

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 345.

NEW YORK, TUESDAY, JUNE 9, 1908.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

APPLAUSE AND GROANS.

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IN picking out the arguments of delegate Guy Miller of Colorado, in favor of restricted immigration, at the national convention of the Socialist party, no affront is meant to the numerous other delegates who also spoke with equal “cogency” on that side, and “carried the day triumphantly.” The arguments of delegate Miller are taken just because he led the debate in favor of the resolution, and did so with an onslaught upon the Socialist position taken by delegate Woodbey of California.

Delegate Woodbey, a colored man, put the question upon the only ground on which it can be properly handled—the ground of facts and reason, in short, the practical ground. The delegate grappled with the false cry about immigration causing the reduction in the standard of living. “So far as reducing the standard of living is concerned,” he said, “the standard of living will be reduced anyhow”; and he proceeded to drive the point home with terse argument: “You know as well as I do that either the laborer will be brought to the job, or the job will be taken to the laborer. We will either have to produce things on American soil as cheap as they can be produced on foreign soil, or the production will be carried to the Orient.” The solidity of the argument required no stage-setting of resounding phrases. From these unshakable premises the delegate drew the unerring conclusion: “I am in favor of throwing the entire world open to the inhabitants of the world.”

Delegate Guy Miller followed. Delegate Woodbey had contented himself with the economic argument. Delegate Miller invited attention to the broader field—“biological, sociological, economic.”

As to the “biological reasons to be considered in this matter,” said the delegate, “there has never been a mixture and amalgamation of races that did not end disastrously for those amalgamated.” The Chicago *Daily Socialist* records

“applause” at this point. The reporter must have been deaf as a post not to have heard the groan and then the loud roar of laughter that went up from the throat of the Genius of America—the land of phenomenally successful “mixture and amalgamation” of races—at this bit of absurd “biological” bombasticism.

Presumably the delegate was under the head of “sociologic reasons” when, attempting to answer delegate Woodbey’s contention that either the laborer will be brought to the job, or the job will be taken to the laborer, he said: “I want to tell him he will have to change some of nature’s laws before he can take the ore out of the Rocky Mountains to the Chinaman.” Again there was “applause,” but again there was a deep groan, this time from the Genius of Sociologic Reason.—The mines are not the only industry of the land: they are not, as Artemus Ward would put it, “everything, and everything else besides.” A majority of industries can be carried to the laborer without changing any law of nature. Sociologic Reason teaches that the taking of only a few of the jobs to the laborer would suffice to “do the job.” Sociologic Reason teaches that, in sociology, minority conditions frequently determine the fate of majorities. The impoverishment that would follow in some sections of the workers, in case their jobs were taken to the laborer abroad, would be such that it would affect all others—miners as well as factory hands. Such would be the depressing effect that the rest of the movable industries would not need to be moved, and the immovable ones, like the mines, would have to settle down to the reduced standard. No wonder the Genius of Sociologic Reason groaned.

Finally, taking up the “economic reasons,” the delegate declared that “any action on the part of the working class which is in accord with the actions and interests of the capitalist class is in direct conflict with the interests of the workers”; and, rushing to his climax, the delegate warned: “Whenever you take any action that puts your sanction upon the efforts of the manufacturer to bring the hordes [mark, the “hordes”] of either Europe [mark, “Europe”] or Asia to this soil, you take your stand for the lowering of civilization.” Once more “applause” is recorded; but again the real sound was a moan; it proceeded from the shades of Karl Marx.

Machinery, ever more perfect machinery—concentration of capital, ever more perfect concentration—are matters that “accord with the interests of the capitalist class.” Marxism teaches that this development is essential to the ultimate

emancipation of the Working Class. Guy-Millerian philosophy would cause the machine to be broken up and the concentration to be smashed. It is not by a promenade through the groves of Paradise, but by a march through the Valley of the Shadow of Death of Capitalism that the proletariat is to reach the ground from which it can plant itself upon its class interests and emancipate itself. Marxism teaches that the various divisions of the proletariat must first lie flat, prostrate, before they can reach that common ground in which alone their strength will be found. Machinery, concentration, immigration—these are means to the end. Purblind, bourgeois-ruled craft Unionism resists these means. The Socialist knows that resistance is vain and harmful.

Many other delegates followed delegate Miller. They followed the pace set by him. Perhaps they did not need any pace-setting. Each was himself equal to the occasion. The arguments were a succession of echoes of cracks of the whip of the A.F. of L.—At the last crack of that whip the S.P. convention took its final stand in keeping with the A.F. of L., which dislocates Labor through its craft Unions, and then re-dislocates it, first, by drawing the “color line” in several of its organizations, and by casting them all in the mold that is expressed by the utterly un-Socialist sentiment which refers to European immigration as “hordes of Europe.”

A political party of Socialism that steers its course by such a compass can march only to the tune of ever decreasing applause and ever increasing groans, until at last swallowed up by the latter.

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

Uploaded February 2010

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