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EDITORIAL

INEFFECTUAL WEAPONS—THE STRIKE.

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It is not a matter of record that any labor fakir ever laid down his life in a strike. However, it is a matter of record, and it is a long and bloody record, that labor leaders have urged the men on to strikes, to demonstrations, and led them into positions where they were shot down. The labor leader has usually nothing to lose by a strike, and he often has much to lose unless the strike takes place. It is a time when the internal upheaval in the organization allows him to play fast and loose with the funds, and the external complications give him an opening to play from the union to the political world without.

In a strike there are pitted against each other two things that stand out in vivid contrast: first, the wealth, the legislative and executive power of the capitalist, and the lack of these things on the part of the workers. On the other hand, we have in still more vivid contrast the power of the workers to acquire the control of the executive and the legislative functions, and the utter inability of the capitalist to seize them without the direct consent of the working class.

Despite this, the strikers persist in using methods that a century of conflict has proved to be utterly worthless. Of late they have become criminal, and a strike that is of any dimensions is sure to see them broken, and their users defeated and forced to submit. Every great battle during the past few years has had the same history. There was the exulting jubilation in the number of men out, the certainty as to the outcome, the enthusiasm, the determination, and the willingness to sacrifice and endure. They were followed by humiliation, by sorrow, by the recognition of the fact that the working class had been thrown back in its fight, and often by intense suffering due to the struggle.

The majority of the strikes have been forced on the men. The employers have used them, and profited. The fakirs have used them, and profited. The men have tried to use them, and yet all the lessons which they contain have been of no profit to them. In the Pennsylvania regions the same scenes are to be enacted over again. Already the troops are in readiness, and they have been given orders to shoot to kill.

The strike will be broken as its predecessors were broken, and all the courage, all the magnificent earnestness of the strikers will have the same ending that their former efforts had.

In any encounter it is wise to use your best weapons, and not strike a truce until you have won. But in this case the miners begin the fight defeated. The troops are ready, the deputies are ready, and when their work is done the courts are ready also to protect and exonerate them.

More could be done in one election in which the working class voted right than by a hundred strikes. The voting part of it may be slow according to the computation of some, but it is much more rapid than the history of the last fifty years has proven the pure and simple union to be. The latter found the working class in a position to be organized, and it did not organize them. It found them ready to be educated aright, and it instilled ignorance into them. It left a heritage of blindness that the Socialist Labor Party must clear away. It left the working class exposed to all the brutality of the capitalist class. Not only must the Socialist Labor Party educate the men, but it must also protect them, both from the capitalist and from the labor fakir.

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

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