

EDITORIAL

GIVING UP THE FIGHT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WOEFUL is the picture cast upon the canvas by the annual financial account of the “Model Union”—Gompers’s International Cigarmakers. The figures shout as loudly as figures can the fact that that Union has quit the battle field against capital and is now crawling into its coffin.

Last year, the whole amount expended by the body in the class struggle was \$9,820.83. On the other hand, for sick benefit the expenditures were \$165,917.80; for death benefit \$162,818.82; and for out of work benefit \$35,168.50—an aggregate of \$363,905.12, or an excess of \$354,084.25 virtually for coffins and ambulances over the amount expended for war.

For the White Flag (or feather?) \$363,905.12; for the Red Flag (or Freedom) \$9,820.83!

Nor do these figures alone tell the whole tale. Not since 1889, when the organization had about half its present membership, did the disbursements for war fall below the figures of 1905. From 1889 to 1901 the figures ranged all the way from \$5,202 to \$137,823, rising, on the whole steadily—and, since then, dropped and dropped and dropped, until last year, with almost double a membership, they were stingied down to \$9,820, while the coffin and “ambulance” expenditures rose as steadily to a triple and quadruple amount.

The word “Union” no longer applies to the International Cigarmakers’ Union. A Union is a body of workingmen organized to wrestle with the employer, not to hug the ambulance; a Union is a body of workingmen organized to promote the interests of the Working Class, to protect them from day to day under the capitalist fire, to resist the encroachments of the exploiting class, and to drill its forces for the final act of emancipation, a Union is not a body that drills its members into purveyors for physicians, food for undertakers and receivers of the crumbs of out of work support

to keep body and soul together just enough so as to be ready at any moment that, like a pasha in his harem when he has a fancy for this or that beauty, the employer throws his handkerchief at them and gives them work again.

For the White Feather \$363,905.12; for the Red Flag of Liberation only \$9,820.83!

No wonder Belmont confirmed Hanna's appointee, and kept Gompers as his First Lieutenant! What a picnic could not the Capitalist Class look forward to, confidently, if Unionism in America could be induced to fall into the step of Gompers's "Model Union": slink from the field of battle and, instead of furbishing up its implements of war to combat the exploiter, it greased the axle-tree of its own funeral hearse.

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