

The People.

VOL. VIII, NO. 26

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1898

PRICE 2 CENTS

EDITORIAL

A Paradox.

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The report of the New York State “Federation of Labor” is a unique document. It contains the “records” of our State legislators. Judging them by the standard of Labor (the Federation’s standard) only six Senators and sixteen Assemblymen are placed on the “black list,” while the remaining ones are given favorable notices, some even placed on the “list of honor,”—all of them approved as “friends of labor” in various degrees of friendship.

If a traveler from somewhere, from some place wholly uninformed upon the condition of the masses in this State, were to read the “Federation’s” document, what conclusion could he arrive at other than that the State of New York is a Labor paradise? Out of 200 members of the Legislature, only 22 are adverse to Labor! An overwhelming majority—178—are its friends. In such a Legislature, the minority of 22 Labor enemies must surely lead a life of misery. The majority, 178 strong, surely mops the floor with the frail 22 minority; surely passes over the heads of the frail minority every law needed by the interests of the working class; and thus surely enacts, over the heads of the minority, laws that cement the happiness of the workers. The result of all this what other could it be than that the working class of New York State must be in clover? Our traveler could come to no other conclusion.

And yet, what are the facts?

The State of New York, true to her leadership in capitalism, leads also in the most shocking conditions for the working class. In this State, more than in any other, large numbers of people are degraded to the level of “charity beneficiaries”; here the sweat-shop flourishes with its filth; here the militia has repeatedly been called out to browbeat the worker into submission; here our Courts have justified the mutilation of the workingman and woman by the capitalist exploiter; here, more than anywhere else, the children of the working class are compelled to grow up in illiteracy, sufficient schools being denied them;—here, in short, though Labor everywhere is on the cross, the modern Golgotha is reared highest, and Labor’s sufferings are intensest.

This is a paradox. With a majority, 178 strong, of “labor-loving” legislators, Labor’s sufferings are severest!

But the paradoxical condition of things would last in our traveler’s mind only the length of time that it would take him to ascertain the facts. Just so soon as he did, he would realize that the 178 “labor-lovers” in the Legislature, are a specialized class of “lovers.” The love in question is not a love that flows from but that flows to them; it is the love entertained for them, not by Labor, but by the Labor Fakir; and that this love proceeds from favors received or expected, from the legislator “labor lovers” by the Labor Fakir in consideration of the good services he will render the capitalist class in keeping Labor low, soothing its discontent, and leading it like cattle to be fleeced and butchered.

The paradox vanishes. What seems incomprehensible becomes clear.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded December 2003