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EDITORIAL

THROWING TUBS TO THE WHALE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

HE who imagines there is not a deep groundswell coming up in the Labor Movement of America must be living with eyes shut, if at all he has any eyes. The conduct of the Central Federated Union of this city is an instance in point.

Theoretically there must be some honest man in that crowd. The bulk of the concern, however, is well typified by Archibald, Bohm, Bama, alias Brown, and such other worthies—men who see in the Labor Movement only “their oyster,” and who manage to get elected by a confiding and credulous rank and file—where they have a rank and file. The concern is essentially a Gompers affair; it is such even with respect to its brazenness in the claiming of a big membership. Of course such a concern loves and is beloved by the Civic Federation, and is simultaneously a stalking horse for the *Volkszeitung’s* Social Democratic pets. The character of this body was well brought out during the Interborough strike. The strike started on March 7, on the following Sunday, March 13, the said Central Federated Union met in regular session. During the preceding five days the treachery of the Stones and Mahons took place. These “labor leaders” dealt the strikers a blow in the back, and simultaneously, the whole metropolitan press, the *Daily People* excepted, sought to poison the public mind with the slander that the strikers “broke their contract with the Company.” That was the time to speak, when the Central Federated Union met. Well, it did speak with that eloquence that is instinct in silence. It was mum as a clam, limp as a dish-clout—in other words, it eloquently condoned the betrayal of the workers by the fakir national officers, and endorsed the calumnies of the capitalist press. Where it should have denounced, it kept silent, in other words, approved. Nor did it stop there. On the Sunday after it appointed a Committee to intercede for the men with Belmont, and, in the conference that the committee held

with the President of the Civic Federation, it betrayed the men some more—it admitted that they had “done wrong” and had “broken their contract.” The sequel up to this point is logical, step by step. Presently, what do we behold? That same Central Federated Union begins to denounce Gompers and the Civic Federation!

Is this a change of heart? A Saul turned Paul?—Not in the least!

The groundswell that is rising in the Labor Movement is forcing fakirdom to throw tubs to the whale. They feel the necessity of doing something quickly, lest they be swamped. They are beginning to throw Gompers overboard lest Gompersism perish. Seeking to save the essence, they are willing to sacrifice the figurehead. They, the stalking-horse of the *Volkszeitung's* Social Democracy, that, at the national convention of their party last year, thrust aside an anti-Civic Federation resolution, now feel constrained to “go for” the Civic Federation, and strike an anti-Gompers posture.

The sight is cheering. It is hard on Gompers! It is hard on Mr. Ralph Easley! It is harder still on the Central Federated Union! But such is the logic of events! The Labor or Socialist whale will not be tubbed—that consolation is in store for the tub Gompers: when he sinks to the bottom he will have the satisfaction of seeing that those who used him for a tub are themselves, in turn, used for tubs by others behind them, and are hurled after him: they may even overtake him in the sinking before he strikes bottom. Only for Mr. Ralph Easley there will be no consolation. When the Ralph Easleys discover the Tacitonian truth that a purchase from him who has no right to sell conveys no property, they will die of a broken heart, like the Chinese Emperor two generations ago, who placed his reliance on his divinely protected porcelain palace against the guns of the allied Western powers. As his chimerical porcelain bastion crumbled, so did his heart.

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