

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 10, NO. 259.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 1910.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

AND STILL THE BONFIRE FLARES UP IN PHILADELPHIA.

By DANIEL DE LEON

NOT all the Universities of the land combined, Rockefeller's Chicago concern included, could, if they would, and surely would not, if they could, throw so much light upon matters that need illumination as is being done by the bonfire of the Philadelphia strike.

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Without declaring the city under martial law the municipal government forbade, and clubbilly enforced its prohibition on the 10th, that the workers assemble in National League Park. The right of peaceful assemblage is a constitutional guarantee; it is moreover a conquest, one of the valuable conquests, made by the bourgeois revolution in the interest of progress.—A tall flash shot up from the Philadelphia bonfire illumines the fact that the bourgeois revolution, having reached its present height, is backpaddling; and the fact of the backpaddling is furthermore illuminated by the oneness of the State of capitalist politics with the Church, so to say, of capitalist economics—a twentieth century adaptation of the feudal unity of Church and State, as illuminated by a seat, both in the municipal government and the Board of Directors of the Company, held by more than one worthy.

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A proclamation, issued by the managers of the strike, calls upon all the workers to withdraw their deposits from all the banks, because “without the money of the workers the bankers' institutions of finance must be a failure.”—Every crevice in the dark caverns of the A.F. of L. mind is lighted by this flash. If the financial institutions of the land must break down without the workers' deposits, then it

must follow that the billions in the banks are deposited mainly by the workers. If this is so, then the claim of low wages, and bad treatment to boot, will not hold water. Fact is wages are too low for any but the meagerest deposits in the savings banks, let alone in the rest of the banks; hence the threat is ridiculous. The training of the A.F. of L. is one that disqualifies logical reason. Being trained to uphold capitalism and yet oppose it, the A.F. of L.-ite can not choose but fire blank cartridges and act hysterically.

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The national officers of the Brewers in Cincinnati decided that their Philadelphia members should not strike because, “only under severe provocation” would they be justified to break their agreements with their employers.—Light dispels the Lie. The pretence of these national officers was that they “led the Labor Movement in class-consciousness.” Did they not declare themselves Socialists? Did not Socialist phrases concerning the class-struggle abound in their national organ? Did they not attribute the “persecutions” that they recently underwent from the A.F. of L. Executive Board to their “revolutionary and Socialist” spirit? Did their organ not contain Socialist articles against the error of the “Brotherhood of Capital and Labor”? 'Tis true. And the capitalist knows that hard words break no bones. What cares the capitalist whether the proletariat calls him their foe or not, provided they treat him as a Brother?

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“Street by street,” so ran the jubilant Philadelphia despatches on the clubbing that the Police administered to the paraders of the 10th, “the details of police directed by John Taylor, the Superintendent of Police, hammered disorderly Unionism off the public highway.”—From as far west as Spokane the legend illumined by that flash can be read: “We have learned nothing since last time.” One of the missions of Unionism is to drill the proletariat from the mob stage into the state of organized efficiency. Divided on the political, Labor needs must remain divided on the economic field—net results a mob for Cossacks to practice their brutality upon.

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When George H. Earle, president of the Real Estate Trust Company, heard the order issued by the strike managers that the workers withdraw their deposits from the banks “he laughed and did not take fright at all.”—And by the glow of that flash could be read the in-most and habitual sentiment of the Employer toward the A.F. of L. Employee. They are the sentiments that Dewey felt in Manila Bay on May 1, 1898, when the Spanish marines, having been harangued by the pompous nonentity of their Admiral, expected they would “send the Yankee boats to the bottom of the sea” by huzzas,—and he sank or beached them all.

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“The strike will be at an end in two days. Conferences with the strike leaders have been brought about by the large holders of stock in the Rapid Transit Company,” so do the Philadelphia despatches of the 15th announce.—Which brilliantly tells the tale that underground conferences between the bondholders and the stockholders, who pulled in opposite directions, have adjusted the differences between these two Interests, and the stockholders’ scheme to run the Company into the receiver’s hand has been abandoned.

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What University in the land can compete with the Philadelphia bonfire in imparting a liberal education on economics and sociology to those who care to graduate?

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded March 2011

slpns@slp.org