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FIRST EDITORIAL

FRICK OUT ON STRIKE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

Henry Clay Frick, the partner of Andrew Carnegie, of church-organ fame, has struck against his partner. This, in a nutshell, is the gist of the bill in equity filed on the 12th instant by Mr. Frick in Allegheny County, to restrict Mr. Carnegie from appropriating to himself large sums of moneys which the petitioner claims are his by right.

Already the “reform” press, together with its kindred—the yellow journals—have broken out with their morbid railleries on the “quarrels of greedy capitalists.” But greed or no greed, the Frick-Carnegie conflict is meat for sober consideration, wholly unconnected with “personalities” and well connected with some of the wheels in the internal mechanism of capitalism.

It is a capitalist theory—the Depews have after-dinnered on it; the “Rev.” Paxtons of Russell Sage imbroglio fame have made it the text of many a sermon; the lackey professors have bestowed essays on the subject; the Green Goods Guntons have delivered “labor addresses” on the motto; capitalist political stump speakers have yelled themselves hoarse thereon; capitalist courts have rendered decisions to that effect, and, unless our memory plays us false, the Carnegies themselves have, in lecture halls and other places orated thereon—that “the capitalist and the workingmen are partners.” That this theory is but capitalist flim-flam and what the flim-flam is intended to conceal, the suit of Frick vs. Carnegie will help to illustrate.

What the rights—at least, the powers—of partners are, may be seen from this suit. A partner who thinks himself aggrieved can set in operation the machinery of government in his behalf; and that machinery is ready at hand with the power to enforce its decisions: back of the placidly calm court decrees stands the physical power of marshals, sheriffs, police, militia, and if need be, federal troops. All of these are within the reach of the “partner.” Even those who never thought of that,

must realize it now; even if they do not go through the thrillingly interesting detailed statements of Mr. Frick's bill in equity, the headlines, graciously furnished by the papers, give the hint quite clearly. Now, stick a pin there.

What's sauce for the goose should be sauce for the gander. What one "partner" may do, another must also be able to do. No opportunities for governmental redress open to one "partner" may be barred out to another "partner." In short, a "partner" is a "partner." Now, then, if capitalists and their workingmen are "partners," and one of these partners, the capitalist, has certain remedies, such as we see Mr. Frick resorting to, it must inevitably follow that the other partners have access to the same remedies.

About eight years ago, 4,000 "partners" of Messrs. Frick & Carnegie (the steel and iron workers employed by the concern) felt themselves aggrieved against their "partners," Carnegie & Frick, upon lines identical in substance with those upon which Partner Frick now feels aggrieved against Partner Carnegie: they also claimed that their "partners" (Frick & Carnegie) were trying to "freeze them out" and to deprive them of sundry sums of money due to them as their share in the "partnership." Did these 4,000 "partners" file a bill in equity against their capitalist "partners?" To put the question is to answer it. They could not; the mechanism of capitalist law provided no wheel for THEM to turn in their favor. The only wheels that could at all turn in that instance were not accessible to them; these were the police and militia; and these did turn, and with a vengeance, and ground the "partner" working man to dust. The contrast between what Partner Frick can do the moment he apprehends that Partner Carnegie is seeking to "freeze him out," and what Partner Labor could do, when it felt itself being "frozen out" tells the tale, and exposes the "partnership of capitalists and workingmen" swindle.

The working class is a slave class, with the capitalist as its master; and the mechanism of capitalist society tears to shreds all the silly drapery of "partnership," "brotherhood," etc., with which capitalist knavery tries to conceal the fact.

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

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