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EDITORIAL

MOB SPIRIT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

DM. PARRY, now sufficiently known to fame to need no further introduction, has been delivering himself of some more congested and self-photographic burning feelings. This time it was on the 13th instant, at the Chautauqua conference. Among the things the gentleman said was that “organized labor is the worst form of mob spirit.” It needs no deep penetration to perceive that Mr. Parry was again “talking out of school.”

When Mr. Parry, the President, be it remembered, of an Association of crippled capitalist concerns that are caught in the swirl of capitalist currents, pronounces organized labor a mob he has a certain thing in mind; that thing is a reflex of the disorganized and, consequently, mob capital that he represents.

The thing Mr. Parry has in his mind is Mitchell with an organization one-half of which (the bituminous wing) he caused to scab it on the other half (the anthracite wing) during last year’s strike; the Murphy-Parks dominated building trades, one set of which cuts the throat of the other; the carpenters and woodworkers, who roundly denounced one another as “scabs”; the railroad “brotherhoods” who transport militias to beat down the wages of the workers in other trades and so on. That, certainly, is a labor-mob. But what is that mob if not the reflex of competing capitalists, the one cutting the other’s throat by underselling, by backbiting the other’s credit, solvency, goods, etc.? Of competing capitalists joining in cartels, each with the object in view of thereby tying the other’s hands, while himself breaks the cartel? Of competing capitalists spreading false market reports to mislead and ruin the others? And so forth and so on?

Capitalism, short of the monopoly stage, is a mob; and the spirit that animates it is Mob Spirit. The bulk of organized labor to-day is at that stage; and its being so but reflects the social stage of development that wide areas of capitalism, the Parry

area, is still wholly in, and that few, if any, are yet wholly out of.

But Mr. Parry need not despair of the country or of civilization. As his stage of capitalism is purely transitory, so is the present stage of the bulk of organized labor transient. The same social and economic laws that are eliminating the Mob Spirit from capitalism in general, are at work eliminating the Mob Spirit from organized labor. Those laws are working with accelerated effectiveness—witness the distress of Mr. Parry. The day is at hand when, wholly eradicated, Mob Spirit in organized labor will have made room for the Spirit of Order. On that day the present mob of organized labor, the reflex and product of the existing mob of disorganized capital, will take the helm and instal Social Order, and save the country and civilization.

Let Mr. Parry wear his soul in patience.

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