

The Chicago Daily Socialist.

Readers of The Public know without being told that this is not a socialist paper—not of the school, at any rate, which the Chicago Daily Socialist editorially represents. Plutocratic bigots who denounce as “socialists” all who object to the existing industrial order, under which the privileged prosper at the expense of the workers, may ignorantly—or it may be maliciously—class us as a socialist, and we have no objection to their epithet. We take the trouble to differentiate here, only because we are about to say something of the Chicago Daily Socialist which we wish to be understood as saying not because but in spite of its socialism. We say it, too, because we think that every really good citizen of Chicago, whatever his political affiliations, his religious faith, or his social convictions or prejudices, ought to feel about the matter as we feel. Let him dislike or despise the socialism of the Daily Socialist all he pleases, he is either a very narrow-minded or a very empty-minded man if he does not nevertheless recognize and appreciate the value of the civic work which that paper has been doing under enormous difficulties.

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Chicago is under the domination—politically, socially, industrially—of a combine which reaches from criminal slum to criminal corporation through the ramifications of criminal politics. So powerful is this combine, that not a single daily paper in the city can be depended upon to fight it to a finish—the Daily Socialist alone excepted. Others may fight it spasmodically, or a little way below the surface; but even the most willing among them soon feel the sting of a forbidding spear point in front or the pull of a shackle behind, and at a critical moment may abandon the fight or divert it. But the Daily Socialist can be depended upon to keep up the fight to the death, and for these reasons. In the first place it has actually done so, under most menacing and disheartening circumstances, without wavering. In the second place, the personal courage of its staff is as dependable as that of any newspaper staff in the city. In the third place, its claims to confidence rest securely upon the one fact that raises a prejudice against it. It can be depended upon because it is a socialist paper. Not that socialism is peculiar in that respect, but that single minded devotion to a cause is a guarantee of fidelity and persistence in this fight. Since the Daily Socialist is in the field of journalism, not to make money, not to get advertisements, not to serve some personal interest, not to curry the favor or

avoid the vengeance of any man or group, but to serve its chosen cause,—for this reason it can be depended upon in a civic fight like the present one, when the equally willing and courageous staff of any other paper might, from no fault of their own, have to retire from the field.

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Yet the Daily Socialist—the only daily paper in Chicago that the dangerous classes (rich and poor, official and unofficial) cannot command if they set out unitedly to do it—is in desperate financial straits. This is not for lack of circulation, although wider and larger circulation would not be amiss. It is for lack of funds to meet past obligations. Without capital, it has had a menacing deficit to face every week for nearly three years; and now as it seems to be almost self-supporting, the accumulated remnants of deficits compel it to announce a financial crisis in its affairs. If the Chicago Daily Socialist should go down for want of financial backing, at this time when it is alone in making a middle-of-the-road crusade against the most powerful combine of grafters that ever cursed an honest community, the event would be nothing for anyone to gloat over but the crooks. With the Daily Socialist out of the way, the official crusade against graft which that paper forced and which is now begun, may be shunted off into blind-alley investigations; with that paper alive, any blind-alley investigation will be a difficult undertaking. There ought to be enough public spirit in Chicago, of the disinterested kind, to sink all hostility to socialism long enough at least to help the Daily Socialist survive while it carries to the end its courageous fight for civic purity.

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Bryan's Mule, Taft's Cow.

Giving editorial attention to the report that “Major Minnemascot,” the trick mule presented to Mr. Bryan last year, is now drawing a beer wagon in Goldfield, Nevada, a Republican paper comments: “Fallen from his high estate, Mr. Bryan’s accomplished mule, like his former owner, is compelled to work for a living, while Mr. Taft’s mooley cow grazes peacefully on the White House lawn.” Such a contrast is unfortunate in a Republican paper. Bryan has been working for a living since he came to man’s estate, while for the past thirteen or fourteen years Mr. Taft has been peacefully grazing on the public lawn. Where the Taft cow would be grazing now if the railroads, the tariff beggars, the privilege holders and others of the Interests had not pushed her owner into the White House is a matter of conjecture. Still,

this. No man, so they reason, would work so hard, and risk so much, without some personal end in view.

