

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 3, NO. 252.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, MARCH 9, 1903.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE TRAITOROUS “LABOR PAPER.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT is a common belief among large numbers of workingmen that it is the function of a “labor paper” to defend the lives and interests of the working class. The holders of this belief look to the “labor paper” to present the facts and opinions gathered and expressed by workingmen on all matters in which their physical and economic welfare is at stake. They look to the “labor paper” to uphold and defend the working class just as the capitalist paper upholds and defends the capitalist class. Is this belief sustained by facts? Does the “labor paper” do all that is expected of it?

In the *Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen’s Magazine* for March, 1903, there is a typical instance which shows that this belief regarding the functions of a “labor paper,” and the expectations it creates, are without foundation in fact.

In this magazine there is a long editorial article discussing “Train Dispatching and Railway Collisions.” Does the writer thereof take his cue and his information thereon from workingmen? Does he present working class facts and opinions? Oh, no; this “labor” editor takes his cue, together with his opinions{,} from capitalist sources, namely from the *Railway Gazette*. The result is a traitorous desertion of working class interests.

Applying his capitalist cue and his capitalist information to the Jersey Central Railroad collision at Westfield, N.J., in which Engineer Davis lost his life, the *Firemen’s Magazine* comes to the capitalist conclusion that “the true cause (of the wreck) will probably never be known”; although it capitalistically intimates that the probable cause will be found in “the absence of the human element”; that is, it insinuatingly makes Engineer Davis responsible for that accident in true capitalist fashion.

The perfidy of this traitorous action can only be realized when it is recollected that Engineer Davis has stated that the cause of the wreck was the unfit condition of Engine

No. 27. This statement was supported by the six engineers who had driven the engine previous to the fatal accident. And this statement has just been confirmed by the Union County Grand Jury, which, while holding Davis primarily responsible, censures the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad officials for sending out an engine that was not in good condition.

The *Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen's Magazine* is no different from the general run of "labor papers."

Based, as are all the organizations these "labor papers" represent, on the capitalist principle that the interests of employer and employee are one, these "labor papers" are utilized by the Sargents and others to reap fat political jobs, for logically enunciating capitalist economic and political ideas through them, while keeping the rank and file of the working class in ignorance of their true condition.

The working class can only be truly represented by a press that bases its policy on the Socialist principle, that the interests of the employer and employee are opposed to each other and that, consequently, one can no more pretend to speak honestly for both than he can honestly claim to mix fire and water. With such a press no duplicity for dishonorable purposes is possible.

Such a press is the press owned and controlled by the Socialist Labor Party.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded November 2006