

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 11, NO. 230.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 1911.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

PRESTON AND SMITH.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE report of the tenth day's session of last month's annual national convention of the United Mine Workers contains this resolution:

“That the U.M.W. of A. use its influence to secure the release of Brothers Preston and Smith, and we recommend that protest meetings be held by local Unions to show the outrage perpetrated upon these two brothers.”

It is to be hoped that the resolution will not be allowed to die the death of oblivion. It is to be hoped it will serve as a spur for the nation-wide agitation that the resolution was meant to set on foot. It is to be hoped that time spent so lavishly and frequently in protests over petty events will not have attuned the Nation's mind to trifles, and to the neglect of matters of great pith and moment.

Preston and Smith in jail are perpetual reminders of the fact that one of the weapons necessary for Labor's Emancipation, the Economic Organization, still wears the collar of the slave around its neck.

As to Preston, while serving as a picket for his Union on strike, and the employer who was struck against having threatened him with a gun, Preston forthwith drew his pistol and shot him dead. If Preston's act was not a legitimate act of self-defense, then picketing is an illegal act, so palpably illegal that it deprives the doer of the right of self-defense; if picketing is illegal then the economic organization is a slave's bauble. No picketing no Union; no Union no emancipation of the proletariat.

As to Smith, the Class that needs to keep the Union in prison felt it needed him also in prison, besides Preston. A transparent charge of conspiracy was framed up against him. Both suffer on account of the same “offense.” Both, accordingly, symbolize the identical thing to-day.

Here is a Cause—a double Cause. It is a Cause of redress of a wrong; it is above all a Cause of Principle pre-eminent.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded January 2012

slpns@slp.org