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EDITORIAL

A SCAB-SMITING DOCUMENT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ELSEWHERE in this issue will be found an exact copy of a circular issued by the St. Louis Local, No. 1, of the Electrical Workers to its sister Locals throughout the country.¹ The document (the original of which, with seal and all, is kept in this office for the inspection of those who wish), together with its publication in the columns of this paper only, furnishes a living leaf, with obverse and reverse, from the book of the stage that the Labor Movement in America is now traversing.

Organized on the false principle of the “Brotherhood of Capital and Labor”; organized on the false theory that the working class can hold its own against the capitalist class in the capitalist social order; organized by the false tactics of obtaining the employer’s consent;—in short, organized on the “tub without bottom and without hoops” principle of pure and simple Trades Unionism, a Union’s officers inevitably developed into sellers-out of the rank and file, scabbers, in short. The document in question proves it. It tells how, the local having demanded higher wages, first the First Grand Vice-President, and then the Grand President himself—his name is W.A. Jackson, of Chicago—interfered against the men, went before the Contractors’ Association and promised that, if the Union insisted on its demands, the Executive Board would “bring men to St. Louis to fill their places”; and it closes with an appeal to the sister Locals to help the St. Louis Local prevent their national Executive Board FROM SCABBING ST. LOUIS.

On the same side of the leaf in which this scab performance of the labor fakir is on exhibition, another sight is on exhibition. A not less scabby. In St. Louis and in a number of other cities there are in the Locals of the electrical workers a certain

¹ [“Electrical Workers: They Protest Against Their Executive Board Scabbing It on Them,” *Daily People*, August 3, 1903. Appended below.—R.B.]

class of people who call themselves Socialists but are very wroth at the Socialist Labor Party Trades Union policy, which demands of its members that they “bore from within” AND “from without” so as to open the eyes of the rank and file and cause these to cauterize the labor fakir ulcer so that the ulcer may never be able to come again to a head. These “Socialists,” who object to this policy and call themselves Socialist, alias Social Democratic party men, hold that the only true Trades Union policy is to “bore from within” only. That is, to conceal and hush up all the iniquities of the scabby officers; to join these in their slanderous outcry against the Socialist Labor Party; to vote them in office, as they did Gompers, and to accept office from them in return and appointments to go on junketing trips abroad at the expense of the rank and file, as did Mamie Hayes of Cleveland, she being appointed “fraternal delegate” to the British Trades Union Congress after she had “bored from within” by supporting the scabby Gompers. These bogus Socialists in the electrical workers Unions lay low when the circular of Local No. 1 of St. Louis was issued in that Local, and when it was received in the others. They did their best to conceal the infamy of their scabby national officers. As trusty candle-holders for the fakirs, they “bored from within” by standing by these in their efforts to prevent the working class from hearing of their scab plan, and thus from being put on their guard.

The other page of the leaf presents the Socialist Labor Party men, or those animated with their manly spirit. They bored from within with a will; and, knowing that boring from within is worthless unless, from without also, boring or lambasting was done, they saw to it that the scab conduct of their national officers be made public and brought to the knowledge of their fellow workers of all trades as an admonition and a warning; and a lesson of what must be done.

And thus—boring from within and from without—the scab-smiting document of the St. Louis Local No. 1, I.B.E.W., is now made public.

ELECTRICAL WORKERS

They Protest Against Their Executive Board Scabbing It on Them.

[The below is an exact copy of a circular, issued over the seal of Local No. 1, I.B.E.W., of St. Louis, an signed by the Secretary of the Executive Board of the Local. The circular was issued to all the Locals of the Organization. The original, from which the below is a copy, is in this office for inspection.]

St. Louis, June 9, 1903

To the Local Unions of the I.B.E.W.:

Greeting—On May 1st, Local Union No. 1 presented to the Building Trades Council, of St. Louis, a demand for an increase in wages from 50 cents to 62¹/₂ cents per hour, or \$5 per day, to take effect Sept. 1st, 1903. This demand received the unanimous endorsement of the B.T.C.

The Electrical Workers were the poorest paid mechanics in the city, as plumbers are receiving 62¹/₂ cents per hour; carpenters, 55 cents per hour; plasterers, 75 cents per hour, and other trades at about the same rates.

On account of the World's Fair, rents have raised, and the cost of living has increased 50 per cent. Our demand was so fair and just that there did not appear to be any particular opposition until Bro. F.E. Lochman, First Grand Vice-President, started to interfere, and went before the Contractors' Association, and said that he would force the Local to live up to an alleged agreement for \$4.00 per day, and also read a letter from the Grand President to the effect that if the Union demanded or tried to enforce a higher scale, the Charter of No. 1 would be suspended, and the E.B. would bring men to St. Louis to fill our places. When Bro. Lochman made the statement to the Contractors and the Chief of the Electrical Department of the World's Fair, the contractors and the management of the Fair entered into a combination called the Electrical League to carry out a certain outline and define an agreement.

The World's Fair on last Monday locked out all the members of No. 1, about 200 men. With this condition facing us, nothing remains but to declare the World's Fair and all contractors in the League unfair.

Charges have been preferred against Bro. Lochaman, and he will be tried in due form according to the constitution.

This is a notice to all union men to keep away from St. Louis until the present trouble is settled. Notice is also hereby given that should the Executive Board, the Grand President or Bro. Lochman attempt to carry out the threats made in regard to sending men to this city to take our places, an appeal will be taken to a referendum vote of the I.B.E.W.

No. 1 never had an agreement with the World's Fair. Before the work started on the Fair No. 1 tried to make an agreement, but Mr. Rustin, chief of the Electrical Department, refused to sign one.

No. 1 had an agreement with the St. Louis Electrical Contractors' Association. This agreement was broken long ago, and we have no knowledge that the organization is in existence at the present time. We never did any official business with the Electrical League, and went on record at least six months ago that we would not sign any or agreements with any contractors' association, and would only deal with individuals, firms or corporations.

Trusting that you will see and appreciate how just and reasonable our cause is, and give us your moral support, and will not permit the Executive Board to scab our city and bring the I.B.E.W. into disrepute among all Union men, and that you will read this at three regular meetings, we remain,

Yours fraternally,

W.J. Gildorf,

Sec. Ex. Board Local No. 1, I.B.E.W.

(L.S.)

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

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