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WHAT'S THE MAT- TER WITH SEATTLE

By Tom Sladden

I had always thought that Local Seattle was one of the revolutionary
locals on the Pacific Coast, they had fought for the rights of Socialists
to speak on the streets, they had been aggressive and theoretically they
had always been a revolutionary body. Something must be wrong.
Some one has blundered and with that someone Local Seattle stands dis-
graced in the eyes of every Socialist who refuses to make a compromise
with Capitalism.

It is the lobster that can see any difference in substance between
a Chain Gang with chains on their legs and a Chain Gang without chains,
but guarded by rifles?

In you suppose that when that gang of Socialists struck and refused to
work for the Chain Gang in Seattle that it was because of the "dis-
grace" (sic) of wearing shackles? No! It was because we refused to
work as slaves for a rotten community and to pay with our labor for a
crime we had not committed. If it was up to me to pass a petition to work
those prisoners or any other without chains, I would sign for the one
with chains, well knowing that the tax payers could not get as much work
out of the man with chains on his legs as from the man whose limbs
were free.

You talk about humiliating working men. Is the infernal robbery of labor! I
wish every member of Local Seattle that voted in favor of circulating that
petition would get one of Judge Gordon's 63 day sentences and be put to
cleaning Second Avenue from Pike to Washington, each one with a chain
on his leg with a hundred pound ball on the end of it and humiliate some-
one into them. I would willingly be one of the gang so I could laugh
at them in their humiliation and at the pious frauds who were in the
passing mob.

The Chain Gang in Seattle has made more Socialists in the last six
months than all the Constructive Socialists will make in the next six
months. Working prisoners relieve capitalism, that is why I am against it.
It reduces taxes. If the tax payers had to dig down in their jeans for
the money to keep those prisoners they would quit putting them in jail
for the sake of being out of a job. They would then spend their money
to pay free laborers and get results from what they spent, instead of put-
ting them in jail and paying their board and getting nothing to show for it.

You say you consider "the Chain Gang treatment conducive to a
career crime." What do you call carrying a hungry man stealing chickens?
The principal crime that a Socialist is interested in is the crime of a
man living off another man's labor and the Socialist can well afford to
allow the capitalists to attend to the other petty larceny crimes them-
selves.

To the devil with your bourgeois morals and ethics and ideas of crime!
To me it is a crime for any Socialist to help the capitalist in his efforts to
regulate society and to help bolster up their crumbling system by mak-
ing their penal institutions more humane and not so shocking to the
eyes of the working class. Socialists, mush chewing, sloppy idealists and
chicken headed sentimental milksoyaks.

You good people make me sick. I would steal an election as quick as
Hinky Dink. I would turn the militia against the capitalists as quick
as Roosevelt did against the striking Danes on the Croton Dam and I
would not rest until I could get away with a capitalist who runs a Chain
Gang and a penitentiary behind me to make me be what they call good.
I will be as good as I have to and no more.

You call yourselves Socialists and go flirting with a bourgeois reform
militia like a dishonest chain gang, and the labor unions of Butte City,
Montana, belonging to the W. P. A. or the A. P. or just a stop to the
public working of prisoners for capitalist gain, year ago. Those unions
and the capitalists and said, "if you can not find work for those men
and keep them from becoming criminals and vagrants, you can dig down
in your pockets and feed them, you shall not work them in competition
with free labor."

You appeal to the people of Seattle to suppress this offense against
human sentiment? do you? It is about time for someone to appeal to the
people to stop this kind of thing. The people of Seattle are a realistic
mentalism in Seattle masquerading under the name of Socialism, with a
stuffed club and run it into the Women's Christian Temperance Union,
or the Methodist Church or Puget Sound, or some place where they need it
in their business.

The "Appeal to the people" and what comes of it. Any time that
a Socialist gets to poking his nose in capitalist business it is time to call
in the coroner.

"Appeal to the people,"—on the new hall for get hold of the city of Seattle
and host the red flag on the city hall and run it to suit yourselves
and if you try to run a chainless chain gang after you get in, I will do
my best to organize a bunch of rough necks in Portland and go up there
and clean out the dump.

ed all day for a contractor in West Seattle and only had ten cents left.
They walked six miles so they could get a meal with that ten cents in
the morning, and then they intended to work all the next day, so they would
have any supper that night, on that ten cent meal, so they would have
two days pay when they quit. They did not have any money to pay for
a bed, so they went down and went to sleep on a pile of hay on that win-
ter night, without any blankets, on an open pier.

