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EDITORIAL

TOBIN, SCAB-HERDER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE reports published in these columns of the upheaval among the shoeworkers in Brooklyn and vicinity are living pages from the Labor Movement. They cast light, not on one, or two, or three features of the Movement. They cast light on all its numerous aspects—on the employer; on his go-between, the labor faker; on the employed; on their long and blind subjection to the tyranny of the boss and to the fraud of the A.F. of L. leaders; on their awakening; on their stumblings; on the chicanery that surrounds them; etc., etc.—

Workers in unorganized shoe shops gather themselves and make demands for better wages. The spirit of the class-instinct spreads, seizes and shakes up the workers “organized” in the A.F. of L., or Tobin’s Boot and Shoe Workers’ Union. They also make demands, and go on strike. Immediately the discovery is made that the wages of the Tobin men are lower than the wages of the unorganized men,—were kept lower by Tobin “Union” devices. “Unionism”—the ideal that the unorganized men had been awakened to, and which the “organized” ones had blindly believed in—receives a staggering blow in the minds of both sets; simultaneously it rises into loveliness in the minds of the employers of the unorganized, and into increased loveliness in the minds of the employers of the Tobinly “organized.” Fifty of these employers meet in the factory of one of the lot, and there, another of them reads a letter from Tobin to him. It is Tobin’s chance. Long has he been laboring on many of these employers to convince them that their interest lay in “Unionism”—A.F. of L. Tobin “Unionism.” They would not listen. Now they are dieted to listen. Tobin’s letter promises speedy settlement, if he is allowed to “organize” the shops, and, as an earnest that the writer means “business,” he declares himself ready to spend \$100,000 to reduce the men of his “Union,” now on strike, back to submission. How, he needs not explain. The

scabs—picked up here and there up-State and in New England; furnished post-haste with Tobin “Union cards”; their traveling expenses paid by the Tobin “Union”; and foregathering in the shops on strike;—these scabs, delivered as per “sacred contract,” render superfluous all explanation as to how the Tobin victims now on strike are expected to be reduced back to submission by Tobin.

Such is the picture that Tobin “Unionism” is drawing of itself—the shield and staff of the capitalist class, the betrayer of the working class. Such is the picture of Tobin, or Gompers Civic Federationized “Unionism” that the Socialist Labor Party has been unmasking—and will continue relentlessly to unmask until that ulcer on the American Labor Movement is finally lanced, and cauterized. Finally, such is the “Unionism,” the sores of which, like a veritable lazarus, the Socialist party makes a specialty of licking; for the unmasking of which the S.P., with impudent mendacity, denounces the S.L.P. as a “Union Smasher”; and in payment for which denunciation the denunciator receives hard cash.

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The law of events is good to the Labor or Socialist Movement. That beneficent law sees to it that Wrong, together with its manifold Doers, never be lost sight of—compels it to reproduce itself till, thoroughly known, every hideous line of its countenance identified at sight, it be done away with branch and root, and in short order.

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