

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 10, NO. 166.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, DECEMBER 13, 1909.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

IF, AND WHY?

By DANIEL DE LEON

IF a paramecium, one of the lowest forms of animal life, fresh from a feast upon bacteria, a still lower form of life, were to wave its cilia gravely and declare itself a protector and patron of bacteria, no one supposes the bacteria would give ear to the siren song and stand around in rows in joyful anticipation of being eaten.

The cuckoo is a bird that visits other birds' nests, throws out the legitimate eggs, and deposits its own to be warmed to life under the despoiled mother bird's breast. If a cuckoo were to set up as an indispensable support of eggs and nestlings, it is not likely she would be accorded a hearing in bird society.

If a wolf, hot from a raid upon a sheepfold, should mount a stump and proclaim himself the prop of all mutton, there are two things which of all others would not happen: The surviving sheep would take no stock in his protestations; and they would not be seen placing themselves and their lambkins under his benign propship.

When Attila with his Huns ravaged Europe, they did thing thoroughly. They sacked, burnt, pillaged and spread rapine. Cities were destroyed, art and literatures wiped out. If Attila had had the fine irony to herald his approach upon some new town as its savior and heaven-sent guardian, it inconceivable that the townsfolk would have sent out delegations to welcome him within their walls.

If a road-agent of a few decades ago, after cleaning up all the valuables in a stage-coach, had conferred upon himself the title of High and Mighty Conservator of the Privileges of Transportation and Commerce, his victims would have formed no posses for his protection against the nearest sheriff.

Yet in one week two sets of capitalists are revealed as destroyers and hamperers of production. In Kentucky the pooled tobacco growers nightrided

against and burned the tobacco of their rival. In New York the American Ice Company is denounced by a United States federal attorney as having, by its incorporation, “sounded the death knell of the ice industry in Maine.” Any other week, if kept tab on, would prove equally fruitful in self-confessions, glaring acts, or proven charges against other members of the capitalist class. And in spite of all this, that self-same capitalist class is hearkened to when it dubs itself the Director of Industry and the ever present Patron of Production, and workingmen can be found who will believe its tale, will place their own and their children’s destinies in its clutch, and will even, if called upon, go out and be shot down for it.

Why?

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded January 2011

slpns@slp.org