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EDITORIAL

AN OPEN LETTER TO L.H. GIBSON, MANAGER NATIONAL WHOLESALE LIQUOR DEALERS' ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA.

By DANIEL DE LEON

To L.H. Gibson, Manager

National Wholesale Liquor Dealers' Association of America,
Cincinnati, O.

DEAR SIR:—Answering your courteous letter of the 16th of the current month, this office should be pleased to receive from your office such “news, editorial and special matter bearing upon the question of Prohibition” as you may be kind enough to forward. In accepting your tender we do so, not merely upon the strength of the French saying that “whatever is good enough to be given is good enough to be accepted.” Your statement that “there is a way to deal with the question (Prohibition) which agitation has forced as a problem for solution,” renders us positively curious to ascertain the solution you may present. We are intensely curious to ascertain what the solution can be that a capitalist, that is, a labor-exploiting, industry can find to an issue raised against it by other capitalist, that is, other labor-exploiting interests.

Prohibitionism differs in mask only from other bourgeois moves. The mask of a High Tariff is “protection to Labor”; the mask of Free Trade is “Labor’s breakfast table”; the mask of Prohibitionism is “a sweet, clean home.” At bottom these movements are one—all the three gnaw at the entrails of the proletariat, and thereby render the homes of the workers ever less “sweet.” The home can not be sweet so long as the share of Labor in the fruit of its toil declines, as decline it must under the present social system. There are more homes wrecked by the Prohibitionist treasurer of the Standard Oil than by all the saloons of this city and your city combined. Accordingly, the Socialist Labor Party is not taken in by the

mask of the Prohibitionist bourgeois.

On the other hand, we must be free to confess that neither has our enthusiasm been kindled by the arguments of the anti-Prohibitionist Liquor Interests. Their arguments of “freedom” sound too specious for consideration. The same right a man may have to take himself off the earth he has to get drunk—provided no ill come to others from his act. To reel along the streets to the annoyance of others; to soil the thoroughfares with the consequences of a liquor-over-laden stomach; perchance to indulge in the sport of popping shots out of a gun to the danger of others’ life and limbs—these are frequent consequences of the “freedom” demanded by the Liquor Interests; and the consequences prove the demand too sweeping to be sound. The consequences strongly suggest a mask not unlike that of Protection, Free Trade and Prohibition—a mask behind which something else lies ambushed than that which the mask suggests.

We certainly are curious to be made acquainted with your solution, and to impart it to others.

Very sincerely,

EDITOR DAILY PEOPLE.

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