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An Inside View of the Appeal Office.

(Continued from page One.)

gle paragraph or line has been published which would justify the charge which Comrade Smith makes in his pamphlet. I cannot account for this rumor unless it was started by the same interests which spread broadcast the statement during the later days of the 1900 campaign that Comrade Debs would withdraw in favor of Bryan. If such an edition had been printed some comrade now living in Kansas must remember having seen a copy, or have in his possession a copy of it. If so, let him speak up. The Appeal, in its edition of August 4, 1900, punctured the lie sent out by the democratic press that Comrade Debs would withdraw in favor of Bryan on October 1st, and repeatedly warned its readers to ignore such reports. The charge that the Appeal issued a Bryan edition seems so utterly ridiculous that I have little patience with any one who would repeat it. Comrade Smith, however, seems to be honestly mistaken, and has simply quoted a capitalistic statement which has no more foundation in fact than the one that Comrade Debs would withdraw in favor of the democratic nominee. This lie was worked over-time by the politicians in different parts of the country even up to the eve of the election. It would no doubt have deterred some half-pursuaded voters had not the Appeal's big election edition put a quietus upon this campaign canard.

V.

Bevans and Phelps.

Charles D. Bevans, at whose door is laid the responsibility for most of the trouble in the Appeal office by Comrade Ricker in his correspondence, and also by Comrade Breckon in his communication in the *New York Worker* of January 31, 1904, left the Appeal in September, 1900, the date of my first connection with the paper. He returned some time during the next year, 1901. He is a relative of Comrade Wayland's and was with him during the trying experiences of the Ruskin colony. This seems to have embittered his soul, and he was suspicious of every one who in later years had any connection with the Appeal. I attributed his attitude to a jealous, suspicious disposition and to his intense loyalty to his sister's husband, with whom he had long been intimately associated. He had watched beside the sick bed of his sister, Mrs. Wayland, and had noticed the tender solicitude of the husband, and it is not strange that he should entertain such sentiments of loyalty. A short time after Bevans returned to the Appeal my brother, Ben P. Warren, was offered the position of foreman of the composing room, which he accepted, and in which department Bevans was employed. The latter imagined that Ben had designs on the office, the building, and, incidentally, on the city of Girard, and missed no opportunity of pouring into Wayland's ears prejudicial statements, which resulted in Ben's discharge in December of that year. I felt that an injustice had been done him and notified Comrade Wayland that I would resign as soon as the Appeal was out of the woods in its fight with the post-office department at Washington. I was handling the Appeal end and I did not wish to miss the opportunity of lambasting Madden and settling for all time the right of a Socialist paper to the same privileges granted to capitalist sheets. When I announced my intention of leaving, Comrade Richardson informed me of his determination to join us in our venture of reviving the *Coming Nation* at Rich Hill, Missouri.

Mr. W. F. Phelps was employed as business manager in February, 1902, one month before Comrade Richardson and I left, we deferring our departure in order to give him a chance to familiarize himself with the details of the office work. Personally I know little about Mr. Phelps. Mr. Phelps had been connected with the Appeal during its stormy days in Kansas City and its first years in Girard. For his services as foreman, business manager and man-of-all work he received $6 per week, which was $6 more than Wayland drew for his services. During Comrade Wayland's long period of sickness and illness in his family, Phelps stood loyally by the old Appeal. It must have been hard pulling during those days of the Bryan free silver craze when many of the stalwarts now in the ranks of the Socialist party were following the Boy Orator of the Platte. The receipts of the office, as shown by the records, were practically *nil*, and on more than one occasion Comrade Wayland, hampered as he was by personal afflictions and financial difficulties, seriously considered the advisability of suspending the paper. No one, unless he has been through the mill as an editor of a Socialist paper, can appreciate the difficulties which beset its publication during the period from 1896 to 1900. One Saturday night, after trying in vain to strike a balance between the receipts and expenditures, Comrade Wayland called Phelps into the little cubby-hole—front office—in the storeroom on the east side of the Girard square and announced his determination, to suspend the Appeal to Reason. It was a momentous event in the career of the paper. Phelps understood the financial situation, but he was willing to make one more attempt.

