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SECOND EDITORIAL

Pictorial Kansas.

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What “Populism” is; what “Radical Populists,” “Populist Radicals,” “Socialist Populists,” “Populist Socialists” are, together with the rest of that bankrupt middle class that talks big, stalks about as the God-ordained paladin of the working class, and meantime demands 16 to 1 silver;—what that “movement” and those “movers” are has all been frequently exposed in these columns. And yet it is not a case of piling on the agony if we take up the subject once more by pointing to the latest illustration from the “Radical Populist,” “Populist Radical,” “Socialist Populist” and “Populist Socialist” Kansan Government.

By the laws of 1891, chapter 114 of Kansas—a law passed before the Populist “friends of labor” came into full control in the State—it is “unlawful for any county or any contractor therewith to require or permit any person to work more than eight hours per day under any contract with it.” Despite this law, the county commissioners of Marshall County employed a workingman named S.C. Billingsley and worked him over twelve hours a day. After the work was done Billingsley sued the county under the law for as much wages as he was entitled to for the excess of hours. The Court threw out Billingsley’s case; he appealed; and the court of appeals sustained the verdict against him.

The decision of this court should be memorized. It holds in substance that Billingsley’s case either comes within the letter of the law, or it does not; if it does, then he is **HIMSELF LIABLE TO CRIMINAL PROSECUTION** for having “contracted” in violation of the law; if it does not, then he has no cause of action!!!!

When the anti-trust law was interpreted and enforced by the gold-bug Courts solely against the workingmen, and thus a law which had been claimed to be levelled at the monopolists was turned against the workers, the cry went up from the 16 to 1 camp: “No Government by Injunction!”—And the innocent among the workers took the cry for genuine.

We here have the silver-bug camp committing a parallel offence, and thereby illustrating the identify of its class interests with those of the gold-buck camp—as far as the working class is concerned.

Eight hour laws for Government employés are intended to serve as a protection to the working class against the employing class in Government. These laws proceed from two premises: one, correct enough, to wit, that the wage earners stand helpless in modern society, and that at least the boss whom they help to rear by their vote shall be restrained from going the full length of capitalist exploitation; the other, absurd enough, to wit, that the working class can escape the effect of its own folly in electing the class of its fleecers into power, and by any sort of law tie the hands of that brigand class once placed in office. The gold-bugs are sufficiently understood to be hostile to labor and unreliable; the silver-bugs are quite generally believed to be better. The former, through their courts and all other officials, are well known to be veterans in perjury, inasmuch as the violation of their oaths of office, whenever the working class is concerned, is their main function; the latter, the silver-bug class is supposed by not a few, and is claimed by itself, to be of different stamp. Is there any difference? Let Billingsley's case speak.

Only a few days ago a convention of Kansas Populists met in Topeka. There the record of their members in public office was examined. With Billingsley's bleeding case still palpitating before them, what did they do? Did they condemn this prostitute Populist Judiciary? Did they condemn their prostitute Populist Legislature for sitting mum and not forthwith hurling that infamous Court out of office with the brand of impeachment on its brow? Did they denounce their precious Populist Executive for his complaisant silence? No; and yet again, no! The "Populist Radicals," the "Radical Populists," the "Populist Socialists," the "Socialist Populists" of Kansas, in convention assembled at Topeka, COMMENDED THE ACTION OF THEIR PUBLIC OFFICIALS!

The working class of Kansas, like the working class everywhere else, has nothing whatever to expect but stripes from any man, or any combination of men, who does not stand exclusively upon the class-conscious demand of the proletariat to wrench from the exploiting class the economic and political weapons of exploitation, and hurl that class, head foremost, from the seat it now usurps.

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