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EDITORIAL

“LOVE WITHOUT CHILDREN.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

HE who coined the phrase: “There is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous,” should have added “and there is an even shorter step from the sublime to the disgraceful.” If there be any doubt about that, look at the movement that has sprung up among some people in Sweden as a result of the break-down of the late general strike in that country, and which, though not officially so designated, goes by the name of the “Love Without Children Movement.”

Religious fanatics have been known to gather into communities that exclude children and the love that begets them; but neither the dementia that promoted the schemes, nor yet the utter shipwreck suffered by them, could call for aught but pity for the pathetic spectacle of mental aberration in pursuit of salvation.

At the extreme opposite end of the line, one finds the intellectual giant of a Humboldt, proceeding from totally different premises and aiming at a wholly different goal, express the belief that it was criminal to bring children into life. Neither does such a stand, nor its emphatic rejection by the human race produce the disgust that the disgraceful thought provokes.

It is otherwise with the “Love Without Children” move, set up by a certain element in Sweden, as a “hitting back” at the capitalist class for the failure of the general strike.

A strike is a revolt of wage slaves against the conditions under which they sell themselves to the master to *work* for him. The general strike is such a revolt multiplied manifold. The “Love Without Children” move amounts to lowering the affections of the members of the proletariat to the level of the efforts that the proletariat {is} enforcedly put to in the shop. It amounts to placing the gentle relations between the male and the female proletaire upon the market level on

which the proletaire finds itself towards the master class. The aspiration after fatherhood and motherhood is implanted in mankind, and has been sublimated into uplifting emotions at every step that the race has taken away from the lowest strata of savagery. Lewis H. Morgan the ethnologist points out that Love is a growth—absent in the low savage state, a force of increasing potency in the measure that man progresses, till it breaks forth in the undying lyrics of conjugal affection that have blossomed forth in all written languages: hand in hand therewith the delights, rendered all the keener by the trials, of fatherhood and motherhood. The “Love Without Children” move is in the nature of a strike, and the language it holds is: “No pay, no children!”—just as in the economic strike the language held is: “No pay, no work!”

The element in Sweden that has hit upon the idea of this bizarre “strike” makes the boast of “revolutionariness” a specialty, and, of course, is hard to distinguish from the Anarchists. It was left to such an element to disgrace the sublime general strike of Sweden with the reflex of such a “hitting back” at the capitalists for the failure of the strike as the “Love Without Children” move.

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