I told them they would get about ten days. They laughed at me. 'I
was crazy. Did I mean to tell them such a thing as that and expect them
to believe it? Why, they could see the city and get damages, they could
publish it in all the papers, I did not know what they would do not. The
Socialists were no good. They were just two good, honest, farmer boys
—that was all—two of just such men as have given their lives on every
field to place the American flag where it today on the topmost
plainside of industrialism. They were so honest and innocent that, as a
grafter would say, "It's a shame to take the money."

I was in court the next morning awaiting trial when they lined up
in a bunch, each 29 hours of the law gave testimony. The judge and
Officer Blank found this bunch asleep on pier 7 (I think it was) so I
sent them in.

The bunch got a fine of \$25.00 collectively. The boys were in the
bunch.

I got freed out about fifteen minutes afterwards, but got pinched
again the same night. I looked through the bars of my cell the next
morning and there were my two brave young American heroes, each one
with his leg on a chair having the leg irons snapped on. I slipped a piece
of money through the bars for the gang to get tobacco with, while the
guard purposely turned his head.

A couple of days later I was pinched again, the boys were trustees
now, that is, in the last couple of days a chain gang prisoner had to serve,
he was left in to hold his tongue during the night so he could go out clean,
unless the guards had it in for him and then he was discharged lousy.

I talked to the boys that afternoon for an hour or two, told them
where our Local was in Portland and how to find it and that if they
were in the boat, some of the gang would give them a lift.

They are both of them now carrying rat cards and they do not care
what any bourgeois minded lobster thinks about them either, and they
would feel more humiliated to think that some who call themselves So-
cialists would petition a capitalist minded people for a chainless chain
gang which would get away with the law, than they would feel with chains
on their legs and curse the pious hypocrites that put them there.

Many of our Portland members have been in jail, some of them have
been on the Seattle Chain Gang and I think in the near future one of the
best qualifications for membership in the Socialist Party would be that
the member had been in jail at least once or twice. This is the best
medicine I know of for those who get humiliated so easily.

THOMAS A. SLADDEN.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

VOTE IT DOWN!
To the Editor:
In your issue of May 26th under the
caption, "The Top," you say, "But the
main thing is that it allows a de-
cision of party validity wholly with-
out reference to the principles in-
volved and the qualifications of the
votes—which might be democratic or
Republican votes."
What do you mean by this? Has
the Socialist party any other way to
select its qualifications for mem-
bership than by the ballot?
If a question of principles
is involved, who is going to decide the
question, if not the party? Is party
membership in fact? If the majority
of the party is not capable of decid-
ing the question vital to the party,
in principle, what part of the
party is to be the deciding body?
Is there that party, will be capable
of doing anything?
The editor will oblige the under-
signed Proletarian by answering these
questions. Excuse me, but I must say
that I consider the paragraph quoted
as the most arrant nonsense.

It is going to be the editorial policy of "The
Socialist" to hereafter oppose majority
rule!
In one column you rejoice in a
"wage-workers' platform, in the next
you denounce that same wage-
workers must not be trusted. Please
explain.

Fraternally,
E. S. REINERT
Orville, Wash., June 9, 1908.

EDITOR'S REPLY.
This question concerns the proper
action of the Socialist party of the
United States in the case of a con-
trary to the Socialist party of any
state.
When there are two factions in any
state organization both claiming to be
the Socialist party in that state, what
action should the National organ-
ization take to decide which of the
two is the real representative of the
party?
The proposed action in the National
constitution, which we want to see
adopted, is that the Executive Com-
mittee shall take the matter up and
referendum in said state of all the mem-
bers "where the party has been estab-
lished" and the fact which gets the most
votes shall be declared the real Social-
ist party in that state.

What we contend for is that it
is the duty of the National Social-
ist Party to ascertain which faction represents the
Principles of the Party and to recog-
nize that faction as the real Social-
ist party of that state.
Suppose the Democrats in this state,
for example, had the majority and
solved to join the Socialist party and
win under the Socialist name. They
do not change their principles. They
still stand for Bryan's "Public Own-
ership of Monopolies." They sign our
Socialist pledge without scruple, not
caring or not knowing exactly what it
means. Many of our local organiza-
tions before the late unpleasantness
of the Democrats in this state, and
until they constituted a large major-
ity of the party in this state.

The real Socialists in this case are
in a minority. The majority of mem-
bers of the Socialist party in the
state are then not Socialists but Dem-
ocrats. If this section of the constitu-
tion remains in force, we are de-
prived of the ability for the real Socialists to get
recognition from the National party,
for the fact that they are not recog-
nized by the National party would
conduct by the National office would
show the Socialists in a minority and
the Democrats in a majority. We
think such a provision which ignores
the principles involved, is "arrant non-
sense."

"Take the actual controversy in the
case of the National party, the Social-
ist party of the National office would
show the Socialists in a minority and
the Democrats in a majority. We
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