

The Vatican

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## Sympathetic Strike in Most Cases a Failure

It Never Has and Never Will Help the Workingmen to Make Real Progress

It is a pity that labor organizations, which are founded upon the best and soundest principles, should be burdened and handicapped by so many foolish, unreasonable and often unjustifiable policies as have unfortunately been allowed to grow up in them. Like the barnacles upon a great and noble ship, those outside and foreign growths have been allowed to accumulate and increase until, just as a ship will eventually be borne down to shipwreck and ruin unless clean of those extraneous growths, the labor organizations are threatened with ruin unless they free themselves of those unjust policies.

The writer does not wish to convey to the readers of this article that the threatening evils which he is about to speak of involve all of our good labor organizations. It is only the organization which encourages anarchy, boycott, and the complete demoralization of a certain industry, and I might say further the ones who do not follow any particular religious teachings, and that advocate any method, regardless of how terrible it may be, to accomplish a financial result to benefit a few.

No employer and no student of the labor question, who is honest and sincere in his expression of thought, will utter a word against the labor organizations or their attempts to better the conditions of the working men, so long as these efforts are carried out on the right lines, and are confined to legitimate, lawful and peaceful methods. It is because the organizations have allowed themselves to be carried away by false ideas and false leaders—because they have forsaken the high and noble principles upon which true organization is founded, and have permitted the growth of barnacles of entirely foreign nature upon them, that

some labor organizations are facing opposition, distrust and antagonism.

It is not because the organizations seek to raise wages, shorten hours, enforce sanitary laws, and laws of protection of life and limb, that they have come to be looked upon as a menace to the real progress of a city or any location where they may become strong and powerful. It is because they have enforced or attempted to enforce unreasonable regulations in many instances.

It is because they have assumed that any action the organization might take was right, or at least must be upheld right or wrong; and that anything which the employers might do, say, or suggest was wrong, and must be opposed. It is because of the attitude so many organizations have taken that labor organizations are primarily and secondarily and at all times militant organizations, and that a request for a raise of wages, or any betterment of conditions must be preceded by a threat to strike that employers have come to assume the only way to deal with the organizations is to treat them as an armed enemy and to keep them in subjection.

And there is one other great mistake which the organizations make—and which has cost them much in the way of lost friendship, lost sympathy of the general public, loss of prestige. It lies in displaying their inability to "make good" their threats. Then there is the loss of time and money. I might call attention to the fact that the loss of money in a great many cases has worked a hardship to the working man. Even though he should win a possible increase, he has probably lost more money than it will be possible for him to regain, even though he be successful in his demands.

A strike is something to be avoided, if possible. It always means suffering and loss to the men, and a great and tremendous loss to their employer, whatever the results may be. There are times when there is nothing else for the men to do, and when a strike is justified, and no one can question the justice of the action of the strikers, such a strike will generally be won, because the public and fair-minded employers themselves will give the men their sympathy and moral support.

When a strike is lost, then there is no more possible chance for the strikers to win, and the best that can be hoped for is the settlement which will permit the men to return to work—to try to bolster up such a loss caused by involving perfectly innocent and disinterested outsiders in a struggle which can result only in more loss, suffering, disaster, ill-feeling, strife, discord, antagonism and bitterness is the height of folly.

If such a course ever did or ever could result in getting for the ones first involved that for which they were contending—if it could help them to win—there would be at least a shadow of an excuse, if not a real reason, for such action, although it is hard to find an excuse for an action which brings trouble and loss to those who are entirely innocent, and absolutely powerless to influence in any way the actions of those who cause the trouble in the first instance. But there never has been and, we believe, nor ever will be, any real advantage gained for the working men by a sympathetic strike. There is nothing about it which can appeal to the general public as just and fair. There is something about the idea of beating up an innocent bystander because he happens to be in the neighborhood where two or more men are trying to settle their disagreements by appeal to brute force, which is not attractive to the imagination of the ordinary individual, and this is in effect what a sympathetic strike amounts to.

This is the reason why a sympathetic strike can never accomplish anything. Public sympathy is a vague and indefinable quantity, but it nevertheless is a mighty and almost irresistible force, and public sympathy can never be won over by a movement which is based upon such entirely wrong principles as brute force, which is not good unionism.

A great many labor disturbances are directly traceable to the agitator, who is only interested in creating disturbances, and if the man who is approached by such an individual would only seek the advice of some good responsible party, who would in no way mislead him, it is just possible that a great many of these difficulties could be settled and would make conditions much better for the working man.

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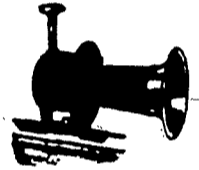
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