

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 5, NO. 221.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 1905.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

UNIONISM'S SUICIDE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Socialist Labor Party asserts that the Gompers, or guild brand of trades unionism, is self destructive. The principle of trade autonomy, based on the principle of the mutual interests of capital and labor, as exemplified in the trade agreement forbidding sympathetic strikes and calling for the settlement of grievances by arbitration, is a principle detrimental to working class solidarity and the advancement of working class interests. In place of the Gompers brand of suicidal craft organization, the Socialist Labor Party advocates the democratic organization of the entire working class on the principle of the class struggle, i.e., the antagonistic interests of capital and labor.

Scarcely a day passes without evidence of the correctness of the Socialist Labor Party's trades union attitude coming to light. The latest contribution to this end is the report of E.J. Collins, business agent of the International Machinists' Union at Indianapolis, Ind., published in the *Machinists' Monthly Journal* for February. Says Collins:

“There is another thing I wish to mention to show the necessity of closer trade relations among the various trades in foundries and machine shops. The union molders at the Chandler and Taylor Company shop came out on strike December 22. This is the fifth instance that the same policy has been pursued by the different managements in the past several years. They first start a fight with the machinists and aim to secure enough skilled scabs to do the difficult part of the work, and to instruct others as specialists. They continue this procedure for a year and a half or two years, during which time they have the assistance of the union molders, and then by the time they are fairly settled in the machine shop they start a fight with the molders, the result being both machinists and molders lose the shop; where if a fight had been made by both at the same time, one of two things would have happened—either the said firms would have made peace or shut up shop.”

The foregoing is indisputable evidence of the fact that the warring interests produced by trade autonomy leads to the overthrow of craft unionism and the establishment of the open shop. The employers, conscious of the division in the ranks of labor produced by these warring interests, systematically use them, in conjunction with strike breakers, to encompass the defeat and degradation of the working class in the shop. The false principles of the Gompers, or guild brand of unionism, strangle the latter to the injury of the entire working class.

As the foregoing report reveals, Labor is taking the lesson to heart. False principles cannot endure when labor learns. Working class necessity is bound to cause light to break—The Socialist Labor Party, and its attitude on trades unionism will prevail in the end. Hasten the day, by propagating Socialist Labor Party principles!

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

Uploaded November 2007

slpns@slp.org