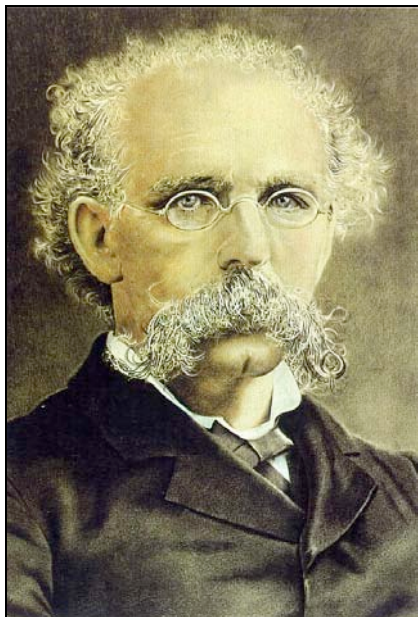


EDITORIAL

A “RECOGNITION OF LABOR.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT is always under the claim of a wish to “recognize Labor” that the Republican and Democratic politicians promote the appointment of some “Labor man” to a political job. The uniform conduct in office of these “Labor man” appointees has been such as to raise the question, In what way do these appointees benefit



TERENCE V. POWDERLY (1849–1924)

Labor, where does Labor come in? The question was tantamount to an expression of the correct answer that Labor was not “in it” at all, that, whoever was recognized, it surely was not Labor. But the question remained open, at least to the Innocents, as to who it was that such appointments “recognized.” The recent rumpus in the Department of Immigration should certainly answer the open question to the Innocents.

Mr. Terence V. Powderly had long been the General Master Workman of the Order of Knights of Labor. He was thrown down through Socialist Labor Party pulsations, having been convicted of appropriating for his own salary funds contributed, upon a call issued by himself, for the benefit of the Homestead and Coeur d’Alene strikers. He tried to start a new organization, but he had lost his hold on Labor, and failed. Being out of a job he was taken up by Republican and Democratic politicians—lay and clerical—; his appointment to a political job was urged “in recognition of Labor”; and he got the job of Commissioner of Immigration. The rumpus that has broken out in the Immigration Department has caused the publication of the following document:

"Treasury Department,
Office of Commissioner General of Immigration,
Washington, D.C.,

Aug. 5, 1898.

"My Dear Mr. Fitchie:

"I have just had a long interview with Mr. Porter, the President's private secretary, who is a candidate for Governor of Connecticut, and it is, in a sense, an administration fight. In Bridgeport they have taken snap action in calling the caucuses for to-morrow night; this he did not know until after he arranged for the interview with me. Under the rules of the party in that State, this year, any one who 'believes in the principles of the Republican party and who will vote for the nominees' may vote in caucuses, and now to the point. Can you reach any one in that city who will assist Mr. Porter to-morrow evening? I know the time is short. The Mayor of Bridgeport, Mayor Taylor, is friendly to Porter, but he is a candidate. Can't Mr. McSweeney run over and get some of his Democratic friends to get into the caucuses and help our friends out? I make this suggestion, and ask you to do what you can. I am writing other friends on the subject. If you have any other one who understands Connecticut politics, who can be trusted, get him to work.

"With best wishes, I remain sincerely yours,

T.V. POWDERLY."

Is it not now clear who it is that is "recognized" by Democratic or Republican appointments of "Labor men"? The suggestion to and wire-pulling of his subordinates by such a "Labor man" appointee to pack the caucuses of one party with partisans of another answers the question in full. Treason to Labor designates a "Labor man" as worthy of Capitalist attention: his nomination to office is intended to enable him to do some more and more effective dirty work for Capitalism: it's a "recognition of the capitalist."

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

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