

EDITORIAL

TRAUTMANN CHALLENGING PROVIDENCE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A FEW years ago there broke out the "Free Speech Fight" of Spokane. Readers of *The People* are familiar with the affair. It was a series of riots, conducted in the city of Spokane, by the Chicago, or Anarch I.W.W. They, who had endeavored to trample upon free speech by the Socialist Labor Party, gave to their riots the name of "Free Speech Fight"; and the leaders kept up the racket so long as the cry "Help the martyrs of Free Speech!" brought in cash. It will be furthermore remembered that when the stream of cash ran dry, the Editor of the organ



of the "Free Speech Fighters," James Wilson, came out with his revelations, to the effect that the "martyrs," he among them, were allowed to rot in jail while the leaders appropriated the cash, goodly portions of which went to subsidize Socialist party privately owned papers to keep up the racket of the "Free Speech Fight." It will finally be remembered that, shortly after he made his revelations, James Wilson was found dead with a hole in his head on a lonely road. It was a sort of providential dying.

Readers of *The People* are familiar with all these facts.

And now comes William E. Trautmann, until recently a national officer of the said Chicago Anarch I.W.W., and in a letter to the *Call* May 2 warns people against contributing to "Free Speech Fights," or "wild cat strikes" engineered by people of his organization. Trautmann states his reasons. He speaks of "Free Speech Fights"

as performances “pulled off by those who never will work”; he specifies the “outrageous misuse” of the Ettore-Giovannitti Defense Fund; and he lets out the secret of a “telegraphic order,” issued by the general office of the said Chicago body, having stopped the investigation of the charges that were made against those who previously handled the funds, and of Fred Heslewood, the same H. who handled the Spokane funds and who, according to James Wilson, refused to make an accounting to the Spokane branch, being dispatched by the said Chicago general office “with discretionary powers how the funds were to be disposed of.”

Providence took charge of James Wilson for the impudence of exercising the rights of free speech and free press. Does not Trautmann now, in turn, challenge Providence?

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
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slpns@slp.org