

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 1, NO. 29.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JULY 29, 1900

SUNDAY, 2 CENTS.

EDITORIAL

UNIONISM AND UNIONISM.

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In yesterday's issue we published a tale that sets in relief the deep damnation of the Gompers style of unionism.

The Alabama miners, affiliated with Gompers, had long been groaning under a burden of grievances. They waited until July, when a joint convention of the miners and operators would arrange the terms under which they would work for another year.

At the first meeting of the delegates the fakirs found that iron-clad instructions were given to the delegates demanding everything that the operators would refuse.

The fakirs were at their wits' end. If they did not get good terms for the operators, the operators would not act as cashiers for their union by checking off the dues in the office.

Finding themselves in this dilemma they hit upon a trick to save themselves. They sent the delegates back for "new instructions." Surely a most ridiculous thing to do if their intentions were honorable. But, realizing that it would be useless to send the delegates back to the local unions, as the instructions would be instantly and unanimously re-endorsed, what they did was to call mass meetings of the men at various places, picking out the weakest spots. The meetings called for 10 a.m. would start at 9.30. The chief fakir in each case occupied the chair. Resolutions were railroaded through appointing a committee to draft "new instructions." The chair would appoint his sub-fakirs. Then without putting the instructions to a vote of the local unions or anything else, the fakirs went off to Birmingham, met the operators and gave into every demand they made, winding up by signing last year's contract, that the miners had instructed their delegates against.

In return for this Judas conduct the operators agreed:

1st. That all local companies shall stop dues of all men employed at their mines for the United Mine Workers of America.

2d. That the company shall allow canvassers for the *United Mine Workers'*

Journal and the *Labor Advocate* of Birmingham, Ala., a local paper, in the mines and COLLECT SUBSCRIPTIONS THROUGH THE OFFICE with charge.

This thing must stop. The miners and all other workingmen must learn that the capitalist is merely using the Gompers brand of unionism as a means to do that which the capitalists could not do themselves, viz., run the union in their own interest. To do this they employ the fakir; act as cashier for the union by checking off the dues in the office, and money for subscriptions for their ribald “labor” papers.

At this juncture, with the Alabama case repeating itself all over the nation, from Idaho to New York, a war over terms becomes folly. The mere calling a thing a “union” does not make it so. The Gompers style of unionism is reeking with corruption. It is the right hand of the capitalist skinner. The thing must be smashed to smithereens, and it will be; and New Unionism, bona-fide Unionism, Unionism which is manned by class-conscious workers, and not by the ulcer labor fakir, must be reared in its stead.

Nothing else will do.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded May 2005