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EDITORIAL

HIS NAME SHOULD BE DANIEL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IN true Danielic style of biblical days rises the editor of the *Chicago Record-Herald* to judgment against the workers. Is it the bosses' fault that factory operatives are held down to inhumanly long hours, and deprived of all time for proper rest or self-improvement? Not at all. It is all pure greed, pure stiff-necked avarice on the part of the workers themselves. "There is," declares the learned editor, "in many cases no compulsion on the part of the employers. The desire to earn as much as possible accounts for much of the overtime and lack of leisure."

This is surely what "efficiency" expert H.L. Gantt calls "the passing of the age of force."

If a man has control of his own living, it may require physical force, and quite a display of it, to bring him to the point of working for another. This is the source of the cries that regularly go up from the planters in Guadaloup, Honolulu and other south sea islands against the "shiftlessness" of the natives. Not quite daring to use outright physical force, the planters find it next to impossible to induce the inhabitants of the islands, whose living, due to the climate, is easily come by, to go to work on the plantations. The man who is master of his own living is master of himself.

Just in proportion, however, as a man ceases to be master of his own living, and someone else becomes the master of that living, the man ceases to be master of himself. Less and less physical force is then necessary to drive him to work. His own instincts of self-preservation spur him on. The lash of the slave driver becomes no longer necessary. A much stronger lash resides in his own stomach.

Which is exactly the position of the factory worker to-day. His wages held down to where they barely or rarely peep over the starvation level, he not only "desires," he must have, every cent he can squeeze out of his own muscles. The lower his

wages are cut, all the intenser does his “desire”—that is, his need—become. At times it may even grow intense to the point of death, as when the girls in the Triangle Shirtwaist factory, instead of quitting early Saturday afternoon as girls in some other shops did, and saving themselves from the fire that wiped out 145 of them, stayed at work and got caught—because the piece work rate in that shop was so low they needed every minute at the machines in order to live at all.

Compulsion is no less compulsion because subtlety and intangibly exercised. Force is no less force because instead of directly driving a man you corner him so that he is compelled to drive himself. His eyes closed to all this, his mental vision cataleptically fixed upon that happy time to come

When workers get no wage at all,
The bosses take the rest,

the editor of the *Record-Herald* proclaims his seer-like judgment.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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slpns@slp.org