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EDITORIAL

## PILING IT ON.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**F**ROM Durban, Natal, as our readers are informed, it has been learned that 31 American workingmen were bunco-steered by British agents from 17 different towns and villages in the land on board a British vessel in New Orleans and taken to Durban; that the food given them on board was so loathsome that they refused it, and, therefore, refused to work; that the captain threw them in irons as “mutineers,” and had them tried as such in Durban; that, in view of the treatment the men had received (shanghaiing and improper nourishment) the “benign” Judge refused to hold them for “mutiny,” but, as a good lackey of his Government, he sentenced them to several months’ imprisonment for “disobeying orders”; that at the expiration of their terms the men, penniless, emaciated and covered with vermin, had no choice, lest they be re-arrested, but to enlist in “Kitchener’s Fighting Scouts” (as they were meant to, from the start); and that all this took place under the placid smile of the American Consul in Durban.—Stick a pin there as an instance of how “improved sanitation” is being practised on the workers, “prolonging their lives 10 per cent.”

Let us now turn to the August number of *Machinery*, a monthly journal of capitalists for capitalists, in which they give one another tips. On its pages 395–396 a letter appears, quoting from a report to the British Foreign Office by Vice-Consul Erskine on trade conditions in Chicago. Among the quotations from the Vice-Consul is this:

“The average life of the workingmen in the big engineering plants is only thirty-two. There are few men of forty-five who have not lost their speed, accuracy or sight. It does not pay a manufacturer to keep a man working on expensive machines, some costing as high as \$10,000, if he is getting out only 90 per cent. of their capacity.”

And this other:

“It is a hard matter for a man of thirty-five who is out of employment to get anything to do, for when he has reached that age,...if he is still capable of doing good work, it is to be suspected that he cannot have worked his hardest for twenty-five years, as he would then be worn out, hence he is passed over for a younger man.”

—Again, stick a pin there on the subject of the “improved conditions” that the workingman now works under, “prolonging his life 10 per cent.”; and, merely keeping in mind that the admission comes from capitalist sources, let us now turn to a third bit of testimony.

Taking up the August issue of *The Carpenter*, one of the official organs of a Gompers, or American Federation style of Union, this neat little editorial item strikes the eye:

“The average age of man has been increased seven years and six months in the last hundred years. This is due to increased sanitation and advancement in medicine and surgery, and improved conditions of the laboring class secured through organization and concentration of effort.”

If it is necessary to “pile on the agony,” so as to shame out of countenance the Organized Scabbery that leads by the nose the innocent rank and file of the pure and simple Unions; if it is necessary to “pile on the agony,” in order to quicken the sensitiveness of that duped rank and file, so that they may finally bestir themselves and fire out of the windows the vampire breed of the labor-lieutenants of the capitalist class who now trample upon them; if it is necessary to “pile on the agony” so as to nerve the arm of the Working Class to snap the bonds that hold them fettered to the chariot wheels of the Capitalist Class;—if that be necessary, that agony shall be piled on, nor shall there be any let up to the piling.

*The Carpenter* is the organ of the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners; that body is a sister organization of the International Association of Machinists, of the United Mine Workers, of the International Cigarmakers, of the Wood Carvers’ Union, of the Street Railway Employees and of a score of other Unions whose membership, in various ways, is hanging from the cross of the modern Golgotha, as may be inferred from the despatch from Durban and from the quotations in *Machinery*. The slaughter of the American Working Class—as touchingly indicated by the Durban despatch, and brutally admitted by the British Vice-Consul Erskine from whom *Machinery* contains the quotations,—is a notorious fact. What, then, does it mean when a “labor organ” makes itself the telephone for the falsifications

that the Capitalist Class needs in order to humbug the Working Class? What does it mean when such a paper lends itself to the ignominious work of throwing dust into the eyes of the Working Class? What does it mean when such a paper buckles on the armor to do the dirty work of the labor-fleecing class against labor-fleeced? Is it mere ignorance? Is it denseness? No. That must be thrown aside. The pertinacity with which the labor-leader of pure and simpledom fights Socialism in general and the Socialist Labor Party in particular, and the calumnious weapons which it uses as its only weapons, prove that that gentry have heard the Word, and that their conduct is that of rats caught in a trap, fighting for their rodent lives. It proves that the term "Organized Scabbery," given to that crew, fits. It proves that, indeed, they are the labor lieutenants of the capitalists.

He who realizes that capitalism must be fought without giving quarter, must also realize that the "Organized Scabbery" must be fought till uprooted.

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

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