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EDITORIAL

OUR TO-DAY'S CARTOON.

By DANIEL DE LEON

VOLUMES of Reason, illustrated by ripe Experience, and couched in diction elegant and incisive, is the cartoon from the pencil of the Socialist Labor Party's talented San Francisco artist, Sidney Armer, that illumines this issue's front page.¹ The lines of Lowell, subjoined to the cartoon, supplement the plastic with the poetic verve {verse}.

Organization, the organization of the Useful Labor of the commonweal, is condition precedent for the overthrow of the organized Idle Class that, under the regime of capitalism, lives upon the toil of the workers. Unionism, accordingly, is a sacred word in the Labor, or Socialist Movement. With that keenness of perception that distinguishes Usurpation, the Top-Usurper, the Plutocracy of the land, seeks to mystify the people by wrapping itself in the name of Unionism, and thus seeks impunity to desecrate the thing itself. Gompersism furnishes the material.

Unionism means the organization of the whole working class. Unionism, accordingly, implies methods that enable all the workers to be classified in their several tool-dictated regiments, battalions, and companies, as integral parts of an army—the Army of Labor, drilled and equipped to overthrow the reign of Capital by taking and holding the reins of government. Gompersism is anti-Unionist. It deliberately keeps the vast majority of the workers out of the bodies which it falsely styles Unions. By means of absurdly high initiation fees; by means of rigid enforcement of dues even where uncollectable for want of work; by means of irrational apprentice limitations; by the false pretence of distinguishing between “skilled” and “unskilled” labor; by means of these and numerous kindred devices Gompersism ruptures the working class into two broad categories{—}the “organized” and the “un-organized.” Proceeding logically enough from such premises, Gompersism further ruptures the “organized” into as many bodies as it

¹ [To be inserted—R.B.]

can manufacture crafts. By means of a system of contracts that disables one branch of the organized to come to the assistance of another when on strike, Gompersism forces the organized, so-called, to scab upon one another. By means of race distinctions, Gompersism throws the apple of discord into the ranks of the workers. By means of these and numerous other A.F. of Hellisms Gompersism bolsters up the reign of Capital. Of course Gompersism furnished the wished-for material for Capital to mask itself. Nor was the material left unused. The Temple of the Civic Federation was reared; on a pedestal within the Temple the heathenish Image of the Gompers creation, the A.F. of L., was set up—and Labor was called upon to bow down and worship.

As Capital itself rears the recruits—the proletariat—for its overthrow, so does Gompersism, in turn, itself rear the recruits that are to smite it. The mass of the un-organized Labor of the land, kept un-organized by Gompersism, are bound in the near future to feel the thrill of their class-mission, and to act accordingly. Once the thrill is felt, that mass will disdain any longer to be forced to the ignominy of underselling their labor for a living; they will spurn the hypocritic praises of the ex-president Eliots of being “heroes”; they will gather up their loins, and calling to their side the rank and file that Gompersism keeps lashed to the chariot wheels of the exploiter, organize to a purpose.

A second *Mahmood the Image-Breaker*, Un-organized Labor, kept unorganized by Gompersism, will prelude the day of that final Strike that will strike the shackles from the working class, with that downright strike that will smite the monstrous image at whose shrine Capitalism officiates as High Priest and Gompers as candle-bearer. Then, in the language of Lowell, luck obeying the downright striker—

from the hollow core
Fifty times the Brahmins' offer will
deluge all the floor.²

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² [After James Russell Lowell's *Mahmood the Image-Breaker*—R.B.]