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REPORT

## GLEANINGS 'LONG THE ROAD. {6}

By DANIEL DE LEON

**E**N ROUTE TO PORTLAND, ORE., APRIL 9.—This will be “Gleanings.” My diary is bursting with memoranda that I have not yet had a chance to handle. Shall take up this “trip” a bunch of them.

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The talk about the “epidemic of railroad accidents” greatly partakes of superstition, or of patient thoughtlessness on the part of the “public.” It is now over a month I have been observing the “epidemic” at close quarters. It amounts to simply this:—the Companies have long been draining the road and rolling stock of every penny there was in them in order to swell the dividends, and, consequently, have not been making the necessary repairs. Furthermore, the Companies are now cheese-paring in point of operating personnel. The former cause would be cause enough to produce quite a crop of “epidemics”; accentuated by the latter cause, the “epidemic” is—well, what it is. Sixteen years ago I made a tour to this coast. I was out nearly two months. I came across only two accidents—one on the outward trip before entering Davenport, Ia., the second on the homerun near Xenia, O. Although I may have consciously lost two and one-half hours. This trip I have been out, so far, thirty-nine days only, and have already lost fifty-three hours. This loss of time was due to the wornout condition of the roadbeds; the wornout condition of the rolling stock, especially freight trains, the wrecks of fully a dozen of which have for long hours blocked my passage; and due, not the least, to the thinned-out personnel that is supposed to wait upon the trains. I have noticed this, for instance: A train arrives at one of the stations where it is “overhauled.” That work should, and can be done quickly. Formerly two men ran along either side of the train—one, tripping with a hammer the wheels and gear to ascertain whether they were in order; another looking into the “boxes” of the wheels to see if there was enough oil in them, and

adding to the supply if it had run low. Now ONE man has to attend to both jobs, on both sides of the train, and when he is through, 'tis he himself who has to climb up a ladder on the flank of the train, and replenish the ice water tanks. No wonder the trains lose time. No wonder none arrives, from these long runs, within as little as three hours late. My trains have been as much as ten hours late.—Are the railroads making hay while the sun shines?

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In Oakland, on the 4th, I had a delightful interview with the Editor of the *Kakumei* (The Revolution), a Japanese Socialist paper. Quite recently he had an article denunciatory of the American Socialists for their joining Belmont's incubatees in the howl against the Japanese. The comrades had soon enlightened him on the facts, and he hastened to correct his error, doing prompt justice to the loyal and sound Marxism of the S.L.P. and distinguishing it from the spurious S.P., whose platform demands the exclusion of the Japanese. In the conversation I had with him he revealed accurate knowledge of the difference there exists between the S.L.P. which practices its preaching—"Proletarians of all countries, unite!"—and the pack of pure and simple politicians who run the S.P. and with whom the hallowed motto is used but as claptrap, like "Freedom" on the lips of bourgeois politicians.

Gilhaus, the Comrade of Section New York, who is now out West here organizing, tells a killing story of a talk a Japanese workingman had with him on a train. The Jap's eye had fallen on the I.W.W. button on the lapel of Gilhaus's coat. He approached, touched the button and said: "Good button." Immediately his eye fell upon the S.L.P. button that Gilhaus wore on the other lapel. The Jap looked excited, and the following dialogue ensued:

Jap.—"Socialist?"

Gil.—"Yes. Socialist Labor Party."

Jap.—"[Unprintable] Socialist!?"

Gil.—"What do you mean by '[unprintable] Socialist?'"

Jap.—(produces from his pocket a copy of the S.P. California platform, and pointing to the plank that demands Japanese exclusion) "[unprintable] Socialist!"

Gil.—"That's not WE. This is the S.L.P."

Jap.—“Oh! ‘Marx Socialists’! Good! Other Socialists [unprintable] Socialists!”

Whereupon hands were shaken heartily. Thus the Japs have their own, not wholly elegant, yet expressive terminology to distinguish the bogus Socialists from the true—the S.P. from the S.L.P.

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The capitalist papers are throwing out dark hints about St. John being indicted at Goldfield. I doubt not the Mine Owners would like to tie him up. They are none too good to commit that or any other crime. All the same, from what I know of the situation in and around Goldfield I very much doubt the story, or, rather, the darksome hint. In a previous report I have described the two fictitious Goldfields—both the products of the capitalist press, and yet materially different—one being the creation of the brain of the Goldfield *Tribune*, for home consumption, the other the creation of the capitalist press, outside of Goldfield, for outside consumption. The story, or, rather hint, goes but to confirm the theory that, of the several precious lives in the United States, to-day, there is none more precious than the life of Vincent St. John.

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From reliable information received on the road I gather two things—

First—That Sherman did not lie when he revealed to Mrs. Forberg the plot he, O'Neill and Kirwan had concocted with an A.F. of L. man in Denver to “purge” the I.W.W. of its revolutionary “fanatics,” which revelation made up the subject of Mrs. Forberg's affidavit;

