

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 7, NO. 239.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1907.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

By DANIEL DE LEON

ON the second and third pages of this issue will be found the photographic reproductions of certain documents that all should read carefully, scan carefully, consider carefully, and, putting two and two together, consider some more.¹

The revelation concerning Sherman's recommendation to his "special police" to give Trautmann "a damned good licking" is not without its significance, under all circumstances. The plea, upon which Sherman secured special police service, was that he feared a personal assault in his office, it was not to enable him to commit a breach of the peace upon a peaceful man, and to commit it through the arm of an officer. That revelation merely depicts Sherman as a cowardly criminal, too cowardly to satisfy his own personal animosities himself, and himself take the consequences. None who watched Sherman at the convention, or since, in so far as his acts have come to light, would wonder at that—if that were all.

The further revelation that Sherman egged on his special police to commit murder, and that the victim marked was St. John constitutes a second link in a chain of evidence that thereby begins to point in certain directions, not previously surmised. St. John, it was known, would go to the old headquarters. The suggestion that, whatever the special police might do, would be done "in the use of his special prerogative" and "in self-defense," was in itself, quite pointed. It meant "shoot to kill." The point of the suggestion was sharpened by the articles that Sherman had inspired in advance to the *Chicago Record-Herald* and the pure and simple political *Chicago Socialist*, to the effect that he expected an assault to be committed upon his headquarters by certain reputed "gunmen" of the West. Is it altogether unlikely,

¹ [To be inserted at a later date.—R.B.]

that the point was furthermore sharpened by the circumstance that, abreast of Haywood, Pettibone and Moyer, St. John is feared by the Mine Owners' Association; was arrested at the same time as those other three men; was also accused of murder; but that part of the conspiracy quickly fell through and St. John had just been set free? Has this sequence of events, directly preceding Sherman's suggestion to his police lieutenant that he "shoot to kill," and that the act would be "in self-defense" and in the "use of his special prerogative"—have the two things nothing in common? Are they mere coincidence?

Furthermore, is the theory of "mere coincidence," or the theory of "link in a continuous chain" at all illuminated by the further revelation that Sherman's special policeman was a Pinkerton of old standing; that he was a veteran in the service of the Capitalist Class at strike breaking; that he was known, well known, personally known in Chicago for his record as a brutal agent of Capitalist brutality; finally, that between such a character and Sherman there were such intimate relations that Sherman gladly gave him a certificate of character and treated him as "George"?—Which of the two theories do these revelations illumine? Do they illumine the theory of "mere coincidence," or do they illumine the theory of "links in a continuous chain," a chain previously suggested by Flentje's allegations?²

What all does all this mean?

As to Sherman himself, he is a corpse washed down the stream of the Movement. Deposed, convicted, utterly discredited, without support from any tangible portion of the Working Class, the revelations on the second and third pages of this issue are merely cumulative as to him; in so far, they are superfluous. A man can not be deader than dead. The documents are also, at best, only of incidental importance towards estimating the Mahoneys and McMullens, Sherman's understrappers, and the rest of his "Kitchen Cabinet." Sufficient facts have sufficiently exposed the whole bunch.

What, then, does all this mean?

Does all this mean that the I.W.W. is dreaded of the Capitalist Class, and that the Capitalist Class will leave untried no act of chicanery, however base or criminal, to stamp out the danger it is threatened with—it and its buffers, the Mitchell-

² [To be appended at a later date.—R.B.]

Gompers combination of Civic Federation decoy ducks? In that respect also the documents are merely cumulative, and hence superfluous.

What, then, does all this mean?

What all this means to the Working Class is something without which all sense of class solidarity will be useless; all organization, however structurally perfect, worthless. To the Working Class the documents on pages two and three are a warning, loud, incisive and persuasive, that the times that are upon them lay upon their mental powers a strain which they must prove equal to or the rising tide of the emancipation will roll back again, leaving the lifeless bodies of their most devoted apostles strewing the dry sands of the beach of Time.

To the Working Class the documents warn to keep their heads cool, their eyes peeled. To guard against hasty suspicion; but to be relentless when facts confirm suspicion. The documents warn the Working Class to demand the fullest publicity of their acts and of the acts of their officers. The documents caution against criticism that is untimely; they urge a careful gathering of facts, thorough digestion thereof, and independent—not angry—thought, and, that arrived at, determined, collected action.

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

Uploaded August 2009

slpns@slp.org