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EDITORIAL

OUR PIGMY COLOSSI.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AMONG the seven wonders of the old world was reckoned the gigantic Colossus of Rhodes, which tradition says bestrode the entrance to the harbor with a beacon light in its hand and ships passing between its legs. To-day in this country that old world wonder is reduced to pigmy dimensions in comparison with the claims of some of the men of flesh and blood who are acting as would-be beacon lights to a benighted people.

Among the colossi of modern dimensions is Woodrow Wilson, president of Princeton University, who, report has it, would like to be governor of the State of New Jersey.

Mr. Wilson's aspiration becoming known, the recent convention of the New Jersey State Federation of Labor, held in Newark, stuck its non-political finger into the capitalist political kettle, tasted of the mixture, and not liking the Wilson flavor passed a resolution condemning him as a "foe to organized labor." The resolution was based on newspaper accounts of what Wilson's supporters claim were only mild and casual criticisms of what was called the standardizing of labor.

President Wilson seems to have taken undue alarm at the unimportant action of the labor fakirs, and has come out in a long letter declaring himself a warm friend of labor.

A few brief extracts from Wilson's letter will serve to show the tenor of the whole. He says:

"I have always been the warm friend of organized labor."

"I have criticised some of the things organized labor has occasionally done, but I have criticised them as a friend."

"I know of no other standard by which to judge these things than the interest of the whole community. The laboring man can not benefit himself by injuring the interests of the country."

“I am much more afraid that the great corporations, combinations and trusts will do the country deep harm than I am that the labor organizations will harm it, and yet I believe the corporations to be necessary instruments of modern business.”

There we have it, just as we have it from Teddy, and the other blatant demagogues who claim they are friends of labor, but—but recognize the “rights” of capital too. They try to hide and cover their capitalist partnership with a lot of words about the mutual obligations of capital and labor, and their equality under the law. In other words, they think to bridge the unbridgable chasm of the class struggle that divides labor and capital by planting one foot on the interests of labor{,} the other foot on the interests of capital.

The interests of the capitalist and the worker are direct opposites. What is good for the one is bad for the other. The capitalist is in business for but one thing, profits. Profits come out of the hides of the workers. The interests of the workers dictate that they yield up as little of their hides as possible.

University presidents, and would-be Presidents, may prate of identity of interests between capital and labor, but below them rage the roaring waves of social discontent drowning their feeble cries. The beacon they hold aloft is a false light intended to lure the workers on to the rocks. Once the workers see and comprehend these things these colossi of capitalism will be seen to be nothing but pigmies who, instead of straddling the angry sea, only “put their foot in it.”

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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slpns@slp.org