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EDITORIAL

## GOMPERS TWADDLING—IF NOT WORSE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**“T**HE Trust is a combination of dollars; the labor organization is an association of human beings.”

So says Gompers in his *Federationist* of this month, and by so saying he illustrates how a principle, correct on the lips of one man, may be false on the lips of another.

The labor organization is not necessarily an association of human beings—it is that, or it is not that, according to the principles that bring it and hold it together.

Under the capitalist system Labor is a commodity, an article of merchandise, in short, a chattel, just as bales of hay, or dollars. The fact transpires clear enough from the well-known term “Labor Market.” Nothing has a market unless it is a chattel; what is not a chattel has no market. There is a hay market, there is a dollar or financial market, and there is a “Labor Market”—proof positive that under capitalism Labor is considered and treated as a chattel.

Must the organization of Labor necessarily be a combination of chattels?

Yes and no.

Yes, if the organization holds the capitalist system to be proper and deserving of support.

No, if the organization holds the capitalist system to be a system of iniquity which should be abolished.

In the former case the organization seeks to perpetuate the chattel feature of Labor; in the latter case the organization seeks to abolish the chattel feature of Labor and to regain for Labor its human attributes.

It follows that, in order to determine whether a certain Labor organization is an association of human beings, or a combination of chattels, one must first ascertain whether the organization seeks to keep up, or seeks to tear down the system of

capitalism.

Does it seek to keep it the system of capitalism?—then it is an organ of chattels.

Does it seek to tear do the system of capitalism?—then it is a combination of human beings.

Under what head does Gompers' A.F. of L. come?

Its principles are that “Capital and Labor are brothers”; that between the two there are “reciprocal relations”; that “the capitalist has rights.” And Gompers confirms these views by coming out for a capitalist candidate for President. It follows that the organization for which Gompers speaks is an association, not of human beings but of chattels.

The Labor organization will be what Gompers now falsely claims for his organization—an association of human beings not before it breaks away from the Gompers theory about the “brotherhood of Capital and Labor”; not before it rises from the shelves of the market where to-day it lies alongside of dollars and doughnuts; not before it places itself in open rebellion to the existing Order of Inhumanity.

The organization of Labor can not be an association of human beings until it acts up to the attributes of such—claims its humanity and seeks to enforce it by overthrowing the Bryan-Taft system of Capitalism.

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

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