

JOHNSON'S WEAK EXCUSE.

INSINUATES THAT THE SOCIALIST LABOR PARTY WOULD NOT TREAT HIM FAIRLY.

He First Accepted a Challenge to Debate With a Member of the Socialist Labor Party, and Then Declines His Ungentlemanly Fear of "Ungentlemanly" Treatment.

Readers of THE PEOPLE will remember the accounts given of a challenge issued to Tom Johnson, Mayor of Cleveland, Ohio, to meet in debate a representative of the Socialist Labor Party.

In so doing Mr. Johnson put himself in a most dishonorable position. It does not matter whether his action was the result of fear or misinformation.

DOCUMENT NUMBER I. Cleveland, Ohio, Nov. 8th, 1901. Hon. Tom L. Johnson, Mayor of City of Cleveland, Cleveland, Ohio.

Dear Sir: At a meeting held under the auspices of the Democratic Party at Collinwood, Ohio, Oct. 31st, 1901, James Matthews, a member of the Socialist Labor Party, was granted the privilege of asking you, the speaker of the evening, three questions.

The first question asked by Mr. James Matthews was: "Is it not an insult to the railroad employees of Collinwood to expect them to support the Democratic Party when the fact is considered that Grover Cleveland, the then Democratic President of the United States, ordered the federal troops to Chicago in 1894 to break-up the A. R. U. Strike and shoot-down the workmen?"

The second question asked by Mr. James Matthews was: "Did not the Democratic Governor Flower of New York sign a bill passed by the New York Legislature which prohibited railroad companies from causing their employees to work more than ten hours per day, and when the switchmen of the Lackawanna Railroad Company went out on strike to enforce that law, did not this same Governor Flower order the state militia to Buffalo to protect that Company while they were openly violating the laws of the State of New York?"

The third and last question would be equal to the former ones in convicting the Democrats Party, whose principles you represent as an unmistakable adversary to the interests of the working class, you skillfully warded it off by becoming a questioner yourself by asking Mr. Matthews whether or not he believed in "equalization of taxation"?

The Socialist Labor Party is an educational party, a fighting organization that will never compromise truth to make a friend, never withhold a blow at error lest it make an enemy. This committee, therefore, now demands from you an answer to the challenge in writing by noon Monday, November 25th, 1901, at noon. Should you fail to comply with our demand, we would have to come to the conclusion, that you are DETERMINED to back out, being afraid to meet the representative of our Party.

Finally Mr. Johnson sent in the following insulting, weak and decidedly ungentlemanly excuse:

to represent your side to meet this committee in joint session for the purpose of making the necessary arrangements.

COMMITTEE: John D. Goerke, Paul Dinger, Jas. Matthews. No answer having been received from Mr. Johnson the following was sent to him by Section Cleveland, Socialist Labor Party.

DOCUMENT NUMBER II. Cleveland, Ohio, Nov. 20th, 1901. Hon. Tom L. Johnson, Mayor City of Cleveland, Dear Sir: - We, the committee appointed by the General Committee of Section Cleveland, Socialist Labor Party, wish to inform you that we have received no answer from you in reference to the challenge to debate, issued to you and mailed by registered letter, Nov. 9th, 1901, for which we hold your receipt.

Evidently you have been informed who your opponent will be. He will be Daniel De Leon, of New York, now Editor of the DAILY PEOPLE, (copy of Nov. 18th, 1901, enclosed in this letter) Official Organ of the Socialist Labor Party, elected by the National Convention of said Party to that position. He is a gentleman who was a lecturer on International Law, and a member of the faculty of the School of Political Science of Columbia College from 1883 to 1889, who will meet you upon any platform in Cleveland or elsewhere to debate the question at issue.

"Arbetaren" Shows a Falsehood So All May See It. The following appeared in our Swedish organ, "Arbetaren," on December 5th: "T. A. HICKEY

Wants to Arrange a New Kangaroo Coup'-Is Fishing in Troubled Waters and Expects Support From Swedish Comrades.

"We wish to make a few observations and statements on the subject of a certain circular issued by the 'Executive Board of N. T. A. G.' and we believe they will meet the approval of all our Scandinavian members of the Socialist Labor Party.

The circular accuses the officers of the S. L. P. and S. T. & L. A. of corruption, but it goes about its 'proof' in a most fishy way, or, in other words, it tries to strengthen its cause by assertions and accusations that are utterly false. See, for instance, the assertion that 'the Swedish S. L. P. branch in Newark is disrupted'-(which, of course, is intended to show that this is in consequence of the alleged corruption of the party officer holders. Equally untrue is the assertion 'the fight is being carried into the Scandinavian section in New York'.

