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EDITORIAL

WHEN KNAVES FALL OUT, ETC.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE Chicago *Provoker*, a Socialist party organ of April 14, 1910, has this article:

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THE CAPITALIST SPIRIT IN NATIONAL AND STATE OFFICIALS.

Barnes—Bentall.

The following is extracted from a circular letter to “Honest Socialists.” The writer says:—“I was interested in the moving picture business for socialist propaganda. National Secretary Barnes took my ideas, formed the ADREM COMPANY and organized a scheme he could control for selling “profit sharing certificates” to trusting comrades at a dollar each. I refused to be a party to such a capitalist game. I told State Secretary J.O. Bentall of Barnes’ capitalist scheme and explained my ideas of party use and management of moving picture propaganda for which I put up one hundred dollars. To avoid conflict with National Secretary Barnes’ Adrem Company and escape public notice Secretary Bentall got the assistance of his two brothers, Lawyer D.J. Bentall and Elmer Bentall. These three Bentalls obtained a charter from the state of Delaware; fixed by-laws and a board of directors to give them absolute control. I protested and demanded back my \$100, but fearing injury by physical violence and legal persecution the Bentalls threatened, I got out.”

With A.M. Simons’ consent and indorsement of the Board of Directors of the *Daily Socialist* the Bentalls presented their scheme in an article of some 3,000 words written in the exalted style which gives the state secretary’s monthly—THE NEXT STEP—a peculiar place in socialist literature. This article by the denunciation of “CAPITALIST EXPLOITATION,” “CAPITALIST SLAVERY,” and in behalf of “OUR GRAND SOCIALIST CAUSE,” and in the name of “TRUTH, SCIENCE AND SOCIALISM,” and with the song of “THE ANGELS’ PEACE ON EARTH, GOOD WILL TO MEN,” State Secretary Bentall and his brothers introduced the “GRAND CO-OPERATIVE COMMONWEALTH” and their “CO-INDUSTRIAL COMPANY” to the trusting comrades who think nothing but the “Truth” appears in the *Daily Socialist*. Stripped of all its “religious” trimmings this article reveals the Bentall scheme to be a

capitalist stock company with a Delaware charter and with Five Hundred Thousand Shares (pretty pieces of picture paper) to sell to comrades for Five Hundred Thousand Dollars—a dollar a share. Each Local and Branch of the Socialist party in the United States to buy 500 shares for \$500, two hundred and fifty dollars cash and \$250 on time. Fifty thousand of these shares were “preferred shares” on which the Bentalls promised to pay SIX PER CENT INTEREST. Bentall presented the bait of enormous “Profit” with all the skill of a professional “barker,” inviting the ignorant to take his particular conveyance to heaven.

The following is extracted from the records of Bentall’s board of directors.

By resolution of the board of directors one hundred and thirty-eight thousand shares of stock was given to the members of the board as follows:

- One thousand shares to each member.
- Twenty thousand shares to the president.
- Twenty thousand shares to the manager.
- Fifteen thousand shares to the vice president.
- Ten thousand shares to each of the other directors.
- Five thousand shares extra to the lawyer.

These shares were given for services rendered in planning this scheme and were to be sold to comrades for a dollar each.

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Readers of *The People* are cautioned not to allow the fact of *The Provoker’s* obvious enviousness, of its objection to “hero worship” being obviously only against the hero worship that is not bestowed on its own Editor and owner, and of that editor and owner being the non-pareil proletaire Mr. Thomas J. Morgan, Attorney-at-Law, swaying their judgment, and causing them to discard its revelations. Readers of *The People* are furthermore cautioned not to allow their knowledge of the fact that the Thomas J. Morgan aforementioned is an Ex-S.L.P. man, consequently, a mental and moral, as he also is a physical misfit, to militate against his allegations above cited. They should ever keep in mind the time-tried adage, When knaves fall out, the truth comes to light.

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