

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 5, NO. 319.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, MAY 15, 1905.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

A REMARKABLE EDITORIAL.

By DANIEL DE LEON

Public Opinion of May 13 has this to say regarding “The Chicago Strike”:
“The teamsters’ strike in Chicago carries a significant meaning. It is not the simple expression of a demand for larger specific concessions as to wages, hours of labor, or even ‘recognition’ in the ordinary sense. In truth it is a test of strength between organized labor and organized employers; a test for which both parties have for some time been preparing. The unions in Chicago, as in certain other cities, have reached the point where they no longer need to fight for individual betterment. To push the wages scale much higher, or further, to curtail the hours of labor, would be to force employers out of business, thus killing the goose. No, the struggle in Chicago is an advance skirmish in the war which is to come between labor and capital the country over. It is the struggle for control of the business situation. It is revolution—the endeavor of the proletariat to democratize industry and wrest control from the employer. The concomitants of riot and bloodshed and destruction of property mean little in comparison with this larger issue, which is the central issue in all the widespread agitation against trusts, against railroads, against oligarchical dictation of political, commercial, and industrial progress.”

Barring the misstatement of the editor that “The Unions in Chicago, as in certain other cities, have reached the point where they no longer need to fight for individual betterment” (why then this fight for the democratization of industry?), the above editorial is indeed remarkable. It shows a clear insight into at least one phase of the struggle—coming?—no! now going on!!—between capital and labor. There is undoubtedly a struggle, conscious and unconscious, “to control the business situation”—an attempt “to democratize industry.” But that is not all: there is an attempt, a conscious attempt, being made to democratize the ownership of the capital on which the “business situation”, that is, production and distribution, is based. This attempt is well expressed in the language of the platform of the

Socialist Labor Party, thus:

“We hold that the true theory of politics is that the machinery of government must be controlled by the whole people; but again, taught by experience, we hold furthermore that the true theory of economics is that the means of production must likewise be owned, operated and controlled by the people in common.”

And this attempt will ultimately prevail. It is a fallacy to suppose, as Dr. Lyman Abbott teaches, and the above editorial intimates, that it is possible “to democratize industry” with the Capitalist Class in possession of the capital which is the basis of industry. As well might one believe that Russia can be democratized by leaving the Czar in possession of the government. No, there can be no democratization of industry without a democratization of capital, in a Socialist, and not a reactionary sense. And this the writer of the editorial from *Public Opinion* will some day have the insight to see as he sees one phase of the subject at present; for evolution is making the other phase clearer and more imperative with each passing day!

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded January 2008

slpns@slp.org