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EDITORIAL

## NEW? NAY, EXCEEDING OLD!

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**P**RESIDENT Shaffer of the Amalgamated Association knows one thing, and another he does not know. The thing he knows is that a continuous repetition of methods that have uninterruptedly proved ineffective and disastrous is apt to draw suspicion upon a "Labor Leader," and thus defeat his own purposes; the thing he does not know is that just as soon as people's experience has become so ample that their deceivers find it necessary to cover up appearances, the jig is up, or on the way to be up: suspicion, once aroused and justifiedly so, is not apt to be thrown off the scent: inquiry, once set on foot, will continue and never rest satisfied till the badger is unearthed.

The pure and simple strike, with all its appurtenances, the subsequent pure and simple boycott with all its rattle-traps, have been tried in a long series of trials. The result is that, to-day, the share of the American workingman in the product of his labor is over 44 per cent less than it was fifty years ago. This fact might escape the rank and file; they were not there fifty years ago; for that the average life of the American workingman is too short: most are worn out with labor and die young; but what does not wholly escape them is the broken-reed nature of the staves they leaned on, the pure and simple strike and boycotts, that their leaders had confidently stated were all-sufficient for protection. These they found to have regularly snapped in two and cruelly lacerated them in the snapping. All this President Shaffer knows, and knowing, he also knows that to talk the identical language of old would seriously expose him. Accordingly, in his speech at Wellsville he took pains to be distinctly heard to say that he was not now managing a strike "in the ordinary sense of the word." What, then, is the extraordinary sense of the word in which this strike is managed? President Shaffer gives the clew to the answer. It is playing the stock exchange and the political move. President Shaffer obviously does not know that this fraud will be seen through, all the quicker as there is nothing new in it.

The pure and simple strike and boycott, together with their combined rattle-traps, never were anything but feints. While the rank and file picketed and boycotted, and was clubbed and shot and arrested by the henchmen of the very parties that their Fakirs induced them to support, the methods of the stock exchange and politics were going on behind the scenes. The Fakirs, wrenching the Labor Movement out of joint, placed it on the false ground of “common interests between Capital and Labor,” instead of on the true ground of the class struggle, and dealt in capitalist methods. To either join or take the tip from stock exchange “bears,” and thus turn strikes, “for the promotion of wages,” into manoeuvres for speculations in stocks, is an old and favorite Labor Fakir device; nor is the device of dabbling in politics at such times less old, witness the raft of strike leaders who bob up with political jobs after the “settlement” of strikes.

Nay, there is nothing new in President Shaffer’s management. It is the old, old system of exploiting the latent resentment that is in the breast of the worker against the individual plundering capitalists, and turning it to the personal advantage of the Labor Fakir, which is to say, the capitalist system of labor fleecing.

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