

EDITORIAL

THEY INDICT THEMSELVES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A printed circular has reached this office, dated Tampa, Fla., Nov. 14, 1900, and signed “International Cigarmakers’ Union No. 336.” The circular purports to give the International Cigarmakers’ side of the story in the conflict that has broken out between it and “La Resistencia,” an independent local of cigarmakers in Tampa. Last Sunday’s DAILY PEOPLE published La Resistencia’s statement.¹ It is a great pity that the extraordinary length of the statement now issued by Union 336 makes impossible the giving of it also in full. Unable to reproduce it, we shall mention its salient features. These certainly are worth knowing.

The statement of Union 336 is addressed to the businessmen, but more especially to the cigar manufacturers of Tampa. These are told that Union 336, together with its national organization, the International Cigarmakers’ Union, is a “conservative organization,” whereas La Resistencia is depicted as a revolutionary affair, a body of “malcontents,” presumably, of course, malcontents with the existing social conditions; that Union 336, together with the whole International Union, consists of “American workingmen,” and the inference is allowed to transpire that the La Resistencia body consists of non-American workingmen; the further point is made against La Resistencia that it is guided by “imported agitators”; and finally the attention of the manufacturers is called to the great advantage to them of having Union 336 men for their employees, on the allegation that these men are infinitely more helpless in their dealings with the manufacturers than La Resistencia men would be. The exact language upon this last point is as follows: “This Union must, by its law and constitution, get a general vote of all American Unions of cigarmakers before your factories are closed by a strike”; this Union, consequently, “is a better friend to you than a local Union like the Resistencia,”

¹ [“Union Wrecking: Cigarmakers’ International Arousing Race Prejudice and Forming Rival Unions.” *Daily People*, Sunday, November 18, 1900. Reproduced on page three. Enlarge to read.—R.B.]

which “can vacate your tables on an instant’s notice,” and thus “damage your best interest.”

Union 336 could hardly have drawn a fuller indictment against itself, along with its Gompers-Strasser-Maroushek-Dan Harris International organization of cigarmakers. Out of its own mouth it stands convicted a body inspired wholly by sentiments, views and principles that are repulsive to Labor, and that can only be a curse to the Working Class.

It is not the voice of honorable Labor that ever breathes race or national distinctions. These distinctions are levers for the capitalist, the exploiter, to wield. The workingman who stirs up these distinctions is a reprobate; the organization of workers that utters such language is a libel upon a Labor Organization.

It is not the voice of virile Labor that ever is heard expressing “contentment” with existing conditions; least of all is it the voice of virile Labor that would ever take from the lips of the fleecers themselves the word “malcontent” with which these ever seek to stigmatize the virile worker, who, chafing under the yoke of capitalism, seeks to emancipate himself. The workingman who applies the word “malcontent” to his fellow wage slave is a poltroon; the organization of workers, guilty of such an act, is a barn of white-livered dunghill-cocks.

It is not, no, never is it the voice of loyal Labor that will make a virtue out of its own weakness with the capitalist, and that will raise the colors of the “Employer’s Interests” above the colors of the “Interests of Labor.” The workingman who hucksters his services with praises of his own “inoffensiveness” to the exploiter is a deserter; the workingman or organization of workers, that would warn the exploiter against the wage slaves who organize in such manner as to be most powerful in their conflicts with Capital,—such an organization is a traitor to the Working Class.

After sinning on these cardinal points, and standing branded by its own irons as a prostituted concern, it can hardly add much to the infamy of Union 336 that even in its cowardly posture, the colors it flies are fraudulent.

Odd, indeed, must sound the charge against the La Resistencia agitator that he is “imported,” when the charge comes from an organization whose Organized Scabbery swarms with such malodorous importations as the Marousheks, the Gomperses, the Strassers, the Dan Harrises, etc., etc., etc. Again, the infamy of Union 336 gains deeper dye—a dye that spreads over the whole International Union, which it seeks to boister itself with—, when its claim is considered that, by the International Union’s laws, “no shop can be closed by a strike without a general vote of all the Unions.” What about Davis’s shop in this city? No such general vote has been taken; indeed, none such is needed; the shop itself voted over-whelmingly

