

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 10, NO. 193.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, JANUARY 9, 1910.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

GOMPERS AND THE STEEL TRUST.

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A FAVORITE argument with some who, while claiming to be Socialists, still objected to the Socialist Labor Party's exposures of Gompers Unionism, is this:

“All that is true; but by emphasizing the truth the peculiar mission of Unionism is hampered. It is the peculiar mission of Unionism that, in seeking to improve the condition of its members, it accomplishes something else. That something else is the pushing along of concentration. When the Gompers Unions demand higher wages, and obtain that, the smaller concerns are forced out of business. It is true that the process has for its immediate effect the throwing of many workers out of work; it is true that the increased wages are increased in seeming only, the increase being beaten down in a score of underhanded ways; it is true, therefore, that the effect of these Unions upon the working class is harmful; that is all true; but the harmfulness is only transitory because it is a necessary step towards Socialism. The real and lasting result accomplished is concentration—the concentration of the plants of production. That is the developed stage of production that Socialism requires, and the Gompers Unions promote the development. That is their mission.”

Of course the argument is false. Of course the Socialist knows that the mission of Unionism neither is nor can be, transitorily or otherwise to inflict increased suffering upon the working class. Of course the Socialist knows that the “peculiar mission” of Unionism is not that of a poultice to bring a sore to a head and then to be thrown away, but the vital and permanent one of organizing the constituent bodies of Socialist society and government. The Socialist knows all this. Nevertheless, and, granted for the sake of argument, that the mission of Unionism is to help along the Trust, then it follows inevitably that when Gompers and his compeers apply to the President to dissolve the Steel Trust they betray and become

untrue to the only mission they had; they upset the only justification for their existence; they also do the uncharitable deed of disarming their own spokesmen, and leaving them at the mercy of the S.L.P.

The mission of Gompersism was and is to betray the proletariat and render it ridiculous. It is a betrayal of the proletariat to hold language that justifies the conclusion that the Government proceedings against the Standard Oil and the Tobacco Trusts have in any important respect “reached” those concerns. It is a rendering of the proletariat ridiculous to appear before the head and front of the Trust offending, the President of the United States, in the expectation of relief through him.

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Uploaded January 2011

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