

EDITORIAL

FLASHES FROM THE PHILADELPHIA STRIKE BONFIRE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE bonfire, kindled in Philadelphia by the Rapid Transit Company, is throwing up flashes by the light of which many a text is made legible for many a sermon. Here are a few:

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Clarence O. Pratt, the leader of the workmen on strike, was, on February 21, summarily thrown into a cell. Constitutional guarantees provide that, unless a community is pronounced in a state of siege, a person arrested must be made acquainted with the charge against him, and no unreasonable bail shall be exacted. Pratt was kept in the dark as to the charges against him, and when \$9,500 bail was offered for his release, the turnkey refused, notwithstanding the order of release, fixing the sum for bail, was signed by a magistrate, Magistrate Gorman. By the lurid light of the flash thrown up from the bonfire the text is legible—**THE PHILADELPHIA RAPID TRANSIT COMPANY, A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CAPITALIST CLASS, HAS USURPED GOVERNMENTAL POWERS; UPON IT CLASS'S HEAD, FOR TREASON, FALL THE CONSEQUENCES.**

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A crowd, brought up to the notion that there is occult power in symbols, and having more than once seen the capitalist deduct justice for his cause by wrapping it in the American flag, now did likewise. It spread an American flag over the rails in Kensington avenue. The strike-breaking motorman of a car that came along ran straight over the flag. Incensed at such desecration of the American flag, the crowd yanked the motorman off and gave him a beating. By the light of the brilliant flash that shot up from the bonfire at Kensington avenue the text stands out with

magnificent distinctness—SYMBOLS ARE KNAVES' TRICKS TO DUPE FOOLS WITH: NOT WITHIN BUT BEHIND THE SYMBOL LIES ITS POWER.

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The Police bustle a good deal, but the bustle obviously is meant to conceal a dislike to hit the strikers and their friends. The reason ascribed by the Company for such “gross dereliction of duty” is that “the Police are loath to club and fight with all the power that’s in them because at the next primaries they will be relied upon by the politicians to bring up the very men they are now fighting.” This flash leaps high from the bonfire; it scatters luminous sparks in all directions; by its intense light the text bulges out in bold relieve— HE IS AN ARRANT LUNKHEAD, OR HE IS AN ARRANT SCAMP IN CAPITALIST PAY, WHO INDUCES THE WORKING CLASS TO THROW AWAY THE SHIELD OF THE BALLOT.

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Pratt, the strike leader, charges that the Company has brought in at least 2,000 strike-breakers. What a flash that is which the bonfire shoots up! By its light Pratt, and, via him, Old Style Unionism, are made acquainted with a state of things that is condensed in the illuminated text—THE STRIKE-BREAKER IS THE PRODUCT OF THAT OLD SYSTEM OF UNIONISM WHICH OPENS NOT WIDE ITS DOORS FOR THE ADMISSION OF THE WHOLE PROLETARIAT, INITIATION FEES, OR NO INITIATION FEES; DUES, OR NO DUES.

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Let the bonfire of the Philadelphia strike shoot up its luminous flashes. It is furnishing a liberal education to the very ones in need thereof.

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