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EDITORIAL

OH, POOR GOMPERS! YET AGAIN.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IRREPRESSIBLE is yet a fourth sigh of compassion, that yet another passage in the article which Gompers fathered in the current month's number of the *American Federationist*, wrings from the *Daily People's* breast. It is the passage in which this chieftain of Unionism a la Civic Federation refers to the goal of Socialism, the co-operative commonwealth, as a "universal slave-pen."

Among the pleasurable recollections that the Editor of the *Daily People* treasures, since his activity in the Labor Movement of the land, is the recollection of the call that President Samuel Gompers favored him with at the St. James Hotel in Minneapolis, on the forenoon of March 23, 1891. Mr. Gompers was on his way East, the now Editor of the *Daily People* was on his way West—both on tours of agitation—the former expressly for Unionism, the latter for the Socialist Labor Party. The S.L.P. host of Mr. Gompers having gathered his Socialism, not from sentiment, but from a close study of the Socialist classics, coupled with his observations and previous reading; being, accordingly, perfectly clear upon the fact that, in America, where Capital and Labor face each other untrammelled by feudal hindrances, Unionism is the foundation of a healthy Socialist Political Movement, and is essential to the accomplishment of the Social Revolution, the conversation immediately turned and continued to the end on Unionism. In the course of the conversation, some theoretical differences of opinion having cropped up, this short dialogue ensued:

S.L.P. man—"Is your objection to the representation of the S.L.P. in the Central Labor Federation of New York due to an objection on principle against political action?"

Gompers—"Not at all. But the future Government must be a Government by the Unions."

S.L.P. man—“That is the goal of the S.L.P.—the Congress of the organized useful occupations of the land.”

Gompers—“That is the only thing that will solve the Labor Problem.”

S.L.P. man—“That being your view also, then, our differences can be only upon trifles; and although we may seem to differ to-day, we are bound to be at one tomorrow.”

This virtually closed that pleasant interview.

“Government by the Unions”!—what else is that but the Industrial Republic supplanting the Political State?—what else is that but the Co-operative Commonwealth, whose Central Directing Authority is the Parliament made up of the delegates of the organized useful occupations of the Nation?—and what else can these be but the Unions?—accordingly, what else, but the social system and Government of Unions, is it that the reputed President of the A.F. of L. aggregation of Unions condemns as a “universal slave-pen”?

Oh, poor Gompers, yet again!

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