATIONAL AROUSING RACE PREJUDICE AND FORMING RIVAL UNIONS.**

**Organized Scabbery Resorts to Force in Tampa—In the Interest of the Bosses It Would Smash a Strong Union. Statement Issued on the Subject.**

TAMPA, Fla., Nov. 16.—The officers, the Organized Scabbery, of the Cigarmakers International Union, these "anti union wreckers," are making a desperate attempt to wreck La Resistencia, the trades union organization of the cigarmakers in this section of the country. It culminated last night in an attack on one of the largest cigar factories in the city. The building was crowded with men and women and for half an hour the International men fired shot after shot at the building. Over 800 shots were fired, but fortunately no one was injured.

The determined effort to smash La Resistencia is due to the fact that the International officers draw no dues from it.

The following statement was issued last week.

**TO THE PEOPLE OF TAMPA:**

No, it is not true, as it has been stated by the officers of the International Union, that the conflict between their union and the Resistencia is due to race prejudices. No, it is not true, as they say through the press, that the Cubans refuse to work with Americans in the cigar factories. La Resistencia is composed of several nationalities, including many Americans, and Americans are today members of our Executive Board. The Cuban element is the one that predominates—constitutes the majority of our members, because they are the strength and chief factor that sustains and gives life to the Havana cigar industry. And to illustrate it, here are some facts taken from our books:

Cubans in La Resistencia	1,558
Spaniards " " "	550
Americans " " "	394
Italians " " "	310
Others " " "	128
Totals	2,880

As can be seen, we are not exclusivists. The conflict now existing is due to the absorbent spirit; absolute and unjust, of the officers of the International Union, which forgetting that all of its Union in the locality is due to the Resistencia, has pretended to dominate all and absorb it in the most brutal way, boasting of a strength it did not have, and of course found itself foiled when the test came.

The officers of the International, without stopping to think that their union is too absolute to be accepted by the Havana Cigarmakers, made vain by the relative growth of their local union, due to the influence and favors of the Resistencia, tried to do as they already have done in other regions; to present definitive battle to the Resistencia so as to smash it or absorb it, and to this end they prepared an ambush, using as tools the new union of strippers organized by them, as the International never had a strippers' union, they organized them into the American Federation of Labor, an act opposed to all principles of trades unionism and to the friendly spirit they should have shown towards the strippers' union already existing and affiliated with La Resistencia.

We knew of their act in regard to the organizing of the strippers, but never protested, as we have been always willing to be liberal in this respect, but we were soon to find out the meaning of said new union. They had not been organized two months, with scarcely a hundred members, when a difficulty arose between members of our union and the employer in a certain shop. He seemed to accede, but on Saturday they were victimized, and when their secretary went to redress their wrongs and called upon the remaining strippers to sustain her, they simply said they had joined the International, and of course we called out our men.

This has not been the only unfriendly shop the International delegate was undermining the strippers, and we thought it was high time to interfere, and we did interfere to save our sister union.

This has not been the only unfriendly act of the International. In their newspaper and in their relations with our central committee, they have always looked for and brought conflicts and discord, which only have been avoided by the prudent prudence of our committeemen.

It is an open secret that the officers of the International have picketed on street corners, in all places, that soon theirs would be the only union in the locality; that those Cubans and Spaniards who did not desire to join the International would have to come in by force, because they would provoke a general strike, and that in two or three weeks the funds of the Resistencia would be wiped out and the International would be then master of the situation, in accordance with this plan they started the rumor all over, that in September there would be a general strike ask-

ing for a raise of \$4 per thousand—a rumor that we knew where it had started, and therefore took precautions.

Knowing as they know our temper, they had hopes that with such a rumor we would be getting impatient and would finally present ourselves the petition for said raise of \$4. When, through our prudent course in this matter, they saw their plans foiled, and knowing that the great federation of the Havana cigar industry was about to be realized, they decided to precipitate matters and provoke the conflict anyway, and to this end they took hold of a few and candid strippers, to use as a cat's paw, who would unthinkingly lend themselves to the plans of the officers of the International union, who only see and only have as goal their personal aggrandizement, even if they risk the welfare of organized labor.

As our paper, "La Federacion," kept silent as to the attacks, unjust and rude as they were, hurled at us from the columns of their organ in the press, our committee was forbearing and dignified before the aggressions and informalities of the executive board of the International, they thought we were cowed by fear and were afraid of their humbug claims of millions untold and power without limit, and that they only would have to shove us and we would come to the ground. They went to the fight bragging, or, better to say, ordering out our people who accidentally belong to the International, and their show was that of a balloon that being pricked, bursted, to the general amusement of a thinking people.

Now they want to take refuge in the folds of the banner of patriotism and wish to incense against us the opinion of the honest American people who are strangers to the tobacco industry, saying that we refuse to work with Americans and that the liberties of the republic are at stake if we do not recognize the union card of the International union.

Deceivers! The republic and its liberties are in danger! To what law actions do defeat and lack of honesty compel certain kinds of men.

Tell us, autocratic officers of the International union, does not the same danger exist to the sacred and free American institutions when you compel by force that every cigarmaker join your union in those regions in which you have the strength to compel them? Did not the same danger exist when in New York you crushed the more liberal union of cigarmakers called the Progressives, and which you compelled, by all means to join in your union? Did not the same danger exist (which is only the bogey) when, about the 1st of May last, you compelled several independent organizations to join your union? How about Philadelphia! In all these cases it

light of liberty and the republic shone upon you, but when you see that your union can't be imposed upon us, then that very sun is eclipsed, and seeing everything black, you call in to your help the authorities and the American people against a horde of ANARCHISTS and ungrateful CUBANS. But the thinking American people will see through your coarse plot and give right and justice to those that are entitled to them, as is their wont to do.

Your game is too well known for us to stop in our organizing march. We look to the unity and federation of the Havana workers, irrespective of the creeds or nationalities. We wish to see an organization in every locality better suited to our interest and character and the special conditions of our industry. We will exhort, as we have before exhorted, the Clear Havana cigarmakers to be calm and dignified in their actions. Our conduct is unimpeachable. The people of Tampa know us to be the chief cause of the progress of the community in all branches. They know us to be laborious and law-abiding, and we will have their sympathy—in fact, we already have it.

We must keep on our highminded policy, we must remain firmly entrenched within the bounds of our inalienable rights. Our federation will be a success and will add not only glory and luster to the city of our adoption, but be a factor in the welfare of humanity, bringing about the true Brotherhood of Men.

**LA FEDERATION.**

**SIGNED:**

By the Secretary of the Cigarmakers, 2380 strong.

By the Secretary of the Packers, 120 strong.

By the Secretary of the Pickers, 160 strong.

By the Secretary of the Banders, 26 strong.

By the Secretary of the Strippers, 1248 strong.

By the Secretary of Shop Employees, 100 strong.

By the Secretary of Employers of Bars and Restaurants, 150 strong.

Total, .....4,684