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EDITORIAL

WATCHERS ON THE TOWER.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Chicago Convention, that is to meet on the 27th of next month, is casting its shadows before it, and the political reflex of the American Federation of Labor—the so-called Socialist, alias Social Democratic, alias Public Ownership party—is casting its shadows behind it. The [open letter](#) addressed by Leo Steinbach of the United Brewery Workers, together with its enclosure, and published in this issue is the latest instance of the two facts.

It were to lose the real instruction conveyed by the Steinbach incident to spend time on the stupidity of the brutality and the brutality of the stupidity exhibited by the “noble wagers of the Class Struggle” in their desperate attempt to hold back the hand of Time. To spend time upon that would be to squander these worthies. History can not afford to allow them to have lived in vain. They are doing their work; they are fulfilling their mission; let us utilize it to clear the path of the American proletariat to its emancipation from the double thrall of the capitalist plunderer and the latter’s lieutenant, the labor fakir pilferer of the fruits of Labor’s toil.

The post taken about four years ago by the United Brewery Workers’ Union, under the whip of the labor lieutenants of the Capitalist Class who had the organization in charge, was a post of great importance to Capitalism. An out-and-out Gompers-Mitchell attitude of pure and simpledom was not advisable to all the American Federation of Labor so-called Unions. In order to save the “principle” of these, one, at least, of their sister organizations had to pretend to be “radical”, “revolutionary”, if need be. So long as the flag of Socialism waved only over the Socialist Labor Party, all coquetting with radicalism, let alone revolutionaryism, was a dangerous playing with fire. All danger seemed removed when placemen of the American Federation of Labor split the Socialist Labor Party in 1899 and set up

as bogus a party of Socialism as their so-called Unions are bogus organizations of the Working Class. The new party threw to the breeze the colors of Socialism; the American Federation of Labor placeman in charge threw bouquets at their fellow A.F. of L. labor-lieutenants of the Capitalist Class by calling the ruinous and disgraceful performances into which they drove and lead the rank and file “a noble waging of the Class Struggle”; and, aided by the “Intellectual” riff-raff whom they naturally attracted, shielded to the correct tune of “De Leonism!” (meaning thereby S.L.P.-ism) whatever generous and sound impulse manifested itself in their new party against that huge conspiracy against the Working Class that has justly earned the name of A.F. of Hell. The “radicalism” and “revolutionaryism” that could be safely coquetted with now existed. A navel string was needed to connect the fetus with the placenta from which it drew its nourishment. The Democratic and Republican labor-lieutenants, and sub-lieutenants, and corporals, and ensigns, down to the water-carriers of the Capitalist Class, who mounted guard over the body of the rank and file of the brewers’ Union throughout the land stepped forth. They saw their opportunity and their mission. They endorsed the bogus party of Socialism.

The post thus taken by the capitalist agencies of the brewers’ Union was obviously one of deep importance. It was almost pivotal for capitalist safety: on the one hand, it insured “Socialist” approval for capitalist rascality, on the other, IT SECURED THE CAPITALIST OUTPOST OF PURE AND SIMPLEDOM. The capitalist agencies of the brewers’ Union thus became “watchers on the tower”—what more natural than that the first alarm should break out from the tower of the watchers at a movement, that, inspired by the breath of S.L.P. literature, positively threatens the destruction of the capitalist outpost of pure and simpledom?

Industrialism, on and of itself, need not be a threat to Capitalism. But industrialism, at this season, and rising to the orchestration of the events that are transpiring in the land, may be a horse of different color. At least, it is big with evil for Capitalism, hence with no good for pure and simpledom. Nor were the “watchers on the tower” inexperienced hands. The first time that the Socialist Labor Party came through its press into collision with the labor lieutenants of the Capitalist

Class, who manned the United Brewery Workers' Union, was upon the very subject of industrialism—they being, of course, arch craft Unionists. It was eleven years ago. The coopers engaged in a Chicago brewery, had a grievance against the employer; they felt the folly of striking without the support of the brewers; they applied for it; the brewers' national headquarters was then in St. Louis with the notorious Kurzenknabe as the presiding genius; the application was denied, and the reason given and defended in the *Brauer-Zeitung* and its side-show the St. Louis *Tageblatt*, since deceased, on which Mr. G.A. Hoehn, the now national committeeman for Missouri of the said bogus Socialist party was a shining light, was—which? The answer was that “if the brewers are to strike every time another trade at a brewery has a grievance against the employer, they will have to be in perpetual strike: one day it would be the coopers, another the carpenters, a third the bricklayers, etc., etc.”!! The ulcer stood out clear. *The People* dug the lancet into it deep, showing that “Unionism becomes but a handmaid for capitalist exploitation, playing into the hands of the capitalist's interest to keep the Working Class divided, if Unionism shatters the ranks of labor by a craft division that pulls the solidarity of Labor up by the roots.” Whatever the attitude the labor-lieutenants of the Capitalist Class in command of the brewers' Union may since have taken that seems to indicate progress from the old stand and towards industrialism, in no wise alters their old time principles. They remained what they were: capitalist agencies, so wide awake to their duties that their nostrils and their eyes promptly detected the danger that threatened from the approaching Chicago Convention.

