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EDITORIAL

Vanderbillionism in 'Pure And Simpledom'

By DANIEL DE LEON

Under the guidance of the alcohol-befuddled and character-shattered Mr. Ernest Kurzenknabe, now of St. Louis, the New York open Brewers' Union No. 1, also known as L.A. 684, K. of L., is giving a shocking exhibition of one of the basest features of that all-around base institution known in the armory of capitalism as the "pure and simple" trade unionism.

It is a feature of "pure and simpledom" that each such union, to use the inelegant but expressive term of the paddock, tries to play for suckers the whole rest of the labor movement and each of its affiliated bodies. Capitalist concerns, in the competition born of their immoral class interests at a certain stage of capitalist growth, combine with one another under the pretext of mutual protection, but in fact with the deliberate intent of cutting one another's throats; and they carry out their purpose. "Pure and simpledom" is an opera bouffe imitation of this tragedy of capitalist chicanery. Each "pure and simple" union sets up its shanty animated solely by the capitalist spirit of looking at and treating the world as its particular oyster, and all other labor organizations as there only to be plucked, sucked and used for its own private benefit; and the cloak of "solidarity" they all put on is cut from the identical cloth that furnishes the cloak of "patriotism," with which capitalism tries to conceal its cloven hoof. Under the cloak of solidarity the "pure and simple" union wields the fratricidal knife; and the more ostentatiously it displays the cloak and invokes its sanctity, the busier it is in sharpening its own axe, applying it to the throat of its brothers, and trying to promote its own narrow and stupidly selfish interests at the expense of all the rest. This is exactly what Mr. Kurzenknabe's open Brewers' Union No. 1, alias L.A. 684, is doing now.

This organization has a fight of long standing with what it calls the pool brewers of New York City; its flight from the camp of the so-called American Federation of Labor did not prosper; to promote that it joined the K. of L., and here in New York it sought and gained admission in D.A. 49 of the Order. Once inside, it demanded the support of the Knights for its boycott; invoking the "solidarity" of Labor in general, and the

“duties of Knighthood” in particular, it called upon the Knights to rally to its support, and with an indignation expressed in high-sounding superlatives, it has been shaking heaven and earth, and hell included, to bring down punishment upon the “recreant Knights” who were so “forgetful of their duty and of the solidarity of Labor,” as to fail to start and carry on a hopeless fight in favor of the boycott in the C.L.F.—a New Trade Unionist central body that simply ignores all beer boycotts. If the conduct of Brewers’ Union No. 1 ended there one might pass it by as an instance of hot-headed, though possibly honest fanaticism. But its conduct does not end there.

It so happens that, connected with D.A. 49 there are a number of tailoring organizations whom “pure and simple” bodies of the same trade in the A.F. of L. have been waging war against. These “pure and simple” placed a boycott on the K. of L. Hackett & Carhart clothing shops, and then got the Central Labor Union—a “pure and simple” central body in which Brewers’ Union No. 1 is also represented—to endorse the Hackett & Carhart boycott. What was then the conduct of that “solidarity” and “Knighthood” invoking Brewers’ Union No. 1? Did it put an example of solidarity and Knighthood by fighting the imposition of a boycott upon its brothers of the K. of L. in the tailoring trades by a body with which it was connected? Did it display that minimum of decency that one should expect by at least protesting against the attack upon a body of workingmen whose assistance it had sought and was insisting upon receiving down to the extremest point? Did it, who declares “unknightly” the simple act of not making a useless noise at the C.L.F.’s refusal to endorse its boycott, display some Knighthood by resisting the positive aggression of a boycott upon its brother Knights? No! Not only did it not, but it disobeyed the mandate of D.A. 49 to protest in the C.L.U. against the boycott on Hackett & Carhart, and sought to sneak out with the coward’s explanation, whisperingly given, that IT DID NOT WANT TO MAKE MORE ENEMIES!!

In other words, Brewers’ Union No. 1’s principles are:

“Let all the other labor organizations go to ruin, provided we can stay alive; they are there only to be ridden by us; we insist upon the K. of L. aiding us in our boycott, but we won’t burn our fingers aiding them.”

This is the “pure and simpledom” adaptation of the Vanderbillion motto:

“THE PUBLIC BE DAMNED.”

No tyrant of the Middle Ages was half as execrable as were those morally and physically deformed beings which he shrewdly picked from among the people, and with the aid of whom he deceived and misled the masses under the guise that these nasty

pets sprang from the ranks of the people themselves. Such physical and moral deformities are the "pure and simple" unions of our own days; they are the nasty pets our modern tyrant, capitalism, rends the labor movement in twain and deceives the wage slaves with; and one of their typical types is Mr. Ernest Kurzenknabe, together with his Brewers' Union No. 1. On the lips of this infamous crew, nine-tenths of whose leadership is sodden with alcoholism, "solidarity" is a lie; it blocks the path of the workers' emancipation; it is a certain disrupter of the proletariat; it brings the labor movement into disrepute; it is ready to sell the wage slave with the Judas kiss for the paltry Judas wages; and when, as in the instance in point, it additionally seeks to cover itself with the doubly sacred cloak of "Unionism" and "Socialism," it reaches the culminating point of organized scoundrelism. Thanks to it, a beer boycott, theoretically the easiest to enforce, has become simply ridiculous in New York.

To clear their path, the New Trade Unionists' uplifted arm and hammer must and certainly will come down upon and crush the monster's hideous skull.

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

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