

EDITORIAL

THE PRINZ JOACHIM.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WHEN the *Prinz Joachim* of the Hamburg-American Line went last week on the rocks off Samana Island with its large freight of passengers, William J. Bryan among them, pleasure-bound to the West Indies, Mr. Emil L. Boas, the general manager of the line, hastened to issue a statement intended to reassure the relatives and friends at home.

What did the statement set forth?

Did it set forth that the Captain was a skilled navigator, and his crew picked men?—No. That would have given but little assurance.

Did it set forth that the ship was well provisioned, removing all fear of starvation?—No. That would have been but cold comfort.

Did it set forth the seaworthiness of the material of which the boat was built?—No, neither that would have removed the real apprehension.

The real apprehension was drowning: the ship's sinking. Mr. Boas knew that. Leaving aside all other consolations, Mr. Boas took up the only one from which comfort could really come. He said:

“The ship is divided into seven watertight compartments by heavy bulkheads. Only one compartment is injured, and that is almost filled with water. The others are intact. With only one compartment broken into, and the other six intact, it will be impossible for the boat to sink. The passengers are safe.”

And so it was. And so they were.

The structure of the *Prinz Joachim*, which is the structure of all ocean steamers, is also the structure of the Ship of Capitalism, with its Gomperstian system of craft and contract-dislocated compartment system of Craft Unionism.

Divided into as many revolution-tight compartments of Craft Unions by the

heavy bulkheads of the labor-lieutenants of the capitalist class, it matters little if the Ship of Capitalism, running off and on against the sharp reefs of socio-economic facts, has any one of its “compartments” staved in by the process technically known in social navigation as the “strike.” That one “compartment” may fill with the onrush of the revolution; but, adopting the language of Mr. Boas, with only one or a small minority of the compartments broken into, and all the other compartments intact—an intactness technically known in social navigation as “mutual scabbery”—it is impossible for the Ship of Capitalism to sink; the capitalist class on board is safe.

Neither the skilled “captainship” in command of the Ship of Capitalism; nor the “picked crew” under the captain; nor the vast supply of “provisions” on board; nor the “timber” of which the Ship is built;—no neither any of these, nor all of them rolled in one, constitute that Ship’s safety. But for the compartments of Gompertian Craft Unionism, into which the Ship’s hold is divided, but for those compartments’ unavoidable effect upon one another, technically known in social navigation as “mutual scabbery,”—but for that, the Ship of Capitalism would long ago have sunk to the bottom of the sea, whither social evolution consigns the craft, whereas now she floats serenely.

The *Prinz Joachim*, on the rocks, yet safe—lo, the lesson-laden portent exhibited to the sight of the Working Class and to the militant Socialists of the land.

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