

The People.

VOL. V, NO. 13.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 1895.

PRICE 3 CENTS.

FIRST EDITORIAL

CUCUMBERS WILL NOT YIELD SUNBEAMS.

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THE glassworkers of New Jersey are making and furnishing experience. They caused the introduction of a bill upon which they lay much store. We have before this referred to the bill and shown its futility. To-day we are able to prove the futility not of the bill, but of trying to obtain redress by electing capitalist politicians to office and then asking and expecting them to aid labor against their own class interests.

We are all familiar with the several tactics and dodges whereby labor legislation is balked. At first the legislators—Democratic and Republican—refused to consider any labor laws. Thereupon the Socialists and New Trade Unionists said: “We, the workers, are the overwhelming majority; let us elect our own men on our own platform, and enact our own laws.” The sneering answer came back from the “pure and simplers”: “Tut, tut; you are not practical; we are. We want something now, not after we are dead,” and in they sailed on their “practical” course. The course had a series of tacks.

First, the members of the Lower House were pledged in advance. The desired bill was then presented, considered and carried through. But it was squelched in the Senate.

Second tack: The Senatorial candidates were pledged. The bill was then presented in the Senate and carried. But it was squelched in the Lower House.

Third tack: Both Senators and Lower House members were pledged in advance. The bill came up and went through both houses. But the Governor sat down upon it by vetoing it.

Fourth tack: Senators, Lower House members and Governor, all were pledged. The bill went through both houses and got the sanction of the Governor. Hurrah! But then the court stepped in and declared it unconstitutional.

Thus the practical fraternity was driven from Pontius to Pilate, from pillar to post. But it never lost hope. The loopholes for escape would finally all be stopped, they reasoned. Yet no sooner was one stopped when another opened up. The latest is the one the glassworkers are now pondering over.

Their pet bill went through both houses; it was so constructed that it could not be declared unconstitutional; the Governor was pledged in advance to sign it. Now, at least, there seemed to be no way of escape. Yet there was. The Clerk of the Legislature managed to leave a whole clause out of the bill in the engrossing of it. This was, of course, a pure accident. Perish the thought that any one had “seen” the Clerk and that the oversight was the result of wire pulling. At any rate the bill came before the Governor in that mutilated form—and, of course, he could not sign it!

Net results of these “practical” steps: Zero.

The New York Trade Unionists and Socialists have stood by all along and looked on, but not idly. They have gone ahead rearing the American wing of the Socialist Labor party, and, with arms extended, they are awaiting the day when their erring and misguided brothers and fellow wage slaves will be through experimenting and attempting to extract labor sunbeams out of the capitalist parties’ cucumber. They are waiting patiently to see their brothers, tutored by experience, abandon the superstitious and the labor fakir leaders, that have misguided them, and march in a body into the New Trade Unionist and Socialist Labor party’s camp, resolved to obtain freedom, no longer by foolishly begging for it, but by manfully striking the only blow that can lead to it.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded January 2003