

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 4, NO. 328.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, MAY 23, 1904.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE OPEN SHOP.

By DANIEL DE LEON

AS has been widely proclaimed by the press, young John D. Rockefeller, acting as the representative of his father, has visited Pittsburg. While there, Henry C. Frick, famed as the greatest iron-master of all times, showed the young man unusual deference, piloting him about the properties of the Steel Trust and explaining to him its plans of reorganization and consolidation. While apparently differing in no respect from the usual capitalist inspection tour, this visit is of interest to the working class in more ways than one. Aside from the important fact that it illustrates growing industrial dictatorship of his father, the visit of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to the Iron City, serves to call attention to a capitalist movement of considerable proportions and significance—the movement toward reorganization and consolidation typified by the Steel Trust.

It is well known that capitalism is continually compelled by competition to lower the cost of production. The necessity of securing markets by producing cheaper than competitors, is always with the capitalists; but at no time is its presence more pronounced than in times of industrial depression. Then, more than ever, is the capitalist class forced to devise ways and means of securing greater efficiency, productiveness and economy for the purpose of producing and selling cheap. The capitalists are now in the midst of such times. Forced by the world-wide depression now on, and profiting by the opportunities for readjustment which it offers, the world-wide capitalist class is reorganizing and consolidating its industrial plants, changing the methods and installing the machinery which such reorganization and consolidation makes possible and necessitates. The capitalist class of this country, as the visit of young Rockefeller makes clear, is no exception to this movement. In fact, the efforts made by the capitalist class of other countries in the direction of reorganization and consolidation, compels it to lead this movement,

or else surrender its supremacy in the markets of the world, a thing that it at present cannot do.

It stands to reason, that with this new impetus toward reorganization and consolidation, it will be ever more impossible to overthrow consolidation by competition; nay, we may except that, with that strange fatality that drives capitalism ever onward to its own destruction, that the appearance of more competition will be the cause of more concentration. It also stands to reason that with this new impetus towards reorganization and consolidation, the evils from which the working class suffers under consolidation will increase. Not only will the opportunities for individual ownership be further decreased, but labor will be increasingly displaced and intensified, the death rate among the workers will go higher, as will prices; while wages will decline.

Workingmen should not overlook these facts. With these facts well in mind it will be clear to them that capitalism has ever greater enslavement and degradation in store for the workers, and that their only hope of relief lies in the inauguration of Socialism.

It is the manner in which it calls attention to the logical development of capitalism and helps to illustrate it, that young Rockefeller's visit to the home of the Steel Trust is of prime importance to the working class.

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

Uploaded June 2007

slpns@igc.org