

Daniel DeLeon (1852–1914) was a socialist theorist, union organizer, and leader in the American Socialist Party. DeLeon gave this speech during a textile workers' strike in Massachusetts.

The essential principles of sound organization are, accordingly, these:

1st—A trade organization must be clear upon the fact that, not until it has overthrown the capitalist system of private ownership in the machinery of production, and made this the joint property of the people, thereby compelling everyone to work if he wants to live, is it at all possible for the workers to be safe.

2d—A labor organization must be perfectly clear upon the fact that it can not reach safety until it has wrenched the Government from the clutches of the capitalist class; and that it can not do that unless it votes, not for MEN but for PRINCIPLE, unless it votes into power its own class platform and programme: THE ABOLITION OF THE WAGES SYSTEM OF SLAVERY.

3d—A labor organization must be perfectly clear upon the fact that politics are not, like religion, a private concern, any more than the wages and the hours of a workingman are his private concern. For the same reason that his wages and hours are the concern of his class, so is his politics. Politics is not separable from wages. For the same reason that the organization of labor dictates wages, hours, etc., in the interest of the working class, for that same reason must it dictate politics also; and for the same reason that it execrates the scab in the shop, it must execrate the scab at the hustings [during campaigning]. . . .

. . . [M]y best advice to you for immediate action, is to step out boldly upon the streets, as soon as you can; organize a monster parade of the strikers and of all the other working people in the town; and let the parade be headed by a banner bearing the announcement to your employers:

"We will fight you in this strike to the bitter end; your money bag may beat us now; but whether it does or not, that is not the end, it is only the beginning of the song; in November we will meet again at Philippi [site of a battle to avenge Julius Caesar's assassination], and the strike shall not end until, with the falchion [a type of sword] of the Socialist Labor Party ballot we shall have laid you low for all time!"

This is the message that it has been my agreeable privilege to deliver to you in the name of the Socialist Labor party and of the New Trade Unionists or Alliance men of the land.

Daniel DeLeon, *What Means This Strike?* (New York: New York Labor News Company, 1899), 30–32.