

# The People.

VOL. IX, NO. 10

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JUNE 4, 1899

PRICE 2 CENTS

SECOND EDITORIAL

## “SWEET ARE THE USES OF ADVERSITY,” ETC.

By DANIEL DE LEON

The Nebraska “Grand Council United Commercial Travelers” held recently a session at Hastings, where they gave vent to their opinion on Trusts by passing the following resolution:

WHEREAS, The Grand Council of Nebraska has noticed with great distress and alarm the rapid formation of trusts now in progress in nearly all lines known to commercial transactions, resolved, that the time is at hand when commercial travelers, individually and collectively, must use every effort in their power to impede the progress and wipe out of existence formations that are taking from us situations for which we have spent years of time and toil to prepare ourselves and that we stand ready to assist to the best of our ability in any movement that will relieve us from the influence of that well-known tyrant, the Trust.

Sweet are the uses of adversity, which, like the toad, ugly and venomous, bears yet a precious jewel in his head. The Trust, meaning thereby the privately owned contrivance of production that bids defiance to the smaller concerns, is such a toad. It is ugly and venomous. Its economic power, coupled to the political power that it takes in hand, turns it into a despot, that pauperizes the people and turns them into abject slaves. Yet ugly and venomous as such a toad is, it does bear a precious jewel in its head.

The Trust-toad is but a developed toadpole {tadpole?}. So long as the toad is not full-blown the poison that is him in remains concealed, and, being concealed, the correct means to his destruction remains hidden. Trust-toad is the developed germ of private ownership in the means of production. Until the germ is developed, illusions untold fill the popular mind. Among these illusions the leading one is that anyone, provided he be industrious, can secure economic independence and welfare. While this illusion prevails, the class, the only class that can remove the evil is incapacitated from fulfilling its mission. Its inability arises from the circumstance that it is cut up, divided,—not a unit. The class that is called upon to

slay the monster and secure freedom must first realize its solidarity as Working Class, as Proletariat. But, in the minds of the members of large sections of the Proletariat, the word “Proletariat,” the idea of “Working Class” is repulsive. The terms are to them identical with “common labor,” with the “Great Un-washed.” External appearances conceal the underlying economic kinship. Thus clerks, Commercial Travelers, etc., still disdain the idea of belonging to the same class as the mechanic and the hod-carrier; and thus the ranks of the Proletariat remain broken.

The Trust-toad, venomous though it is, bears on its head the precious jewel that it brings home to the “Washed” Proletariat its oneness with its “Un-washed” brother; it tears the illusions of the former to shreds; it opens their eyes,—at least starts to open them. But for the Trust, one might well despair of ever solidifying the Proletariat of all conditions; of bringing home to what might be called the “Clerk Class” the fact that, though it seems to work with its head, and, all other external appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, yet it is an exploited class, just as the manual worker, and that its class interests are one with these. But for the Trust, in short, economic slavery might remain a perpetuity, by reason of the guilding of the yoke that some wage slaves bear, preventing them from seeing the YOKE itself, and thus preventing that unity of their class that is the prerequisite to successful emancipatory work. The Trust aids in this clarifying and unifying process. Even if the Trust did nothing else, that is jewel enough on its head.

The Commercial Travelers are being tutored by the Trust; let Socialist literature hasten their graduation into the class-conscious, militant army of the Proletariat of this country that is marshalled under the banner of the Socialist Labor Party.

[Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.](#)

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