

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 2, NO. 32.

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, AUGUST 1, 1901.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

THE “CONSTITUTION” FOLLOWING THE “FLAG.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE paper signed “Americus,” and embodied in the Philippine Commission’s report of 1899, a passage from which was published in our yesterday’s issue,¹ should set at rest all uneasiness on the part of all those who feared the “Constitution” was to lag behind the “Flag.” Once before it was argued in these columns that, so far from playing the truant in the rear of the “Flag,” the “Constitution” is keeping pace with tongue hanging out of its mouth. The “Americus” paper furnishes proof, striking and convincing.

The “Constitution” being in the hands of the capitalist class, requires cheap labor, and none too cheap. That is to say, it requires a working class that is thoroughly fleeced, the more the better. The American capitalist class carried this to what would seem perfection: American labor only keeps 17 per cent. of the product of its own efforts, in other words, it is fleeced of 83 per cent. of its wool,—a larger clip than is yielded by the workers of any European country. When, accordingly, the “Flag” reached the Philippine Islands and found there, instead of the still lower earnings that were expected, that wages in Manila were a good deal higher than across the pond in China, the “Constitution” took a spurt, and “Americus” quickly counseled the importation of Chinese by millions “to make the natives come to their senses.”

With a larger exploitation of Labor here than in Europe, and with Chinese wages “in petto,” the “Flag” reached the Philippine Islands, and the “Constitution” did its best to lay the pipes to land abreast of the “Flag.”

Let none who is satisfied with the present Constitution, that is to say, with a capitalist class in control of the power to interpret and enforce Law, feel the slightest apprehension. The breasts of the Bryanistic silvermine owners, who are ever ready to Bull Pen their workingmen into low wages, need have no apprehension on the score that the “Constitution” may not follow the “Flag”;—it is

¹ [See page three, below.]

following it fast. The Labor Fakir brigade, who act as train-bearers for the anti-expansion capitalists, need weep no longer about the “dangers that beset our country the moment the Constitution should cease to follow the Flag”;—the “Constitution” has no such intentions. Neither need the Mugwump reformer, who habitually insults American Labor, sit up at night to draft resolutions in Bostonese English on “a perfidious McKinley who would dislocate the Constitution from the Flag”;—the two are well set together.

And so will they ever be: Flag and Constitution never will sunder. Held by the robber Capitalist Class, the former will ever lead the latter in its train and establish slave conditions, Chinese conditions, for the workers; some day, seized by the Working Class, the Flag will, over the prostrate body of Capitalism, lead the Constitution to the conditions of freedom.

The choice lies with the people in whose hands they propose to trust the Flag, and to whose sense of justice will they entrust the interpretation of the Constitution.

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 2, NO. 31.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JULY 31, 1901.

ONE CENT.

ARTICLE

SLAVES DEMANDED.

“OUR NEW POSSESSIONS” MUST HAVE PLENTY OF THEM.

Hawaiian Islands Demand the Importation of Chinese Under Contract—They Are Docile, and Can Be Shipped Back When Broken—Report of the Philippine Commission.

WASHINGTON, July 30.—Civil Service Commissioner Rodenberg has returned from a trip to the Hawaiian Islands, where he went to put the civil service law in operation. He said today:

“The labor question is the most serious problem which is now confronting the Hawaiian sugar planters. The proper kind of labor is scarce already, and future agricultural developments will be greatly retarded unless some provision is made to supply this element in the community. The Chinese are the ideal sugar plantation workers. They are better workers than either the Japanese or Portuguese, and besides, they give no trouble. They are quiet and always live up to their contracts. Since the islands were annexed, however, no more Chinamen can be secured, and sugar planters are very much exercised regarding this question.

“I am informed that a strong

effort will be made by Hawaiians at the next session of Congress, when legislation on the Chinese question will be made necessary by the expiration of the Geary act, to have a clause in the new law providing that Chinamen may be taken from China to the Hawaiian Islands under contract to do purely agricultural work for a period not to exceed ten years, when they will be deported. Under the terms of such a provision, it is believed that no conflict would be precipitated with organized labor, as the law would provide that the Chinaman should do nothing but agricultural work, and white men cannot do this class of work in Hawaii on account of the climactic conditions.

“There is another contemplated solution which is receiving serious thought and investigation at the present time, and that is to import native Filipinos to work on Hawaiian sugar plantations. This idea, I believe,

has never been made known here, but several large planters in Hawaii have investigated the proposition sufficiently to predict that the Filipinos may yet solve the perplexing labor question of these islands.

“The Porto Ricans who are now in the islands as an experiment are not proving generally satisfactory. They have to a great extent the disposition of the native Hawaiians, and love ease a great deal more than work. It is not likely that an effort will be made to increase by importation the Porto Rican population of the islands.”

In this connection the following extract from a paper signed “Americus,” which was originally published in a Manila newspaper, and is reproduced in the report of the Philippine Commission of 1899, will be of interest. It unquestionably represents the views of all Europeans and Americans in the Philippines with regard to the labor question, and probably those of the landowning class among the Filipinos:

“Chinese coolies and the buffalo are two essentials. The place cannot get on without them, and were any

road making, railway or agricultural work being done at least a million Chinese would be absorbed right off, the next year another million, and so on until the population be half Chinese and make the natives come to their senses and work for a ‘living wage.’ It seems ridiculous that when the Hongkong scale of wages is about as follows viz.: Coolies, 25 to 30 cents a day; carpenters, 50 to 60 cents; mechanics in iron, 70 to 75 cents; engineers and boilermakers, 80 to 90 cents, rates in Manila have been for these classes, respectively, 75 cents, \$1.25, \$1.40 and \$1.50 since Chinese immigration was stopped. Before April (1899) we were about the same as in Honkong, and it speaks volumes for the admirable management of labor in that colony, the fact that while in the last twenty years or so silver has fallen by one-half, or some 100 per cent on the present value of the Mexican dollar, the currency rate of wages has not advanced more than 25 or 30 per cent all around, the employers of labor getting a benefit of 70 to 75 per cent more than would be the case on a gold basis.”

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

Uploaded June 2006