"*Don't do it*, Wayland," said Phelps, earnestly, "*let's give it one more week's trial.*"

The announcement of suspension, already written, was laid in the copy drawer and was never used. Phelps left the Appeal some time afterwards for Colorado, where he remained until invited by Mr. Wayland to return and accept the position of business manager of the Appeal on the date mentioned above.

VI.

Clark as Associate Editor.

Resuming: W. E. Clark arrived from Kansas City about the 1st of March, 1902, and joined the Appeal staff as associate editor. Some time afterward he was let out. Why, I never knew. It may have been that Comrade Wayland had as just grounds as had Comrade Mailly when the latter demanded his resignation on December 29, 1904. It may have been that Clark was unable to produce results.

There is one thing common to all newspapers, whether Socialist or capitalist: There must be sufficient revenue to meet the bills which, with clock-like regularity, fall due. Our comrades in Chicago realize something of this in their experience with the Chicago *Socialist*. No doubt Comrade Wilshire could write an interesting chapter on his search for a circulation man and business manager who would make ends meet. Comrade Simons was the founder and first editor of the Chicago *Socialist*. Comrades Wanhope, Breckon, Mance, Knocke and Edwards have all taken a hand at it and passed on to give way to other comrades. Comrade Eismann is the new business manager of that paper, and, judging from its appearance, I should say that he is "making good." Whether the inability of his predecessors "to make good" financially had anything to do with Local Chicago making a change I do not know. I presume it did. It is true that the Chicago *Socialist* has never paid its expenses, and that it has been a continual drain upon the resources of the Chicago comrades. They have found it necessary to make changes in the editorial and business departments in the hope of getting the service necessary to keep the machine going.

Clark, after his departure, felt much aggrieved, as was his right, and never overlooked an opportunity to "knock" the Appeal from that time until he was summarily discharged from the national office after nearly two years of service. There is little question, in view of recent events, that much of the unjust criticisms directed against the Appeal were set in motion by Clark. Coming from the national office, as they did, it seemed to lend official party sanction to them. It will be noted in Ricker's correspondence, quoted above, that he repeatedly referred Comrade Mailly to Clark as authority for substantiating things which he said.

Clark used his position as assistant to the national secretary to make the path of the Appeal just as rugged as possible. He was preparing to do the same thing for the national organization. Jealousy was the motive in both cases. No one will criticise Mailly for summarily discharging him. No one in the light of recent events will blame Wayland for discharging him as associate editor, though he was censured at the time.

VII.

Ricker and Breckon to the Bat.

After Clark failed to "make good" came Ricker and later Breckon. Ricker arrived in December, 1902. He remained with the office until last March, when he left for Iowa, claiming that he was mentally and physically incapacitated for work. He left of his own volition, accepting two weeks' pay in advance, with the understanding that he was to return and resume his duties when he had recuperated. I have always considered Comrade Ricker an associate editor of the Appeal. A few days ago I received a letter from him. He had just read Comrade Mailly's bulletin on the Clark incident, upon which he commented somewhat vigorously, and continues in relation to the affairs in the Appeal office from the time of his connection until he left for his farm in Iowa:

