

EDITORIAL

THE TROUBLE IN “THE LABOR UTOPIA.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN Dayton, Ohio, there is situated a cash register manufactory that is know far and wide as “The Labor Utopia.” It is a model factory, where workers’ betterment schemes are in vogue, and an attempt is being made to make capital and labor work together in harmony.

Events are now transpiring that show that the place is well-named. Labor troubles, threatening a strike of the 5000 employes and necessitating hurried official action, have arisen. What is the matter? Why this discord where all is purposely planned in the interest of peace? Let the news despatch tell the tale:

“President Patterson is weary of the labor troubles and threatens to close the plant and move to Europe to live unless some assurance is given that the company will have no more difficulty with the men. General Manager Chalmers quoted President Patterson as saying he was not running the plant to make money, but with the intention of making it the model factory of the world—a place where capital and labor might work together in perfect harmony—and if he thought he could not accomplish this he would ‘go abroad and live rather than worry himself with constant turmoil with employes.’”

In those words one sees the secret of the trouble in “The Labor Utopia.” They are the words of a man who regards his employes as his inferiors, to be subdued by threats that his superior economic condition can enforce to their disadvantage—they are the words of a master to his slaves. As such they show that harmony between capital and labor is only possible when labor has reached the coolies’ stage and is no longer capable of resistance.

The labor utopias are bound to be utopias. They attempt to harmonize a dominant and a dependent—a fleecing and a fleeced—class, between whom there are no mutual interests; and, between whom, because of other antagonistic relations, such interests

can never exist, as long as a spark of manhood and womanhood exists in the breasts of the working class. And this is as true of Europe, as it is of this country. The paternalistic Patterson may fly to Europe, but he will find, as did Herr Krupp, that even there labor utopias cannot escape the disastrous workings of the laws underlying the class struggle.

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