

Daniel De Leon

Editorial: Re-Conquered

Last week, a crowd estimated at from 1,000 to 2,500 unemployed and hungry workingmen of Boston—a portion of the backbone, muscle, sinew and brains of the American nation—gathered upon the historic Common, where they were addressed by Comrade Casson of Lynn, and from whence they marched to the contiguous State House to lay their grievances before the Governor—Frederick T. Greenhalge. What thereupon took place may be now and surely will some day be considered a striking episode in the ongoing Social Revolution.

The crowd of hungry and fleeced wealth producers that sought the aid of the Governor chose Morrison L. Swift as one of its spokesmen. Swift and Greenhalge faced each other; each representing the opposite pole of the modern Social Question. Swift represented the modern slave, Greenhalge the modern slave-holder; Swift the wage-working, wealth producing and robbed proletariat, Greenhalge the idle, wealth-sponging robber class of the capitalist; Swift the oppressed class of modern society, Greenhalge the oppressor of our existing social system. The existence of these two men, together with the stand they took, sufficiently denoted the return to our soil of the slavery that it was thought the musketry of Lexington had rung the knell of doom upon; their proximity on the errand that brought them together accentuated this fact and brought out into glaring light the social class contrast between the modern vassal—the wage working class—and the modern tyrant—the capitalist. Nor was this all. A deeper fact, of deep historic meaning, was thrust on that occasion upon the public notice,

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and with a sharp burin carved its lineaments upon the page of history—Swift was born in Ohio, Greenhalge in England!!

The claim of Socialism that America has been re-conquered, both in that the slavery from which the Revolutionary Fathers freed the colonists has come back, and also in that substantially the same masters of old have returned on top is, of course, poo-pooed by our ruling classes. But facts are stronger than fiction; however much they may be obscured, they will stick out irresistibly, and peep through the drapery of false pretences behind which it is sought to conceal them.

Not only have the two classes of exploiters and exploited, robbers and robbed, idlers and workers, wealth-grabbers and wealth-producers, oppressors and oppressed, affluent do-nothings and industrious poor, taken full shape, but the Briton, who had been thought to have been driven from the country together with all what he implied, has returned, together with all that he essentially had stood for; the tyranny he represented of old has once more its heel planted on the neck of the American people!

The House of Lords has greater landed interests in America than in England; our railroads are virtually European property; our mines, factories, shops and yards are European satrapies; and the traitor American Tories of old, after lying low for two generations, and playing the racket of “patriotism” upon the people, now throw off the mask, and place the coward, insolent foe openly in possession.

A Briton in office at the Massachusetts State House and representing the oppressor, an American pleading for bread before him and representing the oppressed, are events that visibly accentuate in all its phases the fact that our people have been reconquered.

Spirit of '76, arouse!

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*A De Leon editorial transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the
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