

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 344.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, JUNE 8, 1908.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

IS IT JEALOUSY?

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT is an old saying that “Jealousy killed the cat.” If it did, that evil passion has long since turned its attention from such petty game, and is now after something more sizeable. It is nothing less than the international capitalist class that Jealousy now seems bent on killing.

How often has the claim been made by some hireling judge in handing down an anti-labor-union decision, that the union prevents the workman from exercising his right to work for what wages he chooses, that it coerces him into taking higher wages? The cases are too numerous to mention. James A. Emery, whose present title is “General Counsel, National Council for Industrial Defense” (a manufacturers’ body), is the latest to put forth the absurd statement. “The Council,” he says, “is not directed against workingmen, but is fighting for them, to protect the right of the many to sell their labor under their own conditions, and not those fixed by an organized minority from their own ranks.” The “organized minority from their own ranks” evidently means the unions. Why is the “National Council for Industrial Defense fighting the unions? Is it jealousy? It looks very much like it.

The aim of the capitalist class is to make profits. “Profits” and “wages” come off the same loaf of bread, so to speak, the wealth produced by the workers. The more of one, the less of the other.

So it becomes a secondary aim of the capitalist class to keep wages low. It has done this beautifully, and ever more beautifully, as the workers know. But the craft labor unions, which can not see beyond the present system of production, have also had their finger in the pie. By refusing to touch at all whole industries of workers; by organizing only the best paid in other industries; by dividing the working class by insurmountable union dues and membership restriction, they have helped only their enemies, the employers, in keeping down wages. So expert have they become

at this, that it is no wonder if the capitalists themselves are jealous of their success; on the same principle that recently the Wall Street curb operators, themselves not recognized as “legitimate,” initiated a movement against the new brokers attracted to the curb market by the new railroad bond issues, and tried to have them expelled.

Thus it may not unimaginably be jealousy which is evoking the howls and attacks of the capitalists against the unions. But the capitalists have declared these same unions to be their strongest bulwark against the rising tide of Socialism. Every successful assault of the capitalists against the craft unions leaves that bulwark so much the weaker. Should it ever be completely overthrown, the way would be clear for class-conscious Industrial Unionism to march straight to its goal. If the bosses insist in indulging in their fits of jealousy upon their bulwark, the green-eyed monster will indeed be their doom—as it has been of many a better man.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded February 2010

slpns@slp.org