Mr. Johnson, if this report from the 'Plain Dealer' of said date emanated from you (which we do not believe at present) it shows you are not sincere or a gentleman of honor. Either you are afraid to meet your opponent, expecting to get whipped, which would show rank cowardice on your part, or else the Democratic Party stands convicted with no principles to stand upon, and deserves condemnation by the wage workers of Cuyahoga County and Ireland. The 'Evening News,' of Detroit of June 28th, 1901, in its report of the proceedings of the National Political and Social Conference, quotes you as follows: 'I say to the Socialists welcome. Now when we expect you to enlighten the wage workers and citizens why you welcome us is hard to be understood.

DOCUMENT NUMBER III. Cleveland, Ohio, Nov. 23, 1901. Hon. Tom L. Johnson, Mayor, City of Cleveland, Dear Sir: - We glean from the daily newspapers that you will not be at home before the forepart of next week, therefore in all fairness to you, to enable you to answer our challenge, and letters of November 9th and 21st, demanding an answer we will have to extend the time to November 28th, 1901, at noon. Section Cleveland of the Socialist Labor Party is expecting an answer from you by that time.

Yours respectfully, JOHN D. GOERKE, PAUL DINGER, JAS. MATHEWS. Even this did not bring the gentleman to a realization of the fact that he had pledged his word, so a third letter was sent to him.

PASSING EVENTS

Remarkable political and economic phenomena have crowded upon each other so closely during the past few years that it almost seems as if the spirit of Evolution must recognize the artificial divisions of time and feel itself quickened by the strenuous life of the new century.

And the close of this world-epoch is marked, not only by the shifting positions toward each other, but by the internal changes and general reactionary spirit of each separate nation as well, and above all by the rapid banding together of mankind into two distinct classes.

How is it in the United States of America, the great bourgeois Republic, that the real nature of the struggle is most clearly manifested. This country is the creation of the present economic system. Here Capitalism has realized itself, here it has culminated, here it is toppling, here it must fall.

It is not to be wondered at that the death of a system should be marked by bloodshed, and the Capitalist system, whose watchword is gain, and whose ruling passion is greed, might well be expected, in its last convulsions, to produce wars more terrible and more useless, and barbarities more revolting (in the light of present civilization at least) than those of the past.

In the midst of so much death and destruction an occasional assassination need cause no special comment. All trades have their casualties. No factory, at the beginning of the year, can prophesy which, or how many of its hands will fall victims before the close; the same principle holds good with the trade of ruler.

It is interesting, however, to note how, in the shock of this accident, the true nature of the Zeitgeist declared itself. Desire of gain with its ever accompanying spirit of murder predominated. It is a pity that the bourgeoisie must be vulgar even in its sorrow.

Moreover the spectacle of that lonely, misguided boy, standing so quietly before the tribunal of his country, waiting so quietly in his cell, walking so quietly to his death, might almost have aroused sympathy in the weak. The clergy dared not pray for him, his family dared not weep for him; it is possible that certain voiceless observers may have been led to wish that they, too, possessed some influence with the omnipotent commercial god, or that the fountain of their tears had not run dry.

Indeed these passing events, seemingly so ominous, are only significant through their bearing on the Class Struggle, whose rapidly changing aspect is at last attracting the dull interest of the bourgeois economist. Omens of a coming clash between labor, PROPERLY organized, and capital itself stripped of disguise, are thick in the air.

THE FIELD OF LABOR

The National Civic Federation. The capitalists in all sections of the country are greatly pleased at the outcome of the meeting of the National Civic Federation in New York City on Saturday Dec. 21. The headquarters of the Civic Federation in New York City is deluged with letters and telegrams of approval and rejoicing from these capitalists.

This condition is plainly revealed in the composition of the Committee of Thirty-six on Arbitration and Mediation, and the principles and methods by which it will be governed. The Committee of Thirty-six is composed of twelve capitalists, twelve representatives of "organized labor" and twelve so-called neutrals, every one of whom is either a capitalist himself or is of pronounced capitalist sympathies and tendencies.

From this it is to be inferred that there is something sublimely benevolent and beneficial in "calm common sense business methods," and that the working class has consequently more to hope from them than from strikes. Was it not the "calm common sense business methods" of Cecil Rhodes and Joseph Chamberlain, that led them to falsely report the results of the Boer-British negotiations, in order that they might precipitate the Transvaal war and manufacture an excuse for seizing the territory occupied by the South African Republics?

The inference to be drawn from this is that such an agreement is one which the capitalists will secretly keep and labor-effectively enforce. Experience does not justify such a conclusion. The Albany strike is a case in point. There an agreement was reached between the traction capitalists and their motormen and conductors. That agreement is not observed, nor is it enforced; it is a dead letter.

