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EDITORIAL

THE BLEEDING BODY OF SOCIALISM.

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THE front page of the May 15th issue of the Girard, Kans., *Appeal to Reason* is taken up entirely with the Warren Case—its history and the conviction of Warren by a Federal jury in Fort Scott, on the 4th of the current month.

The facts as gleaned from the *Appeal to Reason* itself are these:

Fred D. Warren, the managing Editor of the paper, was arrested and indicted two years ago on the charge of having mailed to one Pierson, San Pedro, Calif., a letter in an envelope on the outside of which was printed in red letters an offer of a reward of \$1,000 to any person who kidnapped ex-Gov. William S. Taylor of Kentucky and returned him to the authorities of his State. Taylor, a Republican, was at that time under indictment in his State for complicity in a capitalist-political murder muddle; he was a fugitive from justice, and lay in hiding in Indiana, but has since been pardoned. No material fact was denied by either side at the trial. Taylor, who was himself present for the prosecution, admitted the facts therein. As to the defence, while presenting very satisfactory evidence that the alleged Pierson was in all probability a myth on the part of the prosecution, it does not seem to have attempted to deny that, at the time, it did mail letters in envelopes bearing the outside inscriptions as charged. Indeed, it seems to be admitted that the defense had and was in the habit of using such envelopes.

What are the obvious conclusions from such facts?

The practice of kidnapping supposed criminals was once a crime. It is a crime no more since the Supreme Court of the United States—over the head of the dissenting opinion of Justice McKenna, who emphasized the point that kidnapping was a crime by whomsoever committed—upheld the kidnapping by the Governors of Idaho and Colorado of Moyer, Haywood and Pettibone. If men, subsequently tried

and acquitted, could be lawfully kidnapped even before indictment, it can be no crime to kidnap one who is under actual indictment and a fugitive from justice. If the act is not a crime, then suggestions to commit the act can not be criminal.

Furthermore, the publication of a reward for the capture of a notoriously indicted and notorious fugitive from justice can not defame the man's character, leastwise when he was never acquitted, and subsequently regained his freedom upon a pardon. Pardons presuppose crime: they do not presuppose innocence.

Accordingly, the lettering on the outside of the *Appeal to Reason's* envelopes was neither a public offence, nor was it the private offence of libel. The conviction of Warren is a gross miscarriage of justice—upon a matter, however, that no wise concerns Socialism, altogether a private affair.

The *Appeal to Reason*, however, identifies the Warren Case with the “Social Revolution”; it calls the case a “mighty issue”; declares that “nothing would so thoroughly arouse the people of this country as the conviction of Warren upon this flimsy charge”; claims that it is Socialism that is being assailed; and, howling about “the enormous expenses” to which this cause of Socialism subjected it, the paper calls for money, its real objective—all this from the *Appeal to Reason*, a paper that was and continues to be silent as the tomb over Preston, a workingman under life sentence for defending his life while on picket duty for his Union! The paper, that has not a word for the signal case of an innocent workingman doing life sentence in a penitentiary, has the shamelessness to pretend that “nothing would so thoroughly arouse the people of this country” as the wrongful sentence of its own Managing Editor to an infinitely lighter punishment, in a matter, at that, which is a purely private quarrel between a private capitalist politician and a privately owned notoriety-seeking publication. That paper has the sordid vileness to seek to turn the event into an opportunity for turning a dishonest penny under the pretext of saving Socialism.

It is the same *Appeal to Reason*, such as it was at its birth, such as it has continued to be every second of its existence—an applier to the sentiment of the weak-minded; cheating them out of coppers with one bogus scheme after another; inciting the cupidity of the uninformed to its own sordid ends; like a caricature of Barnum, who declared there was a sucker born every minute, working only upon

the principle, and carrying its unclean practices under the colors of Socialism.

Not at the hand of the prosecution in the Warren Case, does Socialism bleed—the *Appeal to Reason* and Socialism are two distinct things. The bleeding body of Socialism bleeds only from stabs administered to its character by the Barnums in the Movement to whom Socialism is but a catch-penny affair.

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