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EDITORIAL

POLITICAL ASTRONOMY.

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ON the Metropolitan stage of the city of Greater New York a succession of scenes is being enacted that seems utterly confusing. Sam Parks is the central figure.

From the start of the building trades strike some papers denounced Parks; presently all the Republican, Democratic and Fusion papers fell over him.—What had happened?

In the meantime indictments rained upon Parks for extortion. Strange to say, none of these was pushed, and the right of way was given to a later indictment on a petty charge of assault.—What did that mean?

Convicted on that, Parks was still suffered to stay out of the penitentiary, when suddenly a still later indictment for the extortion of \$200—the smallest of all the amounts he was indicted for—was pushed and forced to trial.—What was behind that manoeuvre?

Again convicted, a struggle followed that was unique. The District Attorney fought to postpone sentence; Parks' lawyers fought for immediate sentence. The latter prevailed, and Parks was railroaded to Sing Sing.—Was not that queer?

Before Parks got to Sing Sing his lawyers fought to get him out again on a “writ of reasonable doubt.” The District Attorney fought the move. The writ was granted by a Supreme Court Judge. Parks came out of Sing Sing, and before he was fairly back in the County Jail he was at large again under bail obtained by ex-Chief of Police Devery.—What did that portend?

The puzzle did not end there. Another set of puzzling incidents followed in rapid succession. Once at large, Parks headed a Devery picnic procession, and delivered speeches for Devery for Mayor; he then was announced to head the Labor Day parade; some unions then began to “rebel”: they would not “march behind a

convict”, while other unions threw up their hats with joy, and the Central Federated Union unceremoniously squelched an anti-Parks resolution; the parade took place with Parks and Devery at the head; the reviewing stand was fought for and abandoned; and down to the end the papers above referred to published from day to day contradictory reports.—What does all this music mean?

Chaotic as the above occurrences may seem, they are no more chaotic than astronomical phenomena. These seem unintelligible if not understood: so does this Parks episode. It is political astronomy, as lucid as it is instructive and interesting.

Readers of *The People* have been made acquainted with the facts in the case, and their concordance. These have shown the Parks episode to be a page, not from the Labor Movement, from the seething ocean of capitalist clapper-claw. It now remains to detect the law of the clapper-claw in this particular instance. It is simply charming. What is called astronomical laws will be found just now to be in full operation in capitalist society. Everybody has heard of the tides and their alternation. Everybody knows that there are several of these, neap tide among them, and the why thereof. The side of the earth that the moon happens to face has its waters drawn towards it, the side that the sun faces has the sunward or neap tide. In this tide formation the earth is also displaced: it is pulled hither and it is pulled thither under the water, emphasizing the tide phenomenon. What the earth is in the tides phenomenon, that is Parks in the present municipal capitalist political phenomenon; and what the sun and the moon are in the tides phenomena that are the “Fusion” and the Tammany bodies in this municipal game. The building trades capitalist concerns, originally fighting it out among themselves, with Parks as the hired man of one of them, presently sought political backing, and in pursuit of this seeking aligned themselves, some with the “Fusion” forces, others with Tammany, according as they reckoned Tammany or “Fusion” would win. In the nature of things, the strike could not go on without Parks acquiring certain popularity among workingmen. Starting along purely economic lines, the competing capitalist building trades concerns found themselves in politics. Some, the most long-headed, wished to eliminate Parks from the equation; but these are few. The others either sought to exploit Parks’ popularity or to browbeat it down. Thus, alternately, Parks has been threatened with indictments held over his head, or has

been hit by them; has been convicted and has had “reasonable doubts” signed too in his favor; has been cast in prison and taken out—according as Tammany or Fusion “pull” alternated in strength.

Devery’s figure in the game may seem to complicate it. It does not. Devery seeks to impose his admission into Tammany. He does not seek to be Mayor. He simply wants “recognition.” Astute enough to seize the apple that accidentally fell his way he espoused the cause of his friend Parks. With Parks, as the supposed leader of thousands of workingmen, under his wings, Devery is beating at the door of Tammany’s convention.

And thus the merry jig goes on, and will go on till election day. Some unions denouncing Parks as a “convict,” others singing his praises as the “Martyr for Labor,” according as Fusion or Tammany “pull” may happen to predominate—with the potato-head of the Social Democratic *Volkszeitung* as a crazy satellite cutting capers through space, utterly unable to understand what’s up: afraid to draw too near Parks lest it be cowhided by *The People*, and afraid to draw too far from Parks lest it lose “peesiness.”

Take it all in all, there is no more charming astronomical phenomenon perceivable just now than that of which the would-be capitalist Parks is the center in the political astronomy of our pending municipal campaign.

Is there any more all around instructive?

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