

EDITORIAL

NOTHING PECULIAR ABOUT IT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

ADDRESSING last Sunday the A.F. of L. protest meeting against the conduct of the capitalist Government and Courts, Mr. Samuel Gompers said:

“You and I, who have worked in this great movement of social uplifting of all our people, find ourselves peculiarly situated.”

Peculiarly situated? There is nothing peculiar about the situation that the “you and I”—Gompers and his craft Union brigade, Gompersism, for short—find themselves in.

Gompersism was—oh, that the “was” could be left standing!—nay, Gompersism IS a caricature of small bourgeois capitalism. It starts from, and is founded upon, the principle of “brotherhood between employer and employes.” The brotherhood being a fallacy, aye, a delusion, Gompersism could not choose but develop into a caricature of its “brother.” “Brother” Gompersism imitates every principle of “Brother” Capitalism. “Brother” Capitalism considers itself to be “all our people”; “Brother” Gompersism follows suit in its own sphere. The Working Class do not count in the capitalist world, therefore, with the imitator the “unskilled” workers do not count either; and, fatedly proceeding down the slope of that blunder, Gompersism demands high initiation fees, excludes the “poorer paid,” and, with its systems of “death benefit attachments,” practically bars the majority of the Working Class out of its “sanctuary.” Mr. Gompers’s own Cigarmakers’ Union is a striking illustration. Documentarily the fact has been proved that it has no use for stogie-workers, for instance. In short, Gompersism is the organized “aristocracy” of Labor, as Capitalism is the organized “aristocracy” of the people. A Labor “aristocracy” is a caricature of its model—“Brother” Capitalism. The caricature nature of Gompersism

manifests itself in its very utterances. So it happens that Gompersism, which scorns and leaves unorganized and can not choose but leave unorganized the vast majority of the workers, apes even the language of the Capitalist, and talks of its endeavors “to uplift all our people,” exactly as the Capitalist claims that his endeavors to increase the dowers, wherewith to purchase “noble” foreign husbands for his daughters, is an endeavor “to promote the prosperity of all our people.”

The lie of the “brotherhood of employer and employes” goes “once too often to the well.” The caricature that took itself for a genuine reproduction has gone to smash—that is the “peculiar situation” in which “you and I” find themselves. In other words, the situation is the most natural thing in the world.

The Working Class being deliberately, systematically, persistently dislocated by Gompersism in the Gompersistic effort to imitate its “Brother” Capitalist, the day has come when the utterly UN-peculiar situation has arisen, that the model has kicked the caricature down stairs and into the street.

There are kicks that are better than tenderest hugs. There are kicks that teach. May the kick that Gompersism is smarting of teach it that it is blood of the blood and flesh of flesh of the rest of the proletariat; may that kick, which, in the language of Marx, lays it “flat on its back beside the rest of the proletariat,” now lining up on soup lines, bring home to Gompersism the truth of the BROTHERHOOD OF LABOR. The day Gompersism will have learned that lesson, then, not the Working Class of the land, but the Capitalist Class, will be the one to face a “peculiar situation”—decidedly “peculiar.”

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

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slpns@slp.org