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EDITORIAL

MOPPING THE OCEAN.

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THE real interesting scene that the approaching national convention of the A.F. of L. will present is one, the subject of which is taken least notice of by the public press. Questions of whether Gompers will be re-elected or not; whether he will come out on top in his quarrel with Schaffer or not; whether the “political plank” will create more ruction or not;—these and such like issues are being considerably debated in advance. They are all of no significance whatever. The significant issue is wholly different.

One trade after another, affiliated with the A.F. of L., is getting into one another’s hair. The machinists and the comps have a fight on hand; the longshoremen have a fight with kindred trades; the miners have a fight with others engaged at the mines; etc., etc., and the brewers lead with a big fight of the same nature. What is it all about?

As capitalism develops, the lines that separate trade from trade wane. Cigarmakers can become trolleyman, trolleyman can become shoemakers, shoemakers can become typesetters, typesetters can become machinists, machinists can become miners, miners can become “helpers,” helpers can become coopers, coopers can become brewers, etc., etc., with infinitely less difficulty than formerly, when the machine was less powerful, and consequently, skill was more requisite. As a result of this development, the individual trades organizations find it increasingly hard to control their own trades. If an idle cigarmaker can endanger a trolleyman’s union, how much easier is it not for men of kindred trades to endanger one another’s trades! Do the Pure and Simple leaders of the A.F. of L. understand this development? If they did they would realize that to attempt to control the trades by the old style of methods is like to attempt to mop back the ocean when the natural dams that held it back have been irreparably swept away. These leaders would understand that that ocean has to be handled upon a new plan. They would have to plant themselves squarely upon the Socialist Labor Party position and, unable any

longer to stem the Ocean, ride it, control it by navigating it. Is that their policy? No!

The real feature of the next national convention will be the fights of these warring trades to control one another, the manoeuvres they will adopt in securing their point, the virulence that will manifest itself, and—the stupidity of the arguments, as all arguments must be that, ignoring facts, seek to mop back the engulfing Ocean.

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