They see Johnson as a politician, skilled in all the tricks of the trade, and they grow suspicious of him. They see him courageous under loss of fortune, patient under ingratitude and political reverses, indomitable in the face of possible defeat, and they do not understand it. They look for ulterior motives.

And in this their instinct is partly right. No politician works as Johnson has worked, as Johnson is working, for the mere fulfillment of pre-election pledges, for the emoluments attaching to the mayoralty, and the honor of being called the "best mayor of the best governed city."

But Tom Johnson is more than a politician. Tom Johnson is not at heart a politician at all. His methods are those of the politician, but his aims and purposes are those of the idealist.

This aspect of Johnson's character is not patent to the casual observer, and few of the plain people are more than casual. They see his political methods; they see his mistakes, and they are plenty. Johnson has sometimes taken the wrong way to do the right thing. His indomitable energy, impatient of restraint, has tried to take short-cuts which have been nearer related to common sense than to legality. He may have played horse with precedent and red-tape in trying to make adjustments by his own scale of value and relative importance. He may have overvalued his friends; he has doubtless been overgenerous toward his own and the people's enemies. His optimism may have led him to promise too much, through overestimating his own power of fulfillment.

But he has never wilfully broken a promise; he has never made a promise he did not intend to keep.

He has never betrayed a trust. He is working hard now to protect the Forest City shareholders, many of whom were led to invest through their personal confidence in Johnson, and his assurances of the safety of the investment.

He has never for a moment stopped fighting the people's fight, since they elected him to office. And he has fought the fight, not as a hireling, but as his own fight, in making all else subservient to it.

To some, this aspect of Tom Johnson as an idealist may seem incongruous. Perhaps they are accustomed to associate an idealist with a pulpit; to picture him lank of person and long of hair,

with soulful eyes and upward gaze, with a head full of visions and a mouth full of metaphysics.

And our own Tom Johnson, round of person, jovial of manner, with his keen sense of humor, his restless energy and untiring perseverance, with a head full of resources and a mouth full of practical, everyday common-sense, does not fit the picture.

But the time came to Tom Johnson, millionaire, practical man of affairs, when he had a dream. It wasn't a pipe-dream, neither did he clothe it in fine phrases and go seeking a publisher. He is not of the sort to think himself great and demand recognition because he has conceived a fine ideal. He does not talk about it. His idealism is of the rarely practical sort that goes to work. He said to himself: "What can I do? What can I do?"

And Tom Johnson in Cleveland to-day is fighting the fight for low fare, not merely because he was elected on that platform, but because he had a dream; a dream of a city, a great city, a free city; a free land; a free people! And because he saw an opportunity right at home, in Cleveland, to begin the realization of that dream, he is giving the best years of his life, the best of his vitality and energy, to breaking the chains of special privilege, and restoring the city to the plain people; and he is doing this for the satisfaction of working along the line of his own ideal.

That is the ulterior motive which keeps Tom Johnson in the fight. That is the "private gain" for which he is using his public office.

He expressed it in an interview last Fall, after the referendum, and shortly after the loss of his fortune:

"I entered the fight in this city with certain ideals before me. I wanted to fight Privilege and Special Interest, and I had already decided to give up working for dollars. . . . I don't want you to misunderstand what I have been working for as Mayor. I haven't been laboring with the expectation of being rewarded by the gratitude of the people. One cannot count on that. It's pleasure in doing work that I like, that has kept me in the fight."

It is this Johnson who will be remembered—Johnson the Idealist—when the mistakes of Johnson the politician have been forgotten. It is this Tom Johnson who will be honored and dealt with justly by the plain people, when they understand.

May the understanding not come too late for their own good!

Tom Johnson needs the people far less than the people need Tom Johnson.

ADELINE CHAMPNEY.