

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 164.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1907.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

STRAUSS AND LABOR.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE *Flashlights of the Amsterdam Congress* make mention of a conversation that Bebel quoted in Amsterdam between himself and Marx, in the course of which, answering to the question, How do you account for the backwardness of the Movement in Great Britain, despite the country's opportunities? Marx answered: "Indeed things would be different here, were not the British capitalists so peskily shrewd: they deaden the Labor Movement by corrupting its leaders." Had Marx lived until these days of Oscar S. Strauss *{sic}*, Secretary of the Department of Commerce and Labor, he might have added: "And, in America, the capitalists are so over-confident in their power to deaden the Movement that they 'rub it in.'"

The Department of Commerce and Labor is a new Department. It is one of the "concessions" to Labor. Mr. Gompers' cry "Labor is not represented in the Administration!" was a cry welcome to capitalist officialdom. Whenever Labor, deadened by the Gompers dope, sets up a cry, it is immediately used as the opportunity to promote the interest of the capitalist—either his pockets, or his taste for displayfulness. The Gompers cry was hearkened. Thereupon a new Department was proposed, in which Labor was to be "considered." The dull Gompers immediately began to nurse hopes of a cabinet position. The Department was established. The "Labor" in it was blanketed by the word "Commerce," and a full-blooded capitalist was put in charge. The present incumbent, Mr. Strauss, caught the spirit of the place, and he has improved upon it.



OSCAR S. STRAUS
(1850-1926)

Mr. Strauss has schemed a scheme according to which there is to be a "Council"

attached to his Department. The Council is to aid him in performing his functions. Now—of whom is the “Council” to consist? The Department is called Department of Commerce and Labor. Is the “Council” to consist of a mixture of capitalists and Laborites, after the fashion of the Civic Federation? Not at all. The word “Labor” on the name of the Department has been thrown into such utter “innocuous desuetude” by the word “Commerce,” that Labor is not to be considered even in appearance, as on the Civic Federation. The whole “Council” is to consist of merchant princes, with the roulette expert Gustave H. Schwab at the head of the procession!

In America not even a bare bone is any longer thrown at Labor. The smell of a bone suffices. And upon the strength of the smell of the bone the capitalists furnish themselves with some new offices, some more glorification.

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

Uploaded November 2009

slpns@slp.org