

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 1, NO. 59.

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, AUGUST 28, 1900.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

“ORGANIZED LABOR.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

Abreast of any and ahead of many of the fraudulent terms, used to-day for the purpose of hoodwinking the working class to its own undoing, stands the term that heads this article, “Organized Labor.” Like the name of “Anti-Trust,” attached to the New York law that is intended to compete with that of New Jersey in favoring and promoting trustification; like the name “Freedom of Worship,” recently given to a bill that was intended to promote one sectarian denomination at the expense of others;—like these and not a few others, the term “Organized Labor” is found to-day on the ulcerous lips of the labor skates as a term by which to convey one idea, a good one, and conceal a fact, a wretched one. The “Labor” in “Organized Labor” is not organized; and what is “Organized” in “Organized Labor” is not Labor. Of this crying truth the below letter from a Boston cigarmaker gives the latest and most striking instance:

BOSTON, Aug. 25, 1900.

To the DAILY PEOPLE:—The great, the only Union 97, held its regular meeting last night. Many words were used, and very little sense was contained in them. In the course of the evening, however, the question of the fifty cents which are now being levied on all cigarmakers here for the New York strikers came up. A motion was put as to whether or not it should be paid in the future. A howl went up from the “labor leaders.” Then the adage of honesty among thieves was placed in a new light. A leader got up and made the astonishing assertion that “it is worth fifty cents a week to Boston cigarmakers to keep the New York men out, AS BOSTON IS GETTING THEIR TRADE!!” If that is the attitude of “organized labor” it is the most degrading confession of pure and simple labor fakir impurity and corruption we have yet had. The great Boston Union 97 is consciously scabbing it on their starving fellow cigarmakers of New York.

A CIGARMAKER.

As blazoned in this letter with words of fire, the “Labor” in this pure and simple union is not organized: it is just the reverse of organized: it is thoroughly

disorganized. The hand of every labor member in it is at the throat of all the others. Untutored on the economic and social lay of the land, this labor rank and file moves at cross-purposes with itself, tearing one another in pursuit of jobs for a living, like a mongrel pack of jackals, wolves and hyenas, accidentally thrown together, would act. Organization implies concerted action, for a common end: the labor rank and file of the union in question acts DISconcertedly, the misfortune of one being the chance of others. No stronger symptom and evidence of lack of labor organization, in fact, of complete labor disorganization, is imaginable.

Nevertheless, as equally blazoned with words of fire in this letter, there IS organization in this “Organized Labor;” but that which is revealed as organized is not “labor.” What is it?

It is the Fakir; it is Corruption!

The corrupt fakir of Boston extends the hand of fellowship to his brother-at-arms, the corrupt fakir in New York. The strike is dollars and cents to them. There is no competition between the Bostonese and the New York set: the opportunity of the one (just now the New York set) is not begrudged by the other, the Boston set. Here we find mutual assistance: thorough organization in the common interest: tomorrow, the Boston set will need a strike, that is to say, Strike Committee dues, and the New York set will reach the helping hand; and all the time the two sets pull unitedly and concentrate their efforts to the end of keeping the “labor” element, the rank and file of the body in such complete blindness to their own class interests as to preserve them in a thoroughly disorganized state, i.e., a state in which the thoroughly organized fakir element can use them to its own interest as food for cannon.

As with this limb or “Organized Labor” so-called, so do things stand with the other limbs of this alleged “Organized Labor.”

“Organized Labor,” in the common parlance of to-day, means the organized scabbery of the fakir, and the total disorganization of labor.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.

Uploaded June 2005