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FIRST EDITORIAL

## Bourke Cockran's 'Answer'

By DANIEL DE LEON

**L**ast Tuesday, the Tammany Hall luminary Mr. Bourke Cockran delivered at the Madison Square Garden a speech, advertised to be in "answer" to Bryan's of the week before. The keynote to the answer, the pivot on which the whole performance turned, was this maxim, uttered early in and frequently alluded to during the course of the address:

"This soil is not propitious to revolution."

It is only this sentence that merits attention. It characterizes both the man who spoke and the class he spoke for.

From the earliest dawn of recorded time, no usurper or tyrant class ever stepped on the stage of history but through revolution, nor did it ever fail, once in the saddle and when the next revolution hove in sight, to repudiate "revolution," grow indignant at the very thought of the thing, and brazenly proclaim itself of all time and for all time. Exactly so with the latest and last of the series of usurping or tyrant classes—the modern CAPITALIST CLASS. Born of revolutions that waded knee deep through human gore into power, the capitalist class, now in turn about to succumb to the last of politico-economic revolutions—the Social Revolution by which the Socialist proletariat of the world is to triumph and finally wipe out all class tyranny—holds to-day throughout the capitalist world the identical language and strikes the identical posture of all its dethroned predecessors in the hour of their approaching downfall.

This language and this posture, idiotic everywhere, is nowhere more idiotic than on our own soil of America—a soil on which, almost within the narrow span of 100 years, two deep-reaching revolutions broke out and were successfully accomplished even with the accompaniment of floods of blood and broad acres of graves: the revolution that overthrew the feudal rule of Great Britain, and that, 30 years ago, overthrew the last vestige of feudalism here—chattel slavery. In both instances the

oppressor class, rotten-ripe for the scythe of time, cried Anathema against revolution, and imagined it could render itself impregnable with the claim that it "always had been, hence, always would be";—yet, notwithstanding, in both instances, both fresh in the memory of man, by the board they both went in short order, obedient to the everlasting principle that social systems or governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and that whenever they are found to be destructive of the happiness of the governed it is the right of these to alter or abolish them, and to institute a new system, laying its foundations on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them may seem wise.

Mr. Cockran, besides being a Tammany Hall man, with all the malodorousness that that implies, is a Northern Copperhead, or Bourbon generally. Of the Bourbon it is proverbial that he never learns. Mr. Cockran is keeping up the reputation of his tribe. It takes the impenetrable denseness rendered all the denser by the coating of modern capitalism, to fail to learn that, if the old Biblical ancestry of chattel slavery proved no protection to that "God-ordained and patriotic" institution, the infinitely shorter and more worldly line of descent of capitalism will be found to be a still hollower shell for the on-coming revolution to crush.

The instinct that to-day guides our capitalist class and that guided last Tuesday its Madison Square Garden spokesman is correct, although, in the bankruptcy that characterizes its intellect, it mistakes the shadow for the substance. It is a correct instinct that causes capitalism from its gold standard citadel to scent revolution from the direction of Bryanism; at the same time it is in keeping with its ignorance to mistake Bryanism for the revolution. The approaching storm drives large drifts of dust before it; but the dust is not the storm, neither is the Popocracy Socialism.

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

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