

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 286.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, APRIL 11, 1908.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

A JACK-IN-THE-BOX.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE latest Jack to jump out of the hocus-pocus box of Reform is Mr. John N. Clark, of Bellevue, O. Like a true scientist Mr. Clark reduces the present social problem to its elemental. He seems to differ from Haywood. According to him, railroading is “the steppingstone to civilization”—not mining. Starting from that principle, Mr. Clark dissolves the whole problem into a railroad solution, so to speak, shakes it up, boils it, and obtains the following three answers:—

First—The owners, managers and employes of the railroads of the country should form a league;

Second—The league must not go into independent politics, it must act with utmost independence, choosing for support only such candidates in the field who stand upon the principle: “With railroads we stand, without them we fall”; and

Third—The league must hold to the principle that “capital and labor are by nature united in hard and fast bonds,” so that the league shall never dissolve.

The last two “answers” suggest a question each.

First question: How can a body act with “utmost political independence” if it does not put up candidates of its own choice, and is bound to make its choice out of candidates imposed upon it? Does a man who is forced to choose between poison and the bow-string—does such a man “act with utmost independence”?

Second question: What is to become of the railway employes whom the managers and owners sack as superfluous by reason of some new invention which renders the employe superfluous, or by reason of some merger in the lines that renders another set of employes equally superfluous? Are the “hard and fast bonds” which unite capital and labor “by nature” so “hard and fast” that the managers and owners will keep the afore-named superfluous-rendered employe members of the

league on a pension list? Or are the said bonds so “hard and fast by nature” that the managers and owners will divide the stocks and bonds with the said employe members of the league when they are rendered superfluous?

Toy stores have a great variety of Jacks-in-the-box—wild looking Jacks in motley and bells, and streaming hair, and queer noses; charmingly startling as many of these Jacks are, none is a circumstance to Jack-in-the-box John N. Clark, of Bellevue, O. He ought to be patented. He would drive all other Jacks-in-the-box out of the toy market.

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

Uploaded January 2010

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