

EDITORIAL

TWO INSTANCES—A THIRD COMING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“As to the Irish, on them we need not count. They are corrupt up to the marrow.”—*New Yorker Volkszeitung*, Nov. 15, 1903.

“New York . . . now takes the leadership among the States of the Union.”—*New Yorker Volkszeitung*, Nov. 17, 1903.

THE above citations from the organ of the Social Democratic party point to the approaching close of a cycle of three sets of events and their supplementals, the lessons of which are not the least valuable contributions of the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic party movement to the Movement in general. These lessons furnish warnings in the nature of “horrible examples” of what a clean Socialist Movement must guard against and, by contrast, observe.

The first is furnished by James F. Carey of Haverhill, Mass., and is supplemented by Chas. A. Born of Sheboygan, Wis. Carey was elected in 1897 on the Socialist Labor Party ticket a Councilman in his city, having, at his nomination, signed a resignation blank, as the S.L.P. constitution prescribes. Two months later he successfully intrigued to pull his Section out of the S.L.P. The obvious fishiness of the act caused the National Executive Committee to immediately demand his resignation from the office to which the S.L.P. had raised him. He declined. His leading reason was that the S.L.P. had not members enough in Haverhill to elect, and he “had been elected by the people.” Carey’s subsequent conduct in voting a \$15,000 Armory appropriation was but a vindication of the wisdom of the S.L.P. constitution in placing upon its nominees the moral obligation of a signed resignation blank, and also of the sagacity of the N.E.C. in foreseeing the contemplated treason to the working class of the Armory appropriation in Carey’s withdrawal from the Party quickly upon his election. For the rest, the Armory episode need not figure any further in this argument. The act, here considered, is

Carey's violation of faith, his repudiation of his resignation pledge. It was an act of moral turpitude. The man guilty of such an act is an ulcer. Was he treated accordingly by the so-called Socialist, alias Social-Democratic, party organization, to whom he turned? No. James F. Carey, with the smirch of this record of betrayal of trust still fresh and redolent upon him, was received as a "star," and honored with chairmanships and editorial praise. This was an outrage on decency and on common sense.—The supplemental event to this performance is furnished by Chas. A. Born. Elected this spring Mayor of Sheboygan on the ticket of the Social Democratic party, he promptly went back upon his own party. His language, backed by his appointments, was a slap in the face to the organization that he owed his elevation to, and his justification to their indignant protests is exactly Carey's—"I was not elected by any one party, but by the people." Thus outraged decency and common sense were not long in being avenged. The condonement of the Carey betrayal of the pledged word swiftly suffered the penalty,—the first in that series.

The second set of supplemental events is furnished by Martha Moore Avery, with herself furnishing the supplement. Mrs. Avery had sided with the S.L.P. at the time of the Kangaroo riots, vehemently opposing the Kangaroos. Presently, however, the lady began reaching the end of her tether. Graft being discovered to be the burden of her aims, she was expelled, convicted of double-dealing. Forthwith, with the brand of dishonor still warm upon her brow, she appeared at the Kangaroo convention. There she was received with cheers, and when the Kangaroos went and hid their diminished head in the Social Democratic camp, she was taken along and gladly accepted as part of the inventory,—another outrage on decency and common sense, but again outraged morality was promptly avenged. The convicted and expelled traitor by the S.L.P. turned and bruised those whose moral sense was of the fibre to welcome such as her—and she dug their grave this November as only the grave of those can be dug who raise dastardliness into a principle of Socialist "broadness."

The third event, the one a-coming, is closely foreshadowed by the citations at the head of this article. The Volkszeitung Corporation has often been described in these columns. To sum up its physiognomy, the concern consists of small bourgeois elements and a sprinkling of "intellectuals"—all of them ashbarrel refuse of the

German population, of which they are a sad caricature. As such the concern is animated by a combination of paltry, un-Socialistic material interests and a grotesque nativism, which finds its grotesque expression in hatred and contempt for the American, our English-speaking fellow citizens in general. Thus animated, the Corporation, as it has expressly stated, does not trust the Socialist Movement of the land in any but German—meaning its own picked pets’—hands. And it is wise in its generation. Out of its control, the Socialist Movement must make havoc of its bourgeois interests and ridiculous racial pretensions. Accordingly, wherever the Corporation could not rule it has sought to ruin the Socialist Movement. It tried the game on the S.L.P., but failed flatly. Having tried to steal the Party’s name and to muzzle the Party by stealing its English press, and been roundly beaten, the Corporation needed a new “Socialist” party to serve as a tender to its business and to its nativistic notions. In pursuit of its aims and needs the Corporation hastened to identify itself with a movement that had just sprung up in the West and that called itself variously Socialist or Social Democracy. All that is said above was well known by the said Western Movement. For all that, the Volkszeitung Corporation, bearing on its face still fresh scars it fetched in the attempt to rule or ruin the S.L.P., was welcomed—just as Carey was and Mrs. Avery.

Thus a third outrage was committed on decency, common sense and self-preservation by the Socialist, alias Social-Democratic party. The supplemental event—the self-avenging of the outrage—is still a-coming. How near, however, the avenging hour is may be judged by the citations that head this article. Nor were approaches thereto long in making their appearance.

Uriah Heep could not be more humble than the Corporation was when first admitted, but it soon began to carry out its scheme, until it now virtually has the Socialist, alias Social Democracy, under its thumb. It dominates the party’s conventions with padded votes, “Porto Rico” contributing its pads of hundreds; recently, when a national tour was arranged, it was one of its own creatures, Hanford—despised in his own Union for a fakir—who was inflicted upon the party; and when a national secretary was to be chosen this year the Corporation managed to smuggle into the office another of its creatures, William Mailly, its one-time hired man, who afterward served a post-graduate course under Carey in Massachusetts.

Thus things were running smooth, and the Corporation hiding its claws when this year's elections took place. The Corporation knows the limitations of the vote it can rely on in New York. The continued smooth running of things depended upon the contingency of the vote outside the State, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania especially, continuing to mount. The snag was struck this year. The vote of the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic, party in Massachusetts tumbled headlong; in Pennsylvania likewise, even losing the party's official standing; and it looks as if a similar fate was met by the soap-bubble in Ohio. At any rate, the soap-bubble has bursted. The Corporation now justly foresees breakers ahead, and it has begun drilling its crew for the rule or ruin game—as indicated by the citations with which it foments racial aversion in breasts of its faithful, and by its unguarded crowing about New York, that is, its own boss-rights.

As in the instances of Carey and Mrs. Avery, so in this: It is at its own peril that a movement, that aims at Socialism, raises WRONG into a norm of conduct. We have seen Right avenged in two instances. It will be speedily avenged in the third, soon as matters shall have matured to the point when the corrupt *Volkszeitung* caricatures of Germans,—their minds poisoned with the notion that their English-speaking fellow citizens are “corrupt up to the marrow” and that themselves (it is to laugh!) are the God-ordained monopolists of Socialism,—will seek to run the wreckage of the Socialist, alias Social Democratic, party to the greater glory of tax-paying “Egyptian Onions” and “Babylonian Potatoes.”

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

Uploaded February 2007