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EDITORIAL

SAM PARKS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

SAM Parks is dead. His pathetic end, contrasted with his once powerful position, has been used by certain yellow and interested newspapers to deliver homilies on his propensities for power and graft, and to attribute to these individual weaknesses the cause of his downfall. Truly demagogical and capitalistic as they are, these yellow and interested newspapers have refrained from showing wherein Sam Parks was only made possible by a corrupt trade unionism that is bred and fostered by a corrupt capitalism.

Sam Parks, from all accounts, appears to have started his career as a labor leader, with a sincere desire to benefit the men of his trade. An aggressive, forceful character, alive to the growing demand for housesmiths, due to the development of the skyscraper and bridge-building, he organized his trade in a manner beneficial to its members. But his union, like most unions, was founded on the capitalist principle that the interests of capital and labor are mutual, and can, accordingly, be harmoniously adjusted by business methods. This principle forces and enables the labor leader to enter into negotiations that result in special advantages for certain employers, for aren't the interests of capital and labor mutual? And, since this is so, isn't any arrangement between capital and labor that conduces to advance the wages of "organized labor" a beneficial arrangement—isn't it "good business?" In other words, as capitalism—"business"—is a series of corrupt political and industrial deals and dickers between capitalist factions, this principle forces the union into them, thus making of it a caricature of capitalism, with the abnormal features of the latter vividly accentuated.

Sam Parks, after much practical experience in the working of this principle, became corrupted by it. Accordingly, when he came here from Chicago it was as the paid agent of a building trust. Here Sam Parks put the logic of the mutual interests

of capital and labor into vigorous effect. He struck the jobs of the trust's competitors, thus forcing construction into its hands, and increasing the wages of the members of his organization. With the aid of the trust, Sam Parks controlled the picked jobs in the trade, and through them built up a strong machine in his union. In brief, Sam Parks became the logical fruit and dower of the labor unionism and the capitalism that is upheld by the demagogical and capitalist yellow newspapers. Were it not that the capitalist faction arrayed against the trust employing him proved more powerful, Sam Parks would have ended his days amid the plaudits, instead of the hypocritical homilies, of these yellow newspapers.

Sam Parks is dead; but Parksism still lives in the labor unionism and capitalism that breed and foster it. Parksism will continue to live as long as labor fails to realize that there can be no mutual interests between capital and labor. With a full recognition of the truth that the interests of capital and labor are antagonistic, will come a clean labor movement and clean labor leaders, for, with such a recognition, the rotten deals and dickers now perpetrated under the guise of promoting labor's interests along with those of capital will be impossible.

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

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