The fact is the capitalist yearly agreement is but a means to divide labor and to defeat any general movement for the improvement of its condition. Recent events clearly demonstrate this fact. It was clearly shown in the strike of the machinists, when the ironworkers were prevented from assisting them by the existence of their contract. Likewise was it shown in the strike of the anthracite Mine Workers, when the United Mine Workers, gave the same excuse for scabbing on them.

So great is the friction in the ranks of "organized labor," arising from the condition of affairs, that it threatens to split them asunder eventually. The matter was aired before the recent A. F. of L. convention at Scranton in the resolutions on trade autonomy. The dangers involved in it were so many that the convention dared not tackle the subject itself, but referred it to a special committee, where it was buried. The fight in the unions however, continue with greater virulence and vigor.

With yearly agreements dividing labor and rendering its hosts into antagonistic factions, the capitalists have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Through the influence of the unions that may be successful in securing favorable terms from them, they will keep the greater part of the working class in subjugation, just as at present they are enabled to keep their employees in the factories in line by giving a certain number of them known as foremen, etc., a small interest in their business. With the working class in subjugation the capitalists of this country will continue in their triumphant struggle for the world markets. They will then be enabled to march capital and labor on the foe as one solid whole.

I believe that it marked an era in history when, in 1890, the Socialist Labor Party threw off all disguise, shook itself free from all middle class connexions, and entered upon its present stern, uncompromising course; when it cast aside its unsteady platform and took its stand upon the earth. But severe remedies do not often meet with sudden popularity, and the good showing made by the party throughout the country, in this year's elections, was a surprise to many. The unbending policy of the S. L. P. has made a wavering, sentimental vote impossible. The man who votes our ticket to-day votes for the Social Revolution, and for nothing else. To compare this year's vote with that polled by the party before 1890 is like comparing kernels of winnowed wheat with chaff gleaned from the highways.

THE FIELD OF CAPITAL

The Standard Oil Company has a new imitator. Another trust has arisen that will extend its ramifications into foreign countries and assume the international features that make the Rockefeller institution a power all over the world. This trust is the Consolidated Tobacco Company, a \$120,000,000 corporation known as "The Tobacco Trust," and "The Cigar Trust."

The course of this company has been watched with much anxiety abroad. The purchase of Cuban plantations in the early spring, was regarded as detrimental to English manufacturers, who purchased their supplies there. It was the opinion of German manufacturers that this presaged an invasion by the trust of English and possibly German markets.

This opinion was justified during the past summer, when the Tobacco Trust entered the English market, with the announcement that it would spend \$5,000,000 a year to secure control of the market. This announcement created the greatest consternation and immediately led to the formation of various opposing corporations which declared that they would spend much more to prevent the trust from succeeding in its laudable efforts to crush them.

One of these corporations is known as the Imperial Tobacco Company, of London. It is capitalized at \$75,000,000. Though it professes to believe in competition as the ruling factor in economic affairs, it also places considerable faith in patriotism as an aid. Though it is practically a trust itself, it breaks out in denunciation of its American competitor and appeals to the Britains in behalf of British labor, capital and trade.

Its prospectus the British Trust announces that "Americans, whose markets are closed by prohibitive tariffs against British goods, have declared their intention of monopolizing the tobacco trade of this country." "It is for British public to decide whether British labor, capital and trade are to be subordinate to the American system of trust monopoly and all that is implied therein."

"The Imperial Tobacco Company, of Great Britain and Ireland, will be an amalgamation of British manufacturers, who have closed their ranks with a determination to hold the British trade for British people." "Its aim is to provide the vast smoking public with cigarettes and tobaccos unexcelled in quality and made solely by means of British labor and capital."

"We anticipated and prepared for just such a fight when we invaded the British field. We can make and sell tobacco cheaper than our English rivals—and we are going to do it." The opinion of the German manufacturers mentioned before was more than justified during the week ending Saturday, December 21st.

"According to a Berlin correspondent, the American Tobacco combination has made an incursion into Germany, and it proposes later to carry the war into Russia. For 2,000,000 marks the combine has bought the Jasmatze cigarette factory in Dresden, the third largest in the empire, with a capacity of 200,000,000 cigarettes a year. The combine has also acquired the business of Kyvizzi Brothers, in Berlin, who control the most popular brand of Egyptian cigarettes sold in Europe. These transactions were completed several weeks ago, but only became known upon the arrival in Berlin, this week, of President Duke, of the American concern. It is believed two other Dresden factories will be absorbed, and then Mr. Duke intends turning his attention to Russia, where a still greater field is said to exist."

What the result of this invasion will be is clear. It will increase the power of the Consolidated Tobacco Company at home and abroad. It will hasten the destruction of the feudalistic barriers which to a great extent prevent the creation of the trust system of production in European countries. It will compel the unfettered adoption of capitalism, with all its evils and dangers. It will, in other words, create that wide division and antagonism of classes, which make for Socialism.

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