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EDITORIAL

THE ALBANY TRAGEDY.

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WITH workingmen—"Unionmen" and "non-Unionmen"—bleeding from wounds, gotten at the Albany strike of conductors and motormen, the first thought naturally is one of indignation at the Murphys, the Barondesses, the Roes—capitalist politicians and officers in the militia—, who, holding controlling positions in the corporations of the State, step up before workingmen's constituencies, sing to them the song of the fraternity between Labor and Capital, hold themselves and their pet candidates as the particular friends of the workingman, and thus wheedle him into placing his fleecers in positions from which they can give the signal so as to enforce, at the point of the bayonet, the tyranny of the capitalist class in the shop. As a matter of course, the first thought of indignation is shot at the capitalist. But a second thought throws the capitalist back in degree of criminality, and raises to the front a criminal of a different stamp,—the Labor Lieutenants of the capitalist class, the Organized Scabbery of the land, in short the officers and perpetrators of "pure and simple Unionism" upon the working class. It is then that the Albany tragedy stands out in full glare of the light, and that its painful significance is brought home.

The conductors and motormen of the company, together with their friends, are enraged at the "scabs" who took their places. Seeing that the scab does not fall from the skies; seeing that the scab is a workingman displaced by the privately owned machinery of production; seeing that these "Union" conductors and motormen, together with the scabs, were taught by the Organized Scabbery of the land, the Gomperses, for short, to support the social system of Capitalism, which, by displacing workingmen, gives birth to the potential scab, and throws the "Unionmen" (hungry workers) against the non-Union men (still hungrier workers);—seeing that, one should think the Albany tragedy to be instinct with all the elements of direst tragedy. But the element just mentioned is only one of the features. There is worse.

Tragic enough should be the spectacle of the ranks of the Working Class, united

on election day under the whip of "Pure and Simple Unionism," plumping their vote in favor of Capitalism, by supporting the Rep-Dem or Dem-Rep party, and immediately thereupon dividing into two camps—the men with jobs and those without jobs—tearing each other to pieces as the result of their combined folly in upholding Capitalism. But there is worse. Born of Gompersism, the Working Class is fractured into more than two fragments. Besides the fragment of the hungry ones with miserable jobs, such as the jobs of conductors and motormen, and the still hungrier ones without any job whatever, and hungry enough to fight for even that dry-bone, there is a third fragment, the fragment of the "skilled" men with jobs in some other trade, like locomotive engineering, etc. The Albany tragedy, accordingly, does not present a conflict between two adversaries only—"Union men" and "non-Unionmen";{—}it presents a fight between three adversaries: one on one side, two on the other: "Union men" on the one hand (in this instance the conductors and motormen), and, on the other hand, the non-Union would-be conductors and motormen, backed by the "Union" locomotive engineers, firemen, brakemen, etc., who took the trainload of Brooklyn militiamen to Albany, there to shoot down the "Union" conductors and motormen on strike! In the melee, who is "Unionmen" and who is scab? Are the militia-carrying locomotive engineers "Unionmen"? Are the scab-producing and then scab-fighting motormen "Union men"? Are the "non-Union" men the only scabs?

As the curtain falls, with the stage strewn with the corpses of the workers, who, fettered by the ignorance of pure and simpledom, rent one another to pieces and were promiscuously riddled with the bullets of the militia, hurled upon the combatants by another set of equally blind workers;—when the curtain falls upon that gruesome tangle, the vapor that rises takes the shape of a group, in which Gompersism and the Red Harlot of Capitalism are seen in close embrace, gathering volume from the sighs-laden field below, and hovering over the scene of Labor's carnage,—as the Genius of the Tragedy.

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