

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 153.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 1907.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

PROLETARIANS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

By DANIEL DE LEON

LAST week alone 70,000 workingmen emigrated back to their homes in Europe. So strong is the flood back that not all the tactics adopted by the capitalist interests of the country have been able to check it. The flood has kept rising steadily despite the raising of the steerage fare from \$20 to \$30. And high-water mark has not yet been reached. Of course, the phenomenal exodus is one of the notes in the orchestra, other notes of which are the suicides of bankers and stockholders, the indictments of Directors, the failures of business houses—in short, the so-called “clearing up of the industrial sky.” The particular note, that consists in the swollen exodus of workers, is, however, big with some interesting social phenomena that the Labor Movement of America may well get ready to witness.

At the evening session of September 21 of this year’s convention of the I.W.W., the anti-Japanese agitation was alluded to by delegate Speed of Locals 92 and 276 of the Pacific Slope, who quoted two statements made to him by California orchardists who are up in arms against the Japanese. One statement was: “When the Japanese are working and they hear the whistle blow at noon, they quit immediately”—that was considered a crime. The other statement was: “When this class of workers [Japs] go on strike it is no strike, BECAUSE THERE IS NOBODY TO TAKE THEIR PLACES.” It is with the second statement we are here concerned, although the first helps to brighten the second.

To the mind of the American capitalist a “strike” is a hostile act of workers, WHOSE PLACES OTHER WORKERS STAND READY TO TAKE. This understanding of the “strike” on the part of the American employing class is quite natural. It is born of the A.F. of L. condition of mutually scabbing workers. To the mind of the American capitalist class, habituated to the practices which itself generated in its pet, the A.F. of L., the theory is: “No potential scab, no strike.” This

frame of mind transpires from the words of the California orchardist, who considered heinous the act of Jap workers in quitting work for better conditions, and the reason for whose condemnation of such an act was that “there is nobody to take the places” of the wicked Japs. The capitalists have had to yield so much to the Genius of the Age as to render external forms of respect to the “Strike”; and they were all the readier to do so, seeing that, annoying tho’ strikes are, they were not fatal to the capitalist—THERE BEING OTHERS READY TO TAKE THE STRIKERS’ PLACE. The moment, however, the conditions were absent that made the “Strike” tolerable, the “Strike” became heinous; being heinous it was a crime; being criminal, the “God-fearing” and “patriotic” capitalist felt free to withdraw even the external forms of respect from the “Strike.” Thus the Jap striker was OUTLAWED.

Similar labor conditions, threatened in the East and Central part of the country, threaten similar results. A large exodus of workers, depletes the surplus in the Labor Market. Surplus workers being no more, or greatly reduced, men “ready to take places of men on strike” are correspondingly reduced. These men being no more, their act, formerly respected as a “Strike,” ceases to be a “Strike,” therefore ceases to be legitimate, therefore renders the men who engage in it guilty of crime, therefore OUTLAWS them.

This is the prospect that is looming up before Labor in America—and it is Labor itself, by yielding to purblind leaders, and also to demagogic fakirs, in enforcing this principle upon their Japanese fellow wage slaves in the West, that is tightening the rope around its own neck, nationally.

“Proletarians of all countries{,} unite!” Every fresh development in industrial society contributes fresh confirmation of the wisdom of the Marxian slogan.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded November 2009

slpns@slp.org