

EDITORIAL

## FORTIFYING THE CANAL—AGAINST WHOM?

By DANIEL DE LEON

**W**ASHINGTON despatches indicate that strong forces are organizing to secure from Congress the necessary act and acts to “fortify” the Canal. The despatches also indicate that the elements in favor of the scheme expect as much opposition as was met by the proposal on the part of the Secretary of War for an enlargement of the Army.

Why so much apprehension of opposition? Is not the plan as plausible as the plan for the increase of the army? Exactly so. One thing is as plausible as the other, and the fact is that the plausibility is not thick enough to carry conviction. In other words the real reason for the plan is not stated by the planners. The pretext they use is too thin.

Fortify the Canal? Against whom? The workings of the Top-Capitalist mind can in many respects be gotten at by a knowledge of workings of the mind of the A.F. of L., or Gompers style of Unionism. The latter being a weak imitation of the former, a thorough grasp of the one discloses the blacker secrets of the other.

Gompers “Unionism” for instance has “The Closed Shop” as one of its favorite slogans. Superficially listened to the slogan seems in the interest of the working class. More closely listened to, the slogan, as pointed out scores of times in these columns, is directly opposed to the interests of the workers. As stated in these columns scores of times, and proved, the “Closed Shop” means the shop closed, not to the employer but to the masses of the workers: it means the shutting of the shop’s door in the face of workingmen. The advocates of the “Closed Shop” also close their Unions to the masses of the men; the shop that is closed to all but these is a shop ruled by a Job Trust. This sleight of hand being understood the sleight of hand to the tune of “Fortify the Canal” will be seen through.

What “Labor’s interests” is with Gompers Unionism that is “patriotism” with

the Top-Capitalist—a phrase to deceive. As “Labor’s interests” is used by Gompersism to Civic Federationize the workers, so is “patriotism” used to cover the tracks of Top-Capitalism. As the “Closed Shop” is a slogan whereby to decree starvation to the proletariat, so now “Fortify the Canal” is the patriotically sounded noise, under the racket of which a further pretext is looked for to increase military forces wherewith—to keep in awe, in fact to massacre the workers whom Top-Capital is getting ready to throw out of work by the hundreds of thousands, and goad into riot.

Fortify the Canal—against whom?—against the Working Class at home—right here at home.

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