

EDITORIAL

## PRESTON'S CASE OVER AGAIN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE nominee for President of the Socialist Labor Party's national convention of 1908 was Morrie Preston. This year's S.L.P. nominee for the Congress District of Passaic County in New Jersey is Rudolph Katz.

The issue represented by Katz in 1912 is the identical issue represented by Preston in 1908—Unionism.

Preston, while doing picket duty at a strike against a Nevada exploiter of Labor, was assaulted by him with a deadly weapon, and on the spot shot the miscreant dead. Was Preston guilty of murder, or was he innocent? The answer turns upon whether picketing is a crime, or the exercise of a civic right. If picketing is a crime then the picket is stripped of the right of self defence; if picketing is the exercise of a civic right then the picket is justified to kill whomsoever assaults him with a deadly weapon. A packed jury, guided by a capitalist Judge, a sort of cross between Hanford and Archbald, pronounced Preston guilty and sentenced him to the penitentiary.

Katz, while doing picket duty at the recent Paterson strike against a manufacturer who sought to turn the light in the eyes of his women employes into bright silk for the market, was summarily arrested under a statute that provides against "disorderly conduct"; and, altho' he was not drunk, did not traffic, and stopped no one, but kept eyes open, was sentenced by a capitalist magistrate, a New Jersey cross between Hanford and an Archbald, to six months in jail. Was Katz guilty of "disorderly conduct," or was he innocent? Again the answer turns upon whether picketing is a crime, or the exercise of a civic right?

While all the other political parties in the field were, in 1908, engaged in the sport of "stealing one another's thunder," hence in the political sport of catching flies, the Socialist Labor Party alone went to the bottom of the issue that then already was convulsing the land.

The S.L.P. maintained that the social distress was brought on by the rotten-ripeness of the Capitalist State for overthrow; that this could not be done without the class conscious organization of the useful Labor of the land—the Union; and that the Union was a fighting body, needing the picket for its warfare against the employer. From these premises the S.L.P. announced the conclusion: “No picket, no Union; no Union, no Social Revolution,” and it emphasized the point by nominating for its presidential standard-bearer Preston, whose imprisonment illustrated the fundamental point at issue between Capitalism and Socialism.

Similarly this year. While now—the social crisis being four years nearer—all the other political parties in the field are proportionally wilder in their mutual stealings of one another's thunder, hence, are wilder in their unmeaning declamations whereby to cover up their own hollowesses, the Socialist Labor Party again picks up and holds aloft the great issue of the day—Unionism.

In Paterson a great Labor battle was fought during the spring of the year. The leader in that struggle, on the side of Labor, was Rudolph Katz. He, like Preston, was pronounced guilty and imprisoned upon an issue that is the great issue of Labor—Unionism. Admittedly by the court, Katz would not have been arrested had there not been a strike on. What would not have been guilt if done by any other, was pronounced guilt because done by a picket, the agent of a Union in battle.

Again the S.L.P. proclaims:—

“No picket, no Union; no Union, no deliverance possible for the Working, Class.” And with all the power that the political arm of the Labor Movement can wield the S.L.P. calls upon the proletariat of the land and all other seriously minded citizens to rally around the banner of the Uplifted Arm and Hammer to enforce the proclamation.

Wherever a presidential vote is cast for Reimer and Gillhaus, there a vote is cast for the organization and strengthening of the striking arm of the Social Revolution—the Class Conscious, the Industrial Union. In the Congress District of Passaic, where the election of Rudolph Katz to Congress lies in the hollow of the workers' hand, the candidacy of Katz emphasizes the principle:

“No picket, no Union; no Union, no deliverance possible for the Working Class.”

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded November 2013

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)