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EDITORIAL

WAHLTEICH'S SUPPRESSED SPEECH.

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THE Pittsburg, Pa., *Dispatch* of October 26 quotes Mr. Julius Wahlteich—an old German Social Democrat who has resided thirty years in this country and has recently been touring Germany—as answering in Berlin the question why Socialism does not progress in America, with these words:

“The reason is that the American people are filled with the incredible and insane idea that everyone is the architect of his own fortune and everyone in America has a chance to get rich quick. They consider Socialism only as the last resort of poverty-stricken Europe; that it is not needed in wealthy America.”

From intrinsic evidence those who know Mr. Wahlteich will greatly doubt his having been correctly reported.

The proverb is “in vino veritas” (in wine there lies truth), which includes beer. Surely having had in Berlin, on the occasion when the question was asked, a good load on, perhaps a gooder load than is his wont, absolute veracity of statement may be expected from Julius Wahlteich. So far from referring his audience to distant America for a “specimen,” he surely took the nearer “specimen,” himself, by the hand, and answered as follows, to wit:

“You want to know the reason Socialism progresses so lamely in America? I'll give ye one of the reasons. Look at me—look at me well—I'm a sample. Europe has none such. Like me there are others in America. We came from Germany—we were here Social Democrats. But here we had sense enough to keep our mouths shut (Maul halten). Otherwise in America. There we pretend to know all about Socialism, about economics and about Marx. Here we wouldn't dare to. There are too many who would have tripped us in short order. But in America, at the time we landed there, there were no Socialists. The consequence was that the men of whom I am a

shining sample forthwith set up shop as teachers of Socialism. In the land of the blind, you know, the one-eyed man is king. The workers in America were then blind. The men of whom I am a sample surely had at least one eye. So we sailed in. Our purpose was of the best. We meant to teach. But presently that happened which often happens. Our 'economic determinism' got the best of our good intentions. What with the start we gave to some; what with the start that others gave themselves; and what with the start that economic evolution gave to many others, there sprung among the people in America, aye, among Germans also, a whole lot of men who had not a 'single eye' like me and my likes, but who enjoyed both their optics on Socialism. It did not take these two-eyed people long to get 'onto us.' They began to preach the real thing, and, consequently, to tear up our twaddle. Did I say twaddle? Nay, our twaddles—

“The taxation issue sprang up there. I and my set, never having grasped the theory of taxation, became easy preys to the bourgeois twaddle of lower taxes, which in America manifests itself in a manner that turns the face of the proletariat away from the shop, where they are plundered, and in a direction where they easily became cat's-paws for the bourgeois. The subject is so alluring that the masses of the workers readily took to it. Fearing to 'isolate' ourselves we fell in, and produced some wonderful statistics. Alexander Jonas beat us all in that line. We took his statistics. The consequence was that we made asses of ourselves. The workers lost sight of their class interests, which apply mainly as producers and began to talk as 'consumers.' The consequence was that we could not hold them back with a forty-horse power when the reformers, who had a chance of election while our candidates had none, began to preach 'lower taxes.'—This was twaddle No. 1.

“Then there was the subject of immigration. That also was greatly calculated to charm the workers. It looked plausible that the wages fell through immigration, whereas they actually fell through improved machinery and capitalist concentration. But I and mine again did not like to 'isolate' ourselves, so we fell in with the anti-immigration cry of the bourgeois. And there again the bourgeois could out-trump us, besides that our anti-immigration talk helped to break up the proletariat of America into as many nationalities as are there represented.—That was twaddle No. 2.

“I could mention a dozen more such twaddles. The two-eyed men began to go for us. They went for us in German and in English and in all the languages spoken in America. As I said before, our ‘economic determinism’ determined our conduct. For the sake of our own jobs as writers, speakers, etc., we fought the two-eyed men. As we wrapped ourselves in the mantle of the German Social Democracy claiming that we were the true apostles of Socialism, we were just the thing that the labor fakirs needed. They made an alliance with us. We furnished them with the mantle of Socialism, they furnished us with the cash—and we began to denounce the two-eyed men as ‘Scabs,’ ‘Union Smashers,’ and such things.

“The consequence was that the masses of the workers were made to believe that bourgeois preachments were Socialism. The further consequence was a sort of Unionism that compels one Union to scab upon another. The ultimate consequence was that the two-eyed men could make headway but slowly.”

This, we feel sure is a condensation of the speech that Julius Wahlteich actually made in answer to the question why Socialism made such slow progress in America, but which the Pittsburg *Dispatch* suppressed to suit its own purposes. We think too highly of the quality of the liquor that Mr. Wahlteich had on board for it to have delivered the untruthful answer imputed to him.

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