

EDITORIAL

COWARDLY FOR FREEDOM, INSOLENT FOR CRUMBS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

MINNEAPOLIS Trades Council, supposedly a labor body, wrote a letter recently to Minister Wu requesting him to decline an invitation extended him to visit that city.

The insult to Minister Wu implied in that letter is more striking and becomes more contemptible when it is realized that the Minneapolis Trades Council is composed wholly of men who believe in the present method of government, who uphold the Governing Class of the United States in its principles, and who look upon ambassadors and representatives of foreign governments as having a use and a place.

The insult was deliberate, was vulgar, was uncalled for. It showed a sneaking mind and a cowardly disposition. Why should Minister Wu be asked to decline an invitation to visit Minneapolis? Will he be insulted? Who will insult him? Will the members of the Trades Council? Or are the members afraid that he will win sympathy for himself and {his} people?

No matter which way the question is turned, there is the stamp of the coward and the crawler in every part of it. Minister Wu has a right to go to Minneapolis, a right to protection there, a right to speak there, a right to plead for the free ingress of every coolie in Manchuria, if he so chooses, and a right, also, if he so chooses, to preach Confucianism. Who can deny him the right? The conceptions of the members of the Trades Council and of Minister Wu are the same excepting in degree, and he doubtlessly has the more liberal of the two. The Chinese have as much right and are here with as good intent as our missionaries in China. "American labor" will be harmed as little by Chinese immigration as by the "Christianization" of China. The place of the process does not matter. It is the underlying idea that counts.

Chinamen at home or here, under capitalism, will have the same effect on American labor.

Until the Trades Council realizes this, until it knows how to act, it but makes a coward, an insulting dastard, and an idiot, not of itself only, but of “Labor” that it pretends to speak for. It fouls itself and all it touches.

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

Uploaded September 2006