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EDITORIAL

MASTERS AND MEN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AT the meeting of the German-American Reform Union held at Union Square Hotel Monday night, the preliminary work of lining the German vote up for the coming campaign was done. The meeting was intensely national. Speaker after speaker dilated on the solidity of the German character, the spotlessness of German morals, the intelligence of the German intellect, the sturdiness of the German reason, and the necessity for the German solidity, spotlessness, intelligence and sturdiness to act together in order that the welfare of the German might be advanced. Twining and twisting around this severe and stately Teutonic pillar was, as a matter of fact, the flag, old glory, the unsullied stars and stripes, the symbol of our adopted nation, etc.

The sentiments and stage trappings would have fitted any other nationality. Had the meeting been one of Irish, Jews, or Italians, there might have been a slight change in the virtues which their speakers modestly claimed for them, but the purpose and the way to achieve that purpose would have been the same.

This year the German-American {Reform} Union has elected to makes its followers dance to the inspiring music of "Down with Tammany." They have no definite plans as to what they wish to "up with" them. Their purpose was not to better the condition of the mass of society, to end political corruption, or to render the city any real service. They pointed to the suffering that exists, to the condition of the police force, and to many acts of official neglect. But they did that for just the same reason that they "pointed with pride" to the Fatherland, and twaddled and tweedled on Germanism and Americanism. They were playing their game, playing the great body of German citizens, and in order to play that great body they first had to make it think that it possessed all the integrity and all the intelligence contained in the city.

Their main card was "bossism." They did not wish the city governed from foreign soil. They wished ring rule to be ended once for all. They protested

vehemently against coercion. Then they resolved mightily in favor of each and every one of the things that they had attacked. The resolutions passed by the meeting gives into the hands of a committee of five practically the whole German vote controlled by the organizations represented at the meeting. They decided upon an organization that is the exact counterpart of Tammany, though it has not Tammany's power. They placed their bosses in a position to exercise the same functions, use the same coercion, and act in the same capacity as the condemned Tammany. They drew the same distinction of master and man, boss and bossed, as is drawn by Tammany, and by every other capitalist political party in the field.

The men who formulated the plans are the masters. It is now for them to beat the men into line. They must use the methods of the boss against whom they discharged so many back-action, continued-in-our-next orations. Master and man alone exist in capitalist politics, and the capitalist is the master.

It is {a} significant fact that the chairman of this meeting was the discredited labor fakir, Henry Weissmann, once President of the Bakers. His connection with that body was ended because of certain practices which tended to show him in the light of a traitor. The Fleischmann case was the most notorious. Fleischmann had been boycotted, and his yeast was "not patronized" by most of the bakers in the country. Suddenly the boycott was lifted, and a Fleischmann advertisement appeared in the *Bakers' Journal*. The price paid for the space was said to have been \$500 an insertion. The fight which arose over this landed Weissmann on the outside, and from economic faking he took the natural step to political faking. It was he that raised his voice the loudest against bosses, although his bossism in the Bakers led to a fight that practically killed the organization.

The workingman who understands his own interests can draw from the meeting of the German-American {Reform Union} certain lessons that are worth being learned. The patriotism, or rather the dual patriotism, that was paraded there is but a blind from behind which the political marksmen can bring down their game. Corruption on the tongue of such a man as Weissmann, and most of those present were of the Weissmann stamp, is an insult even to corruption. The purpose of the meeting was by no means one to replace the rule of Tammany with rule that was any purer or any better. The results of supporting such an organization could not but be disastrous to the working class.

The patron saint of the thief must have light fingers. The patron saint of the political grafter must have a glib tongue. The men who engineered the German-

American meeting have all that is requisite for canonization in capitalist politics. All that they have to do is prove that they are indeed the masters, and that their blind, fellow countrymen are their faithful and obsequious serving men.

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