

EDITORIAL

## POLITICAL JUNK SHOPS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**W**AS it mere invective on the part of Wm. D. Haywood that, writing from the Ada County, Idaho, Jail the letter published in *The People*,<sup>1</sup> he referred to capitalist Government as “a political junk shop?”

Let us turn to Adam Smith. The great Scotch economist and sociologist of the eighteenth century, writing, not under conditions that might suppose anger, but as a calm overseer of events that were transpiring under his own eyes, said this:

“The member of Parliament who supports every proposition for strengthening monopoly is sure to acquire great reputation for understanding trade, and also great popularity and influence with an order of men whose numbers and wealth render them of great importance. If he opposes them, on the contrary and still more, if he have authority enough to thwart them, neither the most acknowledged probity, nor the highest rank, nor the greatest public service, can protect him from the most infamous abuse and detraction, from personal insults, nor sometimes from real danger arising from the influence of furious and disappointed monopolists.”

