

EDITORIAL

WHICH IS TEXT, AND WHICH IS EXEGESIS?

By DANIEL DE LEON

AS a rule, there is no difficulty in telling text from exegesis, or explanation. The text is usually short, the exegesis long. By their looks they can be told apart with ease. But here comes a double-barreled phenomenon that puzzles. It is the annual convention of the A.F. of L. in Scranton, and the “Convention of Capital and Labor,” held in this city in the rooms of the Board of Trade and Transportation.

The Scranton gathering met to the tune that the conduct of the Gompers organization of cigarmakers, in furnishing the capitalists of Tampa with scabs and deputy marshals to lower the wages of Union men on strike, was a meritorious act; it kept step to the refrain that the interests of the workingman and the capitalist are identical; and it wound up in a grand pyrotechnic of glorification of Labor and loyalty to the rights of the capitalist.

The Board of Trade and Transportation gathering—at which all the luminaries of the Scranton gathering assisted and were joined by luminaries of the capitalist world—met to the tune (sung by the labor-fleecers) that laborers and labor-fleecers are “fellow laborers” (Oscar Straus of the wan-looking female wage-slaves of the “Macy” and other Straus labor-fleecing concerns), that the Trades Union in which the check-off system is in vogue is just the thing (Mark Hanna of Hazelton and numerous other bloody fields of labor celebrity), that the wicked Trusts must be smashed (C.M. Schwab, President of the United States Steel Trust); and the tune was sung to the orchestration, conducted by the Scranton luminaries above referred to and others of their kind, that capital, being the creature of Labor, therefore, Labor should be dependent upon capital (Grand Master of the Locomotive Firemen Sargent), that there is a community of interests between workingmen and employers (Samuel Gompers), that the workingman has no right to interfere with

the manufacturer's affairs (Eaton of the Tobin institution to squeeze dues out of the workers under the name of United Boot and Shoeworkers' Union), and that Hanna is a good friend of Labor to whom Labor owed and thereby gave an apology (John Phillips of the Hatters' Union).

Now, which of the two gatherings is the text, and which the exegesis? Is the Scranton convention the text, which, being considered obscure, had to be explained by the Board of Trade and Transportation exegesis of Captains of Capital and their Labor Lieutenants meeting to give and receive the apologies of Labor to its fleecers, and emphasize the "community of interests" that exists between the parasite and the body it feeds on? Or is this Board of Trade and Transportation pow-wow the text, the explanation to which is to be found in the applause with which the Tampa services, rendered to the capitalist class by its Labor Lieutenants, were received at the Scranton gathering?

The thing is perplexing. Who can throw light on the "Dark Affair," worthy of furnishing the pen of a Balzac with matter for another grim and dismal story under that title?

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