"I am back again to the morning in December, 1902, when Wayland's tall form mounted the steps in the old front office and I saw the man I had dreamed about. I grasp again the hand and I feel the current of magnetism that passed from one to the other. I trusted Wayland on the spot. Then follows the months during which Phelps and Bevans became suspicious of the intimacy which existed between Wayland and I—suspicion turned to jealousy and jealousy to hatred. I seem to have entered a whirling channel of seething water and I was borne along the mad current too rapidly for calm reflection. Other persons came to the office. New factors entered. Strife redoubled—and well, why repeat? During these times I kept Mailly informed of current events. My letters often reflected my moods—sometimes I was optimistic—sometimes despondent. I don't believe I ever doubted Wayland for long at a time, until shortly before the strike. Then, torn by conflicting opinions and influenced by my surroundings, suspicion possessed me, and never left till the evening in the court house when we were about to open the public meeting of the strikers and Wayland appeared on the scene and did what, in my judgment, few men would do. This restored the lost chord, welded again my trust and confidence, and, though it was pulled and twisted mightily, it never broke. * * * What is that damaging correspondence? I'll be damned if I know and would like to see it, for I expect it's history. Damage the Appeal? There never was, there never will be, but one thing can hurt the Appeal—the thought of the men and women who produce it at Girard. So long as pure motives and right thoughts are back of the Appeal neither friend or foe can injure it. * * * Keep a place in the chimney corner for me, Freddie, my boy, for I'm coming home some day."

From Ricker's letter it is easy to understand his frame of mind at the time he wrote the letters to the national office.

We see entering here that same subtle spirit of jealousy and suspicion which possessed Clark. It gripped the souls of the men and women connected with the Appeal and embittered them against their comrades and shopmates. It was during this period that Ricker wrote the letters which appear above. In justice to Comrade Wayland and the Appeal this fact should be kept in mind.

VIII.

Organization of the Unions.

In 1898 a typographical union was organized in Girard and the eight-hour-day established in the composing room of the office. From that time to this a contract has been made each year between the Appeal and the local typographical union of Girard. A copy of the existing contract is printed in this issue. Comrade Breckon intimated, and his intimation is quoted by Comrade Smith, that there was some irregularity in the conduct of the union. I believe that at one time there was. If my memory serves me right it was sometime during the year 1901 that the secretary and president of the local union, both men employed in the composing room of the Appeal, were derelict in their duty and remittances to the national office were not made promptly. The members kept their dues paid up and I still have my card in my possession showing a paid-up membership during that period. The Appeal should not be held responsible for the negligence of the officers of the union. The matter was satisfactorily adjusted and the officers expelled for their negligence. Otherwise the International would certainly have demanded the label of the local union. Girard is a small town; the employes of the Appeal in the early days were few in number. I do not believe that Comrade Wayland had any idea that the Appeal would ever reach the proportions which it has. During the early days there were never enough employes in any one department of the Appeal—except the printers—to organize under the craft system of the American Federation of Labor. When the employes of the Appeal, outside of the composing room, reached that point in their industrial career where they felt the need of organization Comrade Wayland offered no obstacle, as appears from Ricker's account in the Appeal of November 7th, which says:

"In the meantime we were getting ready to unionize the shop, and in time succeeded, a report of which appeared in No. 412. The report did not mention the fact, however, that the organization of the union was effected against the bitter opposition of Messers. Phelps and Bevans, but matters soon climaxed. The editorial staff demanded the dismissal of the parties, and they were so objectionable to the employes in the office that by a unanimous vote they agreed to support the demand. On Friday we presented our demand to Comrade Wayland. In all matters pertaining to the organization of the office, scale of wages, etc., he cheerfully agreed, but declined to grant our demands for the discharge of the two members of the corporation."

It is thus quite apparent that the dispute between the employes and Comrade Wayland was neither one of wages nor of hours (the eight-hour-day having been inaugurated throughout the entire office at the time Phelps assumed charge as business manager, March 1, 1902), but one hinging on the personalities of Bevans and Phelps.

For the reasons stated above (Bevans' relationship and Phelps' connection with the early struggles of the Appeal), Comrade Wayland refused to accede to the demand for the dismissal of these men. The members of the Appeal staff, however, backed by every employe in the office, demanded their resignation, which was finally conceded. Those who are familiar with the trying times through which the Appeal passed during this period of the strike will agree that Comrade Wayland humiliated himself in order to perpetuate the Appeal. He felt that it was his duty to the loyal comrades who had sustained it through its early troubles to make a personal sacrifice even to the removal of near relatives from their positions in the office.

