

EDITORIAL

HANNAISM SPRUNG A LEAK.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE pirates on board the privateer “Civic Federation”—Hanna, Captain; Gompers, First Mate, and W. MacArthur, boatswain—had better hustle, pump their ship, and stop a gap: it has sprung a serious leak, revealing a long rift in the planks.

Senator Hanna is the main active force behind the Ship Subsidy bill, that has been recently jammed through the Senate. The pretext for the bill is “American Labor.” If no subsidy is granted to the shipping merchants, “the American workingman, American sailors, especially, will suffer”: such was the contention. “Give the shipping capitalists a good, round, elastic subsidy and the American sailor, in particular, and the American workingman, in general, will be benefited”; such was the argument. In short, the Ship Subsidy bill was a misnomer; to judge by its advocates, it should been called “a bill to subsidize the American workingman and smoke out the non-American.”

At the very time that bill is under way, the Marine Firemen utter strange utterings. At the March 30 meeting of the Central Federated Union, the Marine Firemen “denounced Hanna for giving them the ‘jolly,’ that white stokers were physically unable to perform the work of the Chinese on Trans-Pacific steamers.” And the Firemen explained that “they had wanted Hanna to exclude steamers having Chinese crews from the benefits of the Ship Subsidy bill; but AS HE IS MATERIALLY INTERESTED, HE REFUSES TO USE HIS INFLUENCE AS THEY REQUESTED.”—In other words, the Marine Firemen prove that the Hanna Ship Subsidy bill is not at all intended to benefit American Labor; that its purpose is to benefit the American capitalists only; finally, that the Chinese, with their low wages, are to be allowed to crowd out the Americans on board the very ships for whom subsidy is claimed “in the interest of the American workingman.”

Here is a leak, a big leak. The Hanna-Gompers Civic Federation was intended to prevent just such leaks from being sprung. It was with an eye to that very thing that the twelve limbs of the Organized Scabbery on the Committee were carefully picked out, with W. MacArthur, Editor of the *San Francisco Coast Seaman's Journal*, and anti-Chinee spouter among the lot. Each of these twelve was to keep an eye to just such possible leaks in his particular quarter. He was to act as a stop-gap. W. MacArthur, Editor of the *San Francisco Coast Seaman's Journal*, was to keep an eye on the ship and sailor branches of the workers; moreover, as a notorious anti-Chinee spouter, he was especially qualified to fill the role of a fence behind which the American sailors could be sand-bagged.

How comes it, in view of all this, that the Marine Firemen were allowed to let such a cat out of the bag as they did? How on earth can "Public Opinion" be properly attuned if such facts are allowed to creep into light? In short, is boatswain W. MacArthur asleep?

The whistle sounds from the quarterdeck where Captain Hanna walks uneasy. Through Gompers down, the whistle echoes:

Hustle, brothers, hustle; stop the leak; stop or we drown!

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

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