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EDITORIAL

THE BONFIRE SHOOTING UP LAST FLASHES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHILE the bonfire of the Philadelphia strike is evidently sinking, nevertheless, as sinking bonfires frequently do, its last flashes are, tho' intermittent, vivid.

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“Let us have peace!” exclaims the Philadelphia Socialist party paper *Tageblatt* in an article in which it sides with the Brewers for having left the strikers in the lurch.—He who could fail to read by the light of this flash the tale of S.P. poltroonery, perfidy and dishonesty would not know Dishonesty, Perfidy and Poltroonery even if he saw them coming down the road on horseback.

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“Two bombs exploded wrecking the cars on a quiet street,” and “clever plain clothes men managed to get into a committee room of strikers where they saw percussion caps and other explosives concealed.”—Every spark in this flash underscores the experience that, if the proletariat cannot be egged on to some act of dementia that may give a handle for bourgeois butcheries, then the bourgeois himself gets his agents in “plain clothes” to commit the butcheries. For every one bomb ever thrown by angry workers, a dozen are exploded by deliberately cool bourgeois agencies.

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“Tim Healey’s powermen remain loyal to the Company and to their contract.”—This lambent tongue of fire curls around the stake at which Craft Unionism stands pilloried; and, by the draft it raises, throws open the files of the *Wall Street Journal* at the place where that candid bourgeois publication applauds

A.F. of L.-ism as “the bulwark of American capital.” Surely that system of labor organization that authorizes one battalion of Labor to fire into the ranks of another in battle with the capitalist class deserves the applause of Capital,—and simultaneously consumes the pilloried abortion.

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“The most experienced in politics and labor difficulties cannot recall a situation to equal the present where President Wm. D. Mahon of the national organization of traction men is turned down and a strike ordered to continue.”—The near to 80,000,000 audience, that is witnessing the Philadelphia bonfire, witness at this point the figure of the said President Mahon reeling, blinded by the flash. Hitherto—in Troy, in Detroit, in Chicago, in New York—wherever his “men” went out on strike, the gentleman’s appearance on the stage ever was the certain symptom of the strike being ordered off after “hearty handshakings” between the worthy President and the respective Company. A modern Antony, President Mahon never appeared on the scene to praise but to bury the Caesar of a Labor Revolt. The long lane is turned at last. The bonfire flashes the fact.

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The rumblings in behalf of a Labor Party, heard since the start of the Philadelphia bonfire, are growing louder, and delegates have been called to organize and launch such a party in Philadelphia.—’Tis not the light of this flash alone that is luminous, also the crackle that accompanies it is instructive. Its light once more lights up the fact that the S.P.’s bootlicking of fakirdom has caused the S.P. to become “a hissing and a by-word with the wage workers of America,” such a hissing and by-word that, when they think of politics, they forthwith turn away from the fraudulent concern, and seek to set up their own party. And the crackle that accompanies the flash tells loudly enough that the flash is but an aspiration, and that the aspiration lacks as yet the sufficient Socialist Labor Party drill to secure its realization and save it from evaporation.

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It must be admitted that, tho’ the Philadelphia bonfire is giving unmistakable signs of collapse, it upholds the traditions of well brought-up bonfires of shooting up

with their dying breath grand tongues of luminous flames, and thus their spirit, like John Brown's even after he was hanged, goes marching on.

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