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SECOND EDITORIAL

Social-Economic Caricatures.

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The German Typographical Union No. 7, of this city, affiliated with the I.T.U., contemplates furnishing the latest proof of the theory we have often advanced, to wit, that the pure and simple trade union is not a labor organization, but a caricature of capitalism.

After much straining and struggling, the unemployed of the union had succeeded in raising the out-of-work benefit to \$5 a week. This did not suit the pure and simple element in the union, and now it has decided upon a true caricature of a financier's stroke to circumvent the new outlay.

The plan is to provide a benefit for "invalid members"; these are to receive \$5 a month. So far so good. But on the skirts of this plan lies the scheme of placing all the unemployed upon the "invalid members" list. Thus, instead of giving to these \$20 a month, they are to be disposed of with \$5, and the union will be the gainer to the amount of \$15.

In the genuine, the upper capitalist crust, the feature of financiering consists in small profits, but in such large numbers that the aggregate gains are huge. The financier who shaves one-eighth of a per cent. on a transaction covering millions, rakes in thousands upon thousands of dollars. The individual profits are slight, the total makes up for that and is huge.

True to its anti-labor instincts, the pure and simple Typographia No. 7 is intent upon raking in profits out of its own unfortunate members, and true, again, to its small traders' instinct, it operates upon so small a scale that its aggregate "profits" are as ridiculously small as its individual shavings. Save up all the fifteen dollars it likes, and despite its increasing unemployed membership, the total is trifling, insufficient to accomplish results.

But not in this respect only is the caricature evident. It peeps also through the folds of its middle class and small traders' false pretences: Capitalism plays the vampire trick on the worker; this is one of its leading features, especially in a Democratic-Republican country like this, where the worker has the ballot, and that ballot must be rendered harmless in his hands by befooling, hoodwinking, cheating him. Thus we find in this capitalist society the capitalist politicians periodically advancing projects that are intended to make the capitalist fatter and the worker leaner, but covering up these poison-pills with a sugar coating that renders them externally agreeable to the worker, and induces him to swallow them up to his own undoing. Thus, for instance, at this very time, the scheme to lower the wages of the working people in America is being prosecuted by virtually dumping within our borders millions of the pauper laborers of Asia, the West Indies, and the approval, aye, the enthusiasm of the working people is enlisted by wrapping up the scheme in a "glorious war" that arouses their love of country.

Similarly does Typographia No. 7 proceed only upon a lower caricature level. The idea of providing for the invalids of the union is one that is bound to enlist the support of all the unemployed; having thus captured their hearts, the union expects their aid in putting through a scheme which, like the war, looks innocent and even good, but which carries along with it the plan of rifling the pockets of these unemployed out of three-fourths of the benefits they now get, and, furthermore, exclude them from competition in the shops by laying them on the shelf as "invalids", and dumping them upon other trades.

The hugeness of the profits of capitalist financeering dignifies the smallness of their itemized gains; the false pretences by which capitalists enlist the co-operation of the workers to their own undoing, by this war, for instance, are dignified by the hugeness of the fleecings that will flow. On the principle that causes some admiration to be bestowed on the bold, daring highwayman of large scheming power, the large results of capitalist manœuvres gain a certain admiration. But on the same principle that the petty aims and devices of the sneak thief are unqualifiedly repulsive, so also are repulsive the aims and methods of pure and simpledom—the grotesque caricature of capitalism.

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

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