

EDITORIAL

THEIR “SERVICE” A DAMAGE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE *Railroad Trainman*, which says some sensible things and not a few foolish ones, is hot in the collar this month over the fact that in the labor market wages are determined by the law of supply and demand. “Trades unionism resents the doctrine and in doing so is proving of service to all,” it declares.

For a man whose entrails are attacked by the hookworm to “resent the doctrine” that that is what ails him, is his privilege. For him to seek to inflict his doctrine of “resentment” upon others in like fix, and thereby prevent their taking steps to cure themselves, is a very different thing. That is what the A.F. of L. craft unions, according to the *Railroad Trainman* itself, are doing.

“Resent” it as they may, the craft unions of the country, along with the millions whom they deliberately exclude from membership, are commodities ranged for sale in the labor market. Denial of the fact is useless. Their own report, submitted to the New York State Department of Labor and issued from Albany on the 9th of October, confirms it. It speaks of a “better market” for labor.

A commodity in a market must abide by the rules of the market. The less commodity and the more demand, the higher the price. The more commodity and the less the demand, the lower the price. So it is with shoes, so it is with potatoes, so it is with labor.

What, then, must a commodity, which seeks to better its condition, do? It can not by any manner of means increase the demand for itself. Clearly, there is but one thing it can do—it must abolish its market status as a merchandise.

This shoes and potatoes can not do. Labor, however can do it, by wiping out the labor market of capitalism and establishing in its stead the co-operative republic of Socialism. This consummation the craft unions, by shutting their eyes to the fact

and letting their energy run off into mere "resentment," are effectively if not purposely postponing. Their "service to all" is merely a damage.

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Uploaded November 2011

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