

# DAILY PEOPLE

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EDITORIAL

## STRIKE FOR FREEDOM!

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**he firm of R. Hoe & Co. has issued, direct from its office, a circular that has been placed in the hands of its employees. The circular is addressed to the firm itself, and the employees are required to sign it. This is the circular:

“To R. Hoe & Co.—The undersigned, employed in your works, are desirous of taking in the McKinley-Roosevelt Businessmen’s parade on November 3, next, and for that purpose respectfully request permission to absent themselves on that day, and trust they may have the full endorsement of the firm in assisting at that day’s demonstration.”

When Socialists say that slavery was {not} abolished with the Civil War, but only changed form, the muddle-heads sneer with that sneer that is characteristic of stuffed intellects. And yet, right along events happen that prove the Socialist point.

In the days of chattel slavery, petitions were not a few, proceeding from the slaves themselves, to the effect that they hoped the “divine institution” would not be tampered with by “un-Christian hands.” And now, men, said to be free, have petitions shoved under their noses for them to sign, regardless of whether they wish to join or believe in the demonstration that they “respectfully request” to be allowed to participate in. It may well be imagined that workingmen into whose mouths such groveling language can be shoved, as contained in the petition, are not expected to refuse their signatures. If they did refuse them, the refusal would be identical with a discharge.

There is no freedom where one’s bread (to say nothing of butter) depends upon someone else. The peer at the ballot box is counterpoised by the slave in the shop. It is in the shop that a living is made. The standard of freedom is to be gauged there; nowhere else. If in the shop, man can earn his full living, regulate his methods of work, go in and go out a man free to dispose of his time and his thoughts as he may choose, then and then alone is he free. If, however, in the shop his share depends

upon the will of another; if even the tenure of his job is at the mercy of someone else, then he is not free, then intimidation of all sorts will be exercised upon him; he will be forced to cringe; and demands will be made upon him, that no one would ever dare to make upon the truly brave. And that is what happens to-day, as proved by the R. Hoe & Co.'s circular.

The effort of the worker must be directed wholly towards changing his status in the shop. His status in the shop can not be changed an iota, except he first takes possession of the public powers and there legislates out of existence the social system that now renders him a shop-slave.

Here in the East McKinley employers crack the shop-whip over the backs of their working class, driving them into Republican parades; in Colorado and in other silver mine centers, Bryan employers crack the mine-whip over the backs of their working class, driving them into Democratic parades. Everywhere it is essentially the same.

The picture would be one to cause despair were it not for the presence and rise of the Socialist Labor Party. A veritable Sherman's Army, it marches to the inspiring song of "We bring the jubilee!" It shakes the workers from their lethargy; it knocks the scales from off their eyes; it utters in thunder notes the lesson that no "reform" will stand; but the complete conquest of the public powers is needed by the class-conscious workers for the purpose of knocking the shackles off their limbs in the shop, and render impossible such galling evidences of the slave driver's whip as the R. Hoe & Co.'s circular.

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

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