Those whom aught threatens danger to are the safest guides as to what the occurrence portends. Nothing can be more warmly desired by the American Labor Movement than that the instinct that guides the “watchers on the tower” and that is bereaving them of their senses is correct. The present conduct of the Priesterbachs, the Giovanni Wagallonis, the Huebners, etc., etc., etc., towards Trautmann and now towards Steinbach, has all the marks of the dementia that seizes rats in a panic.

ARTICLE

THE BALL STARTS

THE LABOR FAKIR BRIGADE AT THEIR LAST "ARGUMENT"—SLUGGING.

An Open Letter by Leo Steinbach, of the Brewers' Union, to the Labor Press.

Cincinnati, O., May 24, 1905.

Most of the readers of labor papers have undoubtedly been informed of the announcement contained in No. 20, Vol. 20, of the official organ of the United Brewery Workers, to the effect that the International Executive Board of the United Brewery Workers, as demands the progressive working people, whose goodwill they desire to hold, to withhold judgment until the executive board members have completed a defense on the charges made by the deposed editor Trautmann and his two witnesses on the ballot canvassing board. As one of the said witnesses, who has condemned the outrageous actions of the International Executive Board, because proven, I now kindly ask the labor press to allow me next week space for a true description of the occurrences of late,—since the space of the *Brauer Zeitung* is not at my disposal,—in order that I may prove what peculiar methods the executive board members and the international officers of the United Brewery Workers' organization

Have to apply to make proletarians, dependent on bread and butter for their daily sustenance, subservient to the

arbitrary will, and to help them thus to cover the crimes they perpetrated.

From the clipping enclosed you will learn that the undersigned, nearly sixty years of age, has been beaten down because I positively refused to retract my statements based on absolute truth. Today only, after having been confined to bed for nearly eleven days, am I in a position to ask this favor of the labor press to give a hearing to my true relation. Although the other witness of Trautmann, as can be proven, has been forced through high-handed means and coercion, the perpetrators being backed up by one of the International secretaries, to make retraction of statements, such methods will not have the desired effect with the undersigned, although I know that they wield power to get me out of my job. The two members of the Socialist party, Comrades Thomas McGrady and C.D. Earnist have, as attorneys, taken it upon themselves to proceed against my brutal tormentors with the authority of law, and they will have the opportunity to expose the high-handed methods applied to make the one submit, and to humiliate the other beyond description because he would not back down. The labor press, if

true to its mission, is for these reasons asked by an old worn-out proletarian not to pay attention to the statements made by the executive board members of the U.B.W., extracted under coercion from one man only, until I will be able physically to present such statements as will be sworn to at the courts of Cincinnati before witnesses.

Fraternally,

Leopold Steinbach,

Still a member of the Int. Union of United
Brewery Workers.

Now laid up sick for two weeks as a result
of injuries sustained.

[Enclosure from Cincinnati, O., *Post*,
May 19.]

Leo Steinbach, fifty-nine, 2125 Van Lear street, lies at home in a serious condition because of an assault alleged to have been committed last Sunday evening in the office of the United Brewery Workmen in the Odd Fellows' Temple. A warrant has been sworn out for the arrest of Adam Huebner, an international secretary of the Brewery Workers.

The trouble grew out of the publication in a number of labor papers, it is said, of a statement to the effect that secret

business of the association was being conducted in an illegal manner.

This matter was being discussed Sunday, and Huebner, it is alleged, took exceptions to some of the remarks made by Steinbach and a fight followed. Huebner, it is alleged, knocked the old man down and beat him up. He was removed to his home and is in a serious condition. Steinbach suffered from concussion of the brain.

Wm. E. Trautmann, deposed editor of the official organ of the United Brewery Workmen, now secretary of the temporary organization of the Industrial Union movement, says that Steinbach was one of two men friendly to his interests, who witnessed the count on the referendum vote, on Trautmann's appeal and who declares that Trautmann was illegally counted out. Trautmann says that Steinbach told him he was asked to retract his statement and refused, whereupon, he says, Huebner struck him.

Steinbach has worked at the Windisch-Mulhauser brewery.

Trautmann has consulted an attorney and may get out peace warrants for the members of the Executive Board who, he says, have made statements in public that "they will do him up."

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