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EDITORIAL

SHAKERS FALLING IN LINE.

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NEARLY forty years ago Artemus Ward advised the Shakers that they drop their “meal-bags” and “long westid-coats” and “join the outer-world.” Whether the Shakers have taken the first part of the advice we do not know; to judge by the resolutions that they passed at their recent peace convention one should judge that they took the second part of the advice, and have joined the procession of the sophisticated outer-world, thereby dropping their former candor. The resolution in question adopted at the Shakers’ convention is as follows:

“Resolved, That in disarmament, and the consequent reduction of taxation which now falls so heavily on the producing classes, would be found a remedy for many of the industrial disturbances which are menacing our whole social system.”

The claim that taxation falls heavily upon the producing classes is a “falling in line” kerslap with the procession of the sophisticated outer world. The Shakers having acquired property, and in equal measure lost sincerity; their former language of “yay”, “yay” and “nay”, “nay”, on account of which Artemus Ward pronounced their elder Uriah “a yayer without a eqal”, has at last acquired all the circumlocution of the hypocritical property-holding, and only tax-paying class.

The working class pays no taxes: it has no property on which to pay taxes. Taxes are a burden that the property-holding class is driven to bear in order to protect its wrongly acquired ownership. Taxes, being wealth, are the product of Labor. But the wealth out of which the taxes are paid is wealth that the working class never received: it is wealth that they were plundered of in the shop. It is in the shop that the workingman “pays taxes”. If he is to be relieved, the relief must come there, in the shop. It is the acme of the hypocrisy of the sophisticated property-holding outer-world that they affect sorrow for that burden of taxation which falls,

not upon the workingman, but upon the plunderer, and which has to come out of the plunder itself.

The Shakers should move to Greater New York during this campaign, and help to boom things for the piebald parties of the Republicans, Democrats, Hearstites and Volkszeitung Corporation. All these four concerns are beating the tom-tom of municipalization for the sake of “easing the burden of the tax-payer”. Not one of them proposes to take and hold the public franchises and operating them regardless of the “Labor Market”: all of them, accordingly, talk “municipalization” of the sort that leaves uneased the “burden of taxation” upon the workingman there where it really burdens him—the shop, and of the sort that is thoughtful of the plunderer only.

If these Shakers could vote in New York, their vote would not be plumped for the Socialist Labor Party. For the S.L.P., men who adopt such resolutions can have no use. The S.L.P. cares not a rap what the burden of taxation is upon the plundering class: the S.L.P. directs its undivided efforts towards, not “relieving”, but smashing the “burden of taxation” in the shop, which means to smash the system of wage slavery.

That ticket is headed in this city by John J. Kinneally: it is surmounted by the Arm and Hammer of the Socialist Labor Party.

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

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