In the issue of November 7, 1903, Comrade Breckon writes of the settlement of the strike:

"Monday morning the sun shone in on a group of the most happy people that ever took up a task.

"See Comrade Wayland's face!

"Note the changes that are working there!

"See how he is bringing his mind to grasp the fact that the people who, a few hours ago were so valiantly fighting him, are now bent on showing him that the lovable side of his nature is appreciated and that they love him!

"He looks over the coming great battle of ballots that is to be waged next year and sees that now the greatest Socialist publishing house in the world is without spot or wrinkle and that, with minds working in perfect harmony, nothing can stay the coming social revolution.

"The revolution has been fought and won in the Appeal office, and from this on it will be merely a contention to extend the confines of that revolution.

"The last lingering suspicion that the Appeal was run for personal gain is now removed. The paper and its splendid plant is now to be run in the interests of the party.

"Nothing now can stop the Appeal from reaching a circulation in the next few months of 500,000 copies weekly. The great deterring cause is forever removed—suspicion. When the 250,000 readers catch the inspiration of last week's work each one will at once redouble former exertions.

"No longer a fear—the Appeal is right!

"Make it a mightier force than was ever before conceived.

"We in the office would clasp you by the hand as mind and soul bend to the task. Victory now!"

IX.

After the Strike.

The union won. The objectionable personalities had been removed. Every concession asked had been cheerfully granted and peace and harmony hovered o'er the shop. But the strife engendered and the dissipation of the energies of the office in the family clean-up seriously affected the finances of the Appeal. A heavy drain had been made on its resources by the purchase of the new Goss press, the reserve stock of paper had been practically used up, and the Appeal, for the first time in its history, found itself face to face with an increasing indebtedness. The expense of conducting the Appeal is something appalling; especially is this true when, for any reason, the Appeal Army slacks up in its efforts. The Appeal was like a ship in a storm with a broken rudder making straight for the breakers. Here again jealousy and suspicion entered the office. Breckon and Ricker, who had stood so valiantly together in the fight for the removal of Bevans and Phelps, found themselves drifting apart. Breckon, an intense partisan, strong in his likes and equally as vigorous in his hatred, honest as the day, impulsive, yet generous, opened up his batteries on Wayland and Ricker. His action was doubtless based upon imaginary slights and he was possessed with a consuming jealousy, such as gripped our former friend and comrade, Clark. So malignant was the fight that his shopmates, who had stood by him in every one of his previous propositions, refused to support him. There was no unanaimity of purpose. Breckon opposed any plan suggested by Ricker to keep the machine going, and affairs were rapidly approaching a financial crisis. The paper trust demanded settlement for bills long past due—and at one time it was necessary to telegraph to an extensive advertiser in Chicago for money to meet the payroll. That was the strained financial situation in the office about the first of December, 1903.

X.

The Coming Nation.

I wish the reader to go back with me about two years and a half for the purpose of making a brief review of the career of the *Coming Nation* at Rich Hill, Missouri, under the management of Comrade Richardson, Ben P. Warren and myself.

The first number of the New Coming Nation was issued March 22, 1902. It was printed on a small pony cylinder press, and its advent did not cause the world to stop in its swing around the circle, but it brought much joy to its promoters. It was a hand-made product, so to speak. The editor "set up" his editorials "out of the case," the associate editor hammered his old second-hand typewriter until midnight sending out waves of enthusiasm to the comrades on the skirmish line, while the junior member of the firm washed the rollers and wrestled with the balky gasoline engine. But there was joy in the work—even if the grocery man and the butcher did persist in looking in on us quite frequently and suggesting that the bills were long past due. The Coming Nation, however, grew and grew. It started with a list of 500 and in eighteen months had 27,000 paid-in-advance subscribers, while its special editions frequently passed the 100,000 mark. Any one at all familiar with the printing business will appreciate the stupendous amount of labor involved in issuing so large a number of papers with the facilities which we possessed. I remember, one morning, we received a visit from Comrade Arnold, of Columbus, Indiana. He dropped in on us unexpectedly. We were not looking for visitors. The entire office gang was standing around the little gasoline engine in a vain endeavor to coax it to pull its load. I will never forget the surprise depicted on Comrade Arnold's face as he went over the plant, noting the little dinky press and handful of type. He expressed his wonder that we could do it at all. Each copy of the paper had to be run through the press twice in single sheets and folded by hand. One edition was printed through three times, requiring 194,000 impressions. The editor, in addition to setting up the type for the sheet, found it necessary to assist the press-feeder, and took his turn at the feed board. My turn usually came at night, and three o'clock one Sunday morning found me shoving sheets of white paper into the jerky printing machine. Sleepy? Well, I should say. But the compensation? It was worth all it cost, for it gave to American Socialists their first Socialist paper printed in colors. You wonder *how* it was all done and on a wage of $10 per week *for* the staff—that is, when there was sufficient funds in the till *after meeting* the pay-roll and the paper bills and other incidentals—to make a distribution of this munificent sum. I sometimes wonder myself and can account for it on no other ground than that the fervor and thought back of it sustained us. We had an ideal and we were working it out. When the receipts were low and the financial horizon looked gloomy something always happened that enabled us to renew the unequal fight. One morning in March comes to my mind. The weather was cold, the coal bin was empty, and the office boy was using waste paper to keep the fires burning and the junior member of the firm was working desperately as usual with the gasoline engine. "Rich"—and may blessings be poured on his old bald head, for he never exhibited the white feather during all those trying times—was opening the mail. It was a light mail, but brimful of enthusiasm. It was contagious.

"Whoopee!" she into the Circulation Man. He calledoff the force together, mounted a son as formerly. the floor and read the following letter:

State Headquarters, Socialist Party of Nebraska, J. Edw. Morgan, State Secretary.

Dear Comrades of the Coming Nation:—

I must write my appreciation of the wonderful work being accomplished by the Coming Nation. In my rounds I find that the tremendous battle you are waging with the National Economic League, that imperial blood-thirsty guard of capitalism, has aroused the sleeping slaves over the country as though they had been struck with an earthquake. The last number thundered down upon them like an avalanche. For three hours Saturday, the 21st, I stood on a soap box in the streets of Fairfield, Nebraska, reading the Coming Nation's report of the overthrow of the republic at Washington and the establishment of a military despotism, and agitating for the speedy organization of the working class under the Socialist banner. The immense crowd that blocked the streets was stirred like soldiers in mutiny. The news that President Roosevelt had 10,000,000 soldiers under his command, armed at a week's notice, to shoot down the rising working class, and that any who disobeyed, standing on his constitutional rights, could be court-martialed, struck them like a blow in the face from an unseen hand.

"Here's a hand, Coming Nation—you are fighting nobly. You are stirring the drowsy veins of millions of slaves as they never stirred before. The victory is ours.—Fraternally yours, J. Edward Morgan.

'Stirring the drowsy veins of millions of slaves as they had never been stirred before! The victory is ours!"

Surely there was a work for the *Coming Nation* to do. Every one of the employes on the paper caught Comrade Morgan's spirit and returned to his post and resolved to never give up the ship. The little engine even caught the enthusiasm and ran like a streak of lightning—that is a way gasoline engines have, and it is all their own. Then one day the little pony press broke and refused to budge. Apparently the game had ended. Up to this point in its career the new *Coming Nation* had been able by strict economy and personal sacrifice to keep out of debt, though it had exhausted the personal funds of each member connected with the enterprise. The break was repaired, but it cost $100.00, and left us in debt. In its crippled condition the old press would not care for the increasing circulation, which was rapidly nearing the 50,000 mark. A new press seemed absolutely necessary. It was purchased on credit. It involved an outlay, in connection with the folder and addressing machinery, of $4,000.00. There was no lack of subscriptions pouring into the office; there was no lack of enthusiasm, but the margin on which we operated was so small that, while sufficient to meet the current expenses and a wage of $10.00 per week to the editors for a sixteen-hour-day, there was no surplus to meet the payment on the press, and before the first installment fell due the circulation had outgrown the facilities of the new machinery. It was a serious problem, and I confess we were up against one which we could not solve. Comrade Joe Jester, of Irwin, Mo., a man whose heart is in the right place, had been watching the struggle for some time and dropped a thousand-dollar check in the till. There was a renewal of activity, but in a short time we against faced the same embarrassing financial situation as before.

You wonder why I have given so much space to these incidents. I wish the readers of the Appeal to get an "inside view of how a Socialist paper" is conducted. Every comrade who has been connected with a Socialist publication knows that what I have said is true. It has been the experience of every Socialist paper in the field today, and was the experience of every Socialist paper that has since passed to that bourne from which no newspaper returns. This was the experience of the Appeal in the early years—"only more so," because the Appeal stood alone in the seething caldron of populism, Bryanism and capitalism. The *Coming Nation*, while it was being published at Rich Hill, Mo., had the benefit of the sentiment created by the Appeal and from the Appeal's subscribers was formed the nucleus on which the enterprise was established. This is equally true of all Socialist papers established since 1893—the date when Wayland published the first American Socialist newspaper at Greensburg, Ind.

XI.

Trials of a Socialist Paper.

Some of the trials of issuing a Socialist newspaper are plainly brought out in the following article from the New York *Worker*, which was printed at the time Comrade Titus announced the suspension of the Seattle *Socialist*:

The "Socialist" of Seattle came out last week with a very frank statement to its readers in regard to its financial condition. Of course, it is known that, with the sole exception of the Appeal to Reason, all the Socialist weeklies in America are running at a loss, the periodical deficits being made up by the proceeds of picnics and festivals and the donations of devoted comrades and organizations. The "Socialist," it appears, has had even a harder struggle than most of us, and the question is now presented to its readers whether it shall promptly die an honorable death or whether it shall be put in the position to continue a splendidly useful life. * * * * * *

This incident is worthy of further consideration. In the course of its statement the "Socialist" says that no 50-cent weekly can pay expenses until it has at least twenty thousand subscribers. This statement is absolutely correct. (The "Socialist" proposes to continue the fight if it reaches the ten-thousand mark, but that is because a number of Seattle comrades are willing to bear the deficit that will still exist.) Twenty thousand is the smallest circulation on which a weekly paper good enough to be worth keeping up and sold at 50 cents a year can be made to pay expenses—it being understood, of course, as it must be in the case of a Socialist paper, that it cannot depend on income from advertising. The cost of white paper, press-work, mailing, postage and other "fixed charges" (which increase in proportion as circulation increases) cannot be kept much below 25 cents a year and will often run above that figure. Out of the other 25 cents an allowance must be made for discounts, exchange and sample copies, and failures of some credit subscribers to pay. From what is left, say 15 to 20 cents on each yearly subscription, must be paid the "operating expenses" (those items of cost which do not increase as fast as circulation increases), such as editorial salary and expenses, business official's salary and expenses, agitation, typesetting and stereotyping, rent, light, heat and power. A circulation of twenty thousand would give from $3,000 to $4,000 a year for these purposes, and it does not need much experience for one to know that this is a very small allowance for meeting these expenses as they should be met.

Every year, for some considerable time past, from twelve to fifteen new Socialist papers have been established in different parts of the country. Every year from ten to twelve have died—generally in their first or second year. Most of those that have died have gone under a burden of debt on the shoulders of devoted comrades who had tried their best to keep them. Most of those that have lived have involved a constant drain on the resources of the local movement and many of them have performed their functions but indifferently, for the simple reason that one man had to try to be editor, manager and printer, all at once, and could not do any of his work satisfactorily. A calm consideration of cold figures in advance would have deterred the comrades in many localities from undertaking impossible tasks and would have saved them many discouragements.

If our Socialist press is not in quality what it ought to be—and we insist that neither The Worker nor any other of our papers has yet

(Continued on Page Six.)

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