

# The People.

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SECOND EDITORIAL

## What Now, Bakers?

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he columns of the *Baker's Journal*, organ of the International Bakers' Union, contains in its last issues matter that suggests the above question.

It is now about seven years ago that Mr. Heinrich Weissmann turned up in this city from California. He came as a baker, a profession he had "learned" in jail while serving a term for a fiendish dynamite conspiracy. From the time he arrived here until the date of the exposures of him in the journal of his own union, he was as busy as the Shakespearean "rat without a tail" in doing all the mischief possible to the Socialist Labor party and to the New Trade Unionist movement. In this work he was aided by the office he received of editor of the *Baker's Journal*. His pretence was that the Socialist movement, etc., was harmful to the working class, that the Socialists were corrupt, etc.; and his supporters during this whole fight were the labor corruptionists Gompers, Kurzenknabe and Pomeroy.

The struggle was intense. Weissmann got the worst of it in two ways: The baker's organization dwindled down in his hands, while independent bodies of the trade sprang up, and the Socialist movement increased. During the whole of the contest the International Union of Bakers upheld Weissmann. It shut its eyes to the array of facts and arguments presented by the Socialists, and to the still more tangible evidence of the union's collapse. In the meantime Weissmann prospered. From having nothing, he became a baker boss himself; he was found regularly as the "representative" of Labor on the platforms of fake reform, capitalist organizations, on lobbying committees, etc., and from year to year his funds grew larger, until he no longer needed the bakers. When he reached that point the scales dropped from the eyes of his dupes. To-day the *Bakers' Journal* tells of his "falsehoods," his "tricks," his "frauds," his "political intrigues, harmful to the union," the futility and even harmfulness of his alleged "labor legislation in favor of the bakers," etc., etc. To-day the organ of the bakers confirms all that THE PEOPLE has along been saying, and adds a lot more.

What now, bakers?

To say that what happened to the International Bakers' Union may happen to any organization of labor; that it is a case of misfortune owing to the individual depravity of a member, will not hold. Rascals, frauds and swindlers may get into any organization, but no organization can become the dupe of such unless such organization is so constituted as to invite and give a chance to such fellows. The cholera microbe can enter any body; but it can thrive upon and kill only such bodies whose stomachs have lost their healthy digestive powers. The Weissmann cholera microbe entered the Socialist body of the Central Labor Federation, but there the microbe had no show: the stomach of that body ground the disease down and secreted it in all safety. That the International Bakers' Union is in its present low state of health is, accordingly, not the fault of the Weissmann microbe alone, the International Union itself bears part of the blame.

Let Weissmann be cut out, and off, and branded—what of it? Will the International Union be any safer? No. As constituted, the reappearance of another Weissmann sooner or later is certain; in fact, his reappearance is invited.

The union that does not come out plainly on the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance platform is a union whose stomach is incapable of casting off the labor fakir microbe before it has done mischief. Only the principles and tactics of the S.T. & L.A. can give security against such ills. In the S.T. & L.A. the link is broken that connects the working class with its exploiters. Leave that link there and the union is not a division of the class-conscious army of the proletariat, battling for emancipation; it is an appendage of the exploiter, a fertile ground for the labor fakir to thrive on.

If the International Bakers' Union has learned from its Weissmann experience, it will forthwith apply for a charter from the S.T. & L.A.; if, with all this experience, it continues on its present basis, fraternizing with the Gomperses and the A.F. of L., such conduct would be all the more reason to continue the fight against it with all the greater vigor.

[Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.](#)

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