

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 9, NO. 151.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 1908.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

UP TO THE A.F. OF L.

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TENTATIVELY *The People* commented a few weeks ago, approvingly, upon the report from Denver that, by a rising vote, the A.F. of L. convention decided to go to jail rather than condone illegality by submitting to the illegal injunctions with which the capitalist State steps in to aid the capitalist class in its economic struggles with its wage slaves. No despatches having since come in denying the correctness of the first, it may be considered truthful. In which case one more illustration is furnished to the maxim that even out of Nazareth some good may come.

Prisons are reared upon two theories—

First, that they are there for social criminals;

Second, that the social criminals are a small minority of society.

The two theories involve each other: they are virtually one: if the majority of society are criminals and ought to be in prison, “society” would be behind bars: prisons are banked upon the theory that the criminals are a small percentage.

In this fact lies a profound lesson or, rather, hint, to Revolutions.

If, as happens to-day, according to the A.F. of L., in the matter of injunctions, the power to decide what is crime rests with a small, the guilty capitalist minority, and in the hands of these are the prison keys, an obvious method to wrench the keys from the usurper’s clutches, and expose the fact that the existing prisons stand on false foundation, is for that majority whom the A.F. of L. claim to represent to go to jail—just as the A.F. of L. decided.

Government rests and ever must rest upon the consent of the governed. However far bourgeoisdom has strayed, in fact, from this its pristine principle, it does not dare to openly deny it. Even bourgeoisdom could not have the face to resist so ridiculous a sight as a majority of the people in jail, and the minority out of jail,

and claim they are the body social.

It is up to the A.F. of L. With itself lies the demonstration and the disproof of its claims—either to jail, or submission.

If the A.F. of L. speaks truthfully, no Joshua's trumpet could cause the walls of Jericho to crumble more effectively than its Denver declaration will cause the prison walls to evaporate.

If it did not speak truthfully, then itself should evaporate and make room for that organization which, uniting the Working Class, upon the political as well as the industrial field, shall agitate, educate and organize to the purpose of placing the criminal class where it belongs, and free modern society from the nightmare of the capitalist turn-keys.

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

Uploaded April 2010

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