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EDITORIAL

## HE ILLUSTRATES THE POINT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**F**ATHER John W. Mackey of Cincinnati has appeared in public print in the role of what may be called a political astronomer, or, perhaps, an astronomical politician. The occasion for Father Mackey's sudden burst into this novel field was the decree issued by Archbishop Elders to the clergymen of his diocese enjoining them to add to their Thanksgiving prayers a prayer of thanks for "the progress made by the presidential commission in conciliating the interests of employers and employees" in the mining regions. Taking the decree as his major premises, and certain utterances of Messrs. Mitchell and Gompers as his minor premises, the beatific Father says:

"The declaration of President Mitchell that his associates were a body of men who were trade unionists and not a political party, set Socialism back in this country twenty-five years. And when Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, seconded and defended the actions of Mitchell in the convention which was held in New Orleans, the setback of Socialism was furthered."

What astronomical calculation ever was more accurately laid down than this? What astronomer, true to the impassioned spirit of science, ever set aside his own wishes and feelings in the matter, and gave the lay world the benefit of his observations and conclusions in so dispassionate and objective a manner? None. Nor is there on record a more conspicuous instance of sound scientific calculation, that justly ignores trifles, and reaches truth athwart of them.

It was just before Thanksgiving that that occurred which would seem to give the lie to the theory that "progress was being made by the presidential commission in conciliating the interests of employers and employees." The interests to be "conciliated" broke away. As the Thanksgiving Day's sun rose the conciliatees stood with clenched fists opposite each other. A less balanced scientist than Father Mackey would have been

unbalanced by the fact. He would have seen in it an evidence of the truth of the Socialist teaching that the employer class is a fleecer of the employed class, that the interests of the two are irreconcilable, and that the impossibility of reconciling them has reached a point where it is not even feasible to conceal the fact by bogus peace declamations. But Father Mackey is no ordinary scientist. He is not to be deceived by trifles. What matters it whether the settlement negotiations broke up abruptly? That cuts no figure,—not with a genuine scientist. So, then, Father Mackey proceeds to place the blue glass of his octogon up to the political sky, and taking into consideration such really important facts as the declarations of Mitchell and Gompers, the Father then computes the tickings of his chronometer, runs his thumb up and down the logarithmic tables, draws with his compass a circle or two, traces the lines between the points of where the circles intersect, and tells us, down to a little, that Socialism is on the descendent 219,000 hours and 55.15 seconds. Apprehensive that such long figures and fractions of time may bewilder the ignorant, Father Mackey comes down to the level of the common herd, and lets us know that “Socialism is set back twenty-five years,” to begin with, and still more to end with.

To the Socialist this information, painful though it may be, is valuable. He will now, of course, give it up for the twenty-five years + the additional indefinite time alluded to by Father Mackey, and save his pains.

What a blessing it is to have a Father Mackey around!

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