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EDITORIAL

## THE REALLY RESPONSIBLE AGENCY.

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**T**HE *Typographical Journal* for September “tells its own tale.” Two passages from the tale it tells will, in their turn, tell the tale for the rest.

The leading article is entitled “The Philosophy of Strikes.” It is not here intended to animadvert on the title. It is given merely to designate the article. In it the following passage occurs:

“It is not the workingman that is responsible for these strikes, but the great industrial system that is at fault, and it is this system that is on trial. \* \* \* Labor is not responsible for these strikes, but the capitalist system alone is responsible, and must be prepared to pay the price for all its ill-gotten luxury, until such time as it may be called upon to surrender its plunder to its rightful owners—the workingman and his despoiled family. \* \* \* The newspapers that furnish the great reading public with their knowledge upon this strike question rarely, if ever, mention the evils of this industrial slavery—for that is what it is—but harp constantly upon the ‘tyranny of labor,’ the ‘unjust demands of labor leaders,’ or throw a few sentences from the Bible, or possibly an adage or so from some old slave driver, that they have saved out of the musty past, that will bolster up this false civilization and continue it in its iniquities.”

Without even as much as the interval of a leaf, behind which to shelter one’s surprise and give one time to recover his breath—in fact facing the very article just quoted from—appears another article in the course of which the following passage from the Boston *Herald* is reproduced on the late Cincinnati convention of the union:

“At the annual meeting of the International Typographical Union in Cincinnati, last week, the printers showed an admirable conservative spirit. For one thing, attempts to justify a boycott on trivial grounds were frowned upon. One of the most important actions was on a resolution offered by a Pennsylvania delegate forbidding members of the union to join the state militia. The resolution was rejected. It has been the case in various labor

unions that hostility to the militia has received approval. The fact that the militia has occasionally been called out to check rioting among strikers has been sometimes foolishly represented as an indication that the citizen soldiery is hostile to laboring men, and a special agent of the employers. Nothing can well be more unreasonable than such an opinion. The militia is never called out in case of a strike except for the suppression or prevention of lawlessness, and there is no class of people who get more ultimate benefit from the maintenance of law and order than the workingmen. A Cleveland delegate, who is a recognized Socialist leader, offered a long resolution in favor of abolishing the wage system. The committee on laws reported against it, and the report was sustained by an almost unanimous vote. This large organization of printers appears to be controlled by conservative, level-headed men, and not by revolutionists.”

Surely, with the writer of the first article quoted from, it must be said that, not the workingman, but the great industrial system of slavery is responsible for the disturbances, generally serious, that result from strikes. But, in view of the second article quoted from, and published in the *Journal* without adverse comment, is all said that there is to be said on the subject when the responsibility is laid to the door of the industrial system? Nay, does not such a passage, from one of “the newspapers that furnish the great reading public with their knowledge upon the strike question,” and quoted by a labor journal without holding it up as a horrible example—does not that bring out the fact that the inanimate “guilty industrial system” is upheld by living beings; that some of these beings are the runners of the newspapers mentioned; and—last not least—that, back of these living beings, there are others, who act as resounding boards for such poisoned information as reaches the rank and file—these resounding boards being the runners of labor or pure-and-simple trade journals, in short the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class?

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