

Published in the Interest of the Working Class

The Voice of Labor

A Paper That Dares To Tell The Truth.

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CAMDEN, N. J., SEPTEMBER 22, 1917.

FIFTY CENTS PER YEAR.

FREE SPEECH AS VIEWED BY SOME PROMINENT MEN

Democracy Endangered If Constitutional Guarantees Are Set Aside.

The "imminent statesmen" of Camden have taken their stand with regard to Free Speech...

Joseph Story, LL. D., Justice of the Supreme Court.

In his exposition of the Constitution, referring to the various clauses of the First Amendment...

Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States.

Senator A. J. Gronna, of North Dakota.

Senator G. W. Norris, of Nebraska.

One of the fundamental principles of any free government is the freedom of speech and freedom of the press.

Harold Knutson, Congressman from Minnesota.

Impressions of a City Council Meeting

"No member shall speak to another, or leave his seat, so as to interrupt the business of the Council while the minutes, reports or any other papers are being read, or when any member is engaged in debate."

With this rule in mind, the writer crept softly into the balcony of the Council chamber.

The hall was empty. It was early—fully five minutes before time for the session to open.

Suddenly an on-rush was heard. In the twinkling of an eye the cathedral-like calm of the place was transformed into the hubbub of the New York Stock Exchange.

A faint tapping was heard at the front of the room. The chairman was calling for order.

The right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances...

B. C. Hilliard, Congressman from Colorado.

"The constitutional guarantee of freedom of speech is of little value if those in authority may deny it at pleasure."

Ernest Lundeen, Congressman from the Minneapolis District.

Harold Knutson, Congressman from Minnesota.

Rev. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, Director of Abraham Lincoln Center, Chicago.

Democracy is never more threatened than when officials, who owe their authority to the suffrage of the people, forget that they are the servants and not the rulers of the people...

At each pause of the clerk, the tapping could be heard from the chairman, and Mr. Van Hart would move "the resolution be adopted."

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(Continued on Second Page)

City Council Threatens Constitutional Rights How to Oppose This Effectively

1. Cut out the petition printed below and after signing it yourself, get as many other signatures as you possibly can.

2. Write to the Councilmen in your ward, telling them what you think of the ordinance, and asking them to vote against it.

3. Write to Mayor Ellis, asking him to use his influence to have this ordinance voted down.

4. If possible, attend the meeting of City Council on Thursday afternoon, September 27th, at 3 o'clock and see for yourself whether or not your duly elected representative there will deliberately refuse to heed your wishes.

5. If they do—Then the only thing to do is to wait until election day. Remember What They Have Done To You, and Vote For the Candidates that Will Carry Out the Wishes of the People.

6. Remember that the City Council is against the measure.

7. Remember that the City Council is against the measure.

8. Remember that the City Council is against the measure.

Petitions must be at The Voice of Labor Office Before Thursday, September 27th.

A Petition of Protest

To the Members of the City Council of the City of Camden, N. J.

Whereas, "An ordinance prohibiting the use of the streets, highways or public places in the City of Camden for meetings, parades, concerts or other private purposes without a permit" passed first reading at the meeting of the City Council of the City of Camden, New Jersey, held on August 30th, 1917; and

Whereas, the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America specifically states:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and to petition the government for a redress of grievances; and

Whereas, the Constitution of the State of New Jersey specifically states:

(Article I, Par. 5) Every person may freely speak, write and publish his sentiments on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of that right. No law shall be passed to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech or of the press, and (Art. I, Par. 18) The people have the right freely to assemble together to consult for the common good, to make known their opinions to their representatives, and to petition for redress of grievances; and

Whereas, said ordinance is in direct violation of the rights of the people as guaranteed by both the National and the State Constitution, inasmuch as it, in its very nature, tends to restrain and abridge the freedom and liberty of speech and the right of the people peaceably to assemble by requiring a permit to hold public meetings; and

Whereas, Section 2, grants the Mayor of Camden unrestrained power in regulating public meetings by providing that the amount of fee to be paid under this ordinance shall be fixed by the Mayor at the time application therefor is made, which provision opens the way for an unscrupulous Chief Executive, should one ever be elected in Camden, to forbid all public meetings in opposition to his own beliefs or policies, by merely demanding a prohibitive fee for granting the permit; and

Whereas, the Second Provision of Section 2 of said ordinance, by its obscure and indefinite wording, leaves a loop-hole for rank injustice, in forbidding the granting of permits for the use of practically all prominent and centrally located streets for "carnivals or for any private purpose by means of which public travel will be unduly impeded"; and

Whereas, we believe the granting of such arbitrary power to any city official to be exceedingly dangerous and entirely out of keeping with the principles of democracy which are traditional in America;

Therefore, we, the undersigned petitioners, do hereby vehemently protest against the passage of said ordinance and urge every member of the City Council to vote against the same when it comes up for final passage at the meeting of the City Council to be held on September 27th, 1917.

Table with columns NAME and ADDRESS for petitioners.

(Note: If you can get more signers than the above space provides for, paste a sheet of blank paper to the bottom of the petition.)

Petitions must be in the office of "The Voice of Labor", 315 N. 6th Street, Camden, before Thursday, September 27th, 1917.

An Ordinance. An ordinance prohibiting the use of the streets, highways or public places in the City of Camden for meetings, parades, concerts or other private purposes without a permit.

ORDINANCE AIMS TO KILL FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND RIGHT OF PEACEABLE ASSEMBLAGE

City Council Proposes To Grant Unheard of Power to The Mayor.

Power to control all public meetings will be granted to the mayor of Camden unless City Council votes down the ordinance which passed first reading on August 30, prohibiting the use of the streets, highways or public places for meetings, parades, concerts or other private purposes without a permit.

Never has such a blow been aimed at constitutional rights in Camden. Freedom of speech will become a thing of the past if the ruling is allowed to pass.

No Limit to Fee.

The public must be ever on the alert for the joker in all city ordinances. Section 2 is the joker in this particular one.

It provides for the payment of a fee, but leaves the amount to be fixed by the mayor at the time each application is made for a permit.

Could anything be more sweeping. A mayor can, by simply demanding a prohibitive fee, prevent from holding a public meeting, anyone whose opinions or policies differ from his own.

Let us consider some of the dangerous consequences. Any political party, republican, democratic or Socialist, could shut off all opposition meetings.

Do you realize the scope of the power that is about to be vested in

Mayor Ellis and his successors? If you do, protest against it.

Not satisfied with the power already granted, the ordinance then itemizes the streets for the use of which no permits may be granted.

Evidently our politicians have been visiting the Socialist street meetings this fall. These meetings have been attracting unusually large crowds.

The Socialists of Camden are ready to fight this issue through to the last card.

If the ordinance is passed in spite of the protests of the people, the Socialist organization is prepared to put it to a test at once, and promises to make a free speech fight here that will put Camden on the map.

The Socialists have been holding meetings on the streets for years, and have never had any trouble.

Perhaps the city administration thinks it can stop Socialism by these tactics. They might as well try to stop the sun from rising tomorrow.

Councillmanic Thoughts On American Liberties

Even if an ordinance passes on its first reading in Council without a dissenting vote, without a word of discussion or a single question, it does not follow that the Councilmen all know upon what they voted.

This fact was disclosed when delegates from various Socialist branches called upon the Councilmen to protest against the ordinance to regulate public meetings.

Mr. Way and Mr. Rodan, of the Third ward, both stated they were not aware that an ordinance affecting freedom of speech had been introduced.

Mr. Deacon, of the Tenth ward, had not heard of it.

Mr. Trebar, of the Thirteenth ward, was under the impression that the ordinance was intended to control merely carnivals.

The sum and substance of Mr. Rodan's remarks was that he favored free speech, providing that free speech remains within the law, but when asked when free speech became illegal, he replied he did not know.

It is, indeed, condescending for an elected servant of the people to say that HE FAVORS one of the rights of those people, when that right has been guaranteed to them by the Constitution of the Nation under which he is serving.

Mr. Rodan, and shall do our best to send, not one, but several representatives of labor there this fall. And, we guarantee that no ordinance abridging the liberties of the people will be jammed through without being thoroughly understood and explained to the people.

Von Neida Favors the Ordinance. Mr. Von Neida, of the Eleventh ward, favors the ordinance because of his belief that the mayor would not abuse his power.

We have had a chance to observe our present mayor in operation since 1905, but fail to recall any action which would inspire the average citizen with Mr. Von Neida's child-like faith.

Hartmann's Spark Cigars

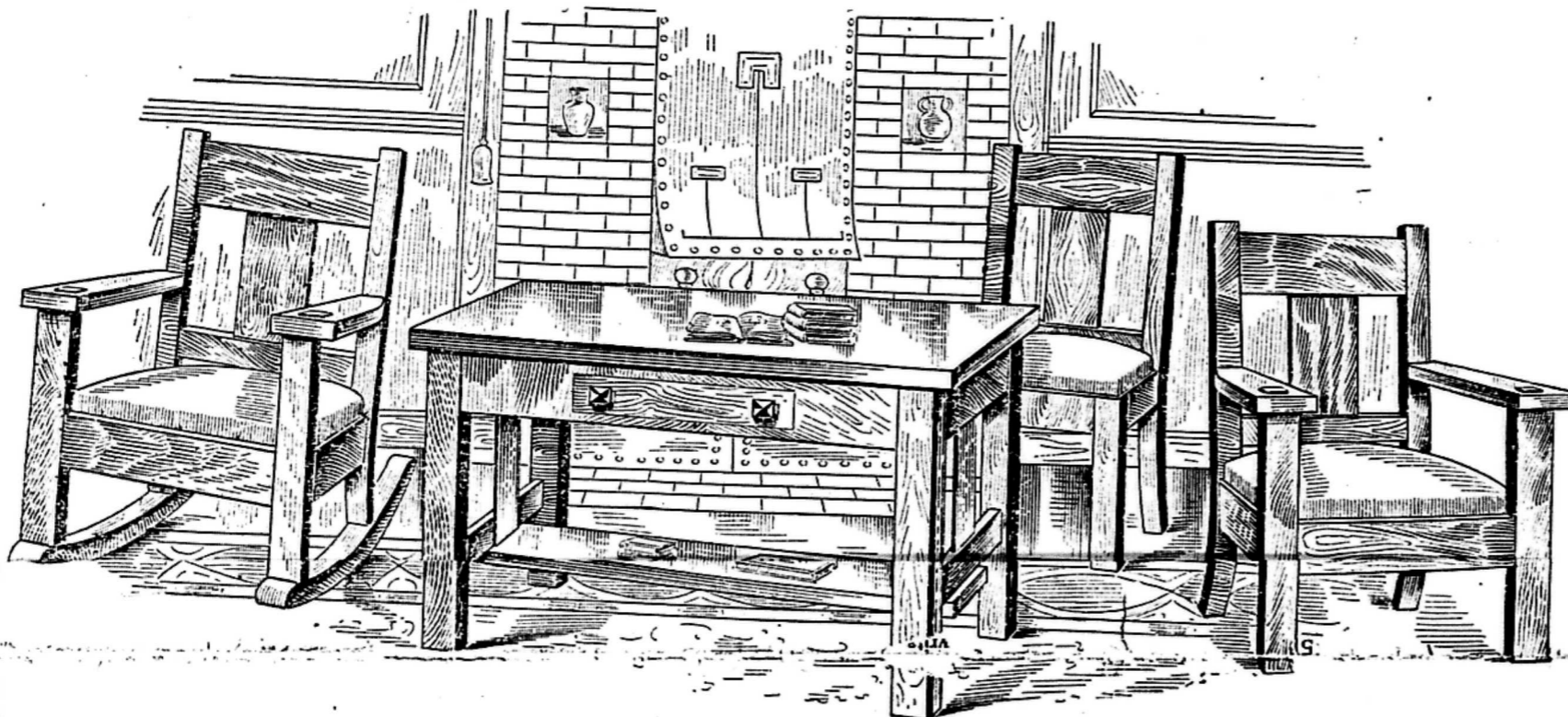
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Councilman's Thoughts

(Continued From First Page.)

saying, for the first and only time in his career, "Let the people decide; their will be done?"

Perhaps Mr. Von Neida can, but frankly, we cannot.

Mr. Helmach, also of the Eleventh ward, stated that he did not understand the sense of the ordinance, and intended to interview the mayor about it.

Mr. Roberts, of the Fourth ward, arrived at the last meeting of Council too late to really know anything about the business transacted. HE was under the impression that the ordinance had passed finally and that it was too late to do anything.

When Mr. McIntosh, of the First ward, was asked if he intended to support the ordinance, he replied:

"Yes, I positively will vote for it when it comes up." "But," said the interviewer, "Do you think the City Council can pass a law that is contrary to the Constitution?" I believe the mayor should have the power," replied Mr. Macintosh.

Mr. Trebar is reported as being opposed, on principle, to the granting of such sweeping power to any official. To offset this opinion, Mr. Reader of the same ward, said, "I am in full accord with the provisions of the ordinance and intend to vote for it."

When officials who are, presumably at least, servants of the people, view with such charming indifference the establishment of the regime of the Old Russia in the City of Camden, with Mayor Ellis as czar, we feel that any editorial comment is unnecessary. Here are the facts: Now, voters, it's up to you.

Impressions of a City Council Meeting

(Continued from First Page.)

the room, and probably not having seen him since the night before at the Elks, he would rush across with a greeting. Criss-cross, back and forth they flew, like the shuttles in a loom.

Then, without the slightest warning the hubbub was noticed to increase just a little bit; the it died away entirely. The Council chamber resumed its original ghost-like mien, and the writer was again alone on the balcony. A glance at his watch showed that it was four o'clock: Council had adjourned. The business of the city had been transacted.

The writer then remembered an old nonsense verse:—

Every child that has the use Of his senses, knows a goose. See them underneath the tree Gather round the Goose Girl's knee, While she reads them by the hour From the works of Schopenhauer. How carefully the geese attend: But do they really comprehend? What Schopenhauer is driving at? Oh! Not at all. But what of that? Neither do I; Neither does she; And for that matter, Nor did he.

Those who contend that "democracy is a bad war maker" are not making out such a bad case for democracy as they may believe.

Over 2,000 organized bargers at Chicago (Ill.) have received an increase of \$3 a week.

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The selection has had more than usual attention as to quality, style and price. It will be our pleasure to please our patrons as formerly.

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Caps \$1.00 and \$1.50

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BABIES DYING IN POOR HOMES

Low wages of father and the gainful employment of mothers away from home accompany an excessive death rate among babies in Manchester, N. H., according to the report on infant mortality in that city which has just been issued by the children's bureau of the United States Department of Labor.

The study was based primarily on interviews with babies' mothers. It was absolutely democratic in scope and included all babies whose births were registered during a single year and whose families could be found. Of all the babies studied, one in six—165 per 1,000—had died during the first year of life. There were wide variations in rate between different groups of the population, according to the fathers' earnings, the employment of the mother, the congestion of the home, and the way in which the baby had been fed.

Nearly half of the 1,643 babies had fathers whose earnings were less than \$650 a year, and more than one-eighth of the babies had fathers earning less than \$450 a year. Only one in sixteen (6.4 per cent) had fathers earning as much as \$1,250. The death rate among the babies in the poorest families was more than four times as high as among those in the highest wage group.

Low earnings on the part of the father appear to be the most potent reason for the mother's going to work. Where the fathers earned less than \$450 a year, almost three-fourths of the mothers were gainfully employed during some part of the year after the baby's birth. As the fathers' earnings rise the proportion of working mothers falls until in the group where fathers earned \$1,050 or over less than one-tenth of the mothers worked.

Keeping lodgers was the chief occupation of those who worked at home, and working in textile mills was the chief occupation of those who worked away from home. The mothers of 267 babies went out to work during the first year of the baby's life, and these babies had a death rate considerably higher than those whose mothers worked at home or were not gainfully employed. The rate is especially high, 277.3 per 1,000, among the 119 babies whose mothers went out to work before they were 4 months old.

The babies were grouped also according to the kind of house in which the family lived. The death rate for babies whose homes were in one-family houses was 86.1 per 1,000; in houses containing seven or more families 236.6 per 1,000. Similarly the rate showed a steady increase according to the number of persons per room. It was 123.3 per 1,000 where the family had more rooms than persons, and 245.9 where there were two or more persons per room.

In each economic group the babies who were artificially fed had fewer chances of survival than the babies whose mothers nursed them. But the economic status of the family modifies the influence of feeding, and the difference in the death rates for breast-fed babies and artificially fed babies is least striking in the highest income group.—Exchange.

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People's Council Asks To Be Investigated

New York, Sept. 13.—The People's Council, in a letter just sent to the Department of Justice, invites a federal investigation of its plans and purposes and a thorough inspection of its activities. It has been decided by the Council's executives that the best answer to recent attacks, would be the report of such inspectors as the federal authorities might assign to their work.

The letter to Attorney General Gregory follows:

"On behalf of the People's Council of America for Democracy and Peace, the undersigned officers respectfully invite the Department of Justice to make a full investigation of the affairs of said Council. We are ready to submit for your inspection all our books showing the sources of our income and the nature of our expenditures; also our correspondence, minutes of our General and Executive meetings, material bearing upon our methods of work, and such additional data as may aid you in making a thorough investigation.

Our activities are and have been at all times open and above board. We have nothing to conceal. We are moved to make our request because of the malicious attacks made upon us from outside sources, attacks, which we confidently expect, will be set at rest forever by an official investigation."