Second—That either the Sherman ignoramus or men and things in the Labor Movement got names twisted, or Mrs. Forberg heard a name wrong. The A.F. of L. representative in that cabal was not Victor Berger. It was Barney Berlyn, the Chicago A.F. of L. cigarmaker, whose horizon is bounded by the \$550 coffin benefit which he will be awarded when he will have been gathered into the bosom of Abraham. Barney is a typical “Neutrality on Trades Unions” S.P. leader. The Social Revolution is, in his mind, dwarfed and narrowed down to that coffin. That is his level. He it was who was in Denver as “Envoy Extraordinary” of the A.F. of L.-ized S.P. The scatter-brained worthy felt so sure of his game that he gave some of the delegates to the I.W.W. convention, who happened to pass through Denver, some

tart messages for the “coffee-and-doughnut” delegates they were to meet in Chicago. Hence the confident announcement in the Chicago *Socialist*, a few days before the convention met, that the “revolutionists” were to be dumped by the combined efforts of Sherman and the miners; hence also the dumpful notes with which, a week later, the same paper confessed that its prophecy had unfortunately not proved true. “Dumping” having been the order of business arranged by the S.-P.-A.-F.-of-Lized Sherman, he and his clique were the dumpees, with the stalwart miners’ delegates, St. John, Ryan and Heslewood leading in the work of dumping.—Barney, be it remembered, has long been the “Snap-Shot” Editor on the Chicago *Socialist*. That much for the wheels within wheels in the S.P. “Neutrality” game, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, contributory proof of the S.L.P. contention that the A.F. of L. dominates the pure and simple political Socialists’ councils.

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My California meetings have been huge. They fitly culminated night before last with the 'Frisco meeting. The Pavilion, long and wide, with seats shelving from the roof down to the floor, and said to hold from three to four thousand people, was packed to its utmost capacity. The chairman at the Oakland meeting was the talented S.L.P. artist Sidney Armer. At the San Jose meeting I met the venerable mother of St. John, and a brother of Moyer with his wife. The S.L.P. of California will henceforth set up its own ticket—I think. The circumstances that the corrupt so-called “Labor” party and the freak so-called “Socialist” party prevent the S.L.P. by law from taking its own name, as its official name in California, will no longer keep the Party from doing its political work, and thus have its agitational work accrue to the benefit of those two political disgraces to Socialism and to Labor. Not, in this instance, will another name, adopted under the compulsion of circumstances, be an alias, as the various names, adopted freely by the S.P. or S.D.P., are. On the California official ballot we shall have another name, but all our campaign literature will bear the Party’s honored name—S.L.P., whither all that is earnestly Socialist and Labor is steadily flowing, uniting upon the rockbed of INDUSTRIAL UNIONISM.

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A “gleaning” worth notice is the fact that the lumber men of the Pacific—a

“key-note industry”—hoot the A.F. of L. “organizers” (they ARE organizers, they organize for the capitalist class) from their midst. A.F. of L. attempts to organize the lumbermen for the capitalists have failed signally. In the meantime S.L.P. and I.W.W. literature is seized with avidity in many lumbermen quarters, and is breaking its way finally through.

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On all sides the evidence cumulates going to prove that the revolutionists saved the I.W.W. at the late Chicago convention from the catastrophe that the Shermanites had prepared for it. Whether the conspirators were less wicked than stupid, or as wicked as stupid is hard to tell. The conception the pin-head Shermanites have of Industrialism is that of old style Unionism labeled Industrialism. They have not the remotest inkling that Industrialism is as superior an evolution from Gompersism as man is from the dog. They do not apprehend the fact that Industrialism is the builder of a New Nation—the Nation of the Organized Workers. Their aims being petty their methods are petty also. Having been entrusted with the officerdom of the I.W.W., a Movement the purposes of which they could not understand, like clumsy nurses they were about to choke the baby to death. The revolutionists snatched the baby—the Principle—from the claws of death. I doubt whether the Principle and Object of Industrialism could be to-day understood so generally as it is understood, had not the Reactionists tried their disruptive tactics, and had the Revolutionists not proved equal to the occasion. Only trivial objections have I heard raised to the actions of the latter. On the whole a whole-souled estimate is made of their conduct. People are “catching on.”

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In this connection, and as the closing item of these “gleanings,” the touching lines should be quoted with which Mrs. Shea of the Los Angeles Local of the S.T. & L.A. commemorated the event of the surrender of the S.T. & L.A. charter of that Local to I.W.W. headquarters in 1905, when the Local merged in the I.W.W.:

Local Charter, thy mission is ended;  
 We tenderly send thee away,  
 Where, with those of identical likeness,  
 You'll be placed on the shelf to decay.  
 But thy teachings can never perish

Till slaves shall be unknown,  
Till King Capital's been abolished,  
Till those who toil shall own.

When we sit in our meeting-chamber,  
And gaze on that vacant space  
On the wall, and know thy sister  
Will fill your accustomed place,  
Our hearts are filled with longing  
For all the future will bring  
Ere the Workers' emancipation  
From Pole to Pole shall ring—  
To know if thy sister's followers  
Will be as loyal—true  
To the cause of the shackled Wage Slaves  
As those who met 'neath you.  
Yours was a hard-fought battle  
For tactics sound and right.  
May thy spoils prove worthy thy struggles  
In a sister's vast army of might.

Dear Charter, I well remember,  
It seems but yesterday,  
Since those who've embraced thy sister  
Hurled a curse at the S.T. & L.A.  
We are joyed; they have seen this error;  
Gladly we clasp their hand;  
As brothers beneath thy sister  
United forever we stand.

From the depth of the woes of the workers  
Thy banner—long years ago—  
“Emancipation of the Working Class”—  
Was planted in the face of its foe.  
Although in material numbers  
Your struggles were crowned with defeat,  
Thy banner was ne'er known to waver,  
Thy army ne'er known to retreat.

In other generations,  
When we are all passed away,  
Truthful History's pages  
Will speak of the S.T. & L.A.  
Old men—now young—in other days,  
When slavery is unknown,  
Will tell their babes thy history

In patriotic tones.

Good-bye Old Charter, you go from us;  
We would not have you stay;  
Your infant sister beckons us;  
We hasten to obey.  
She tells us that we soon shall know  
Freedom,—No tear is dropped, no sigh  
Is heard at this hour of parting—  
Good-bye, Old Charter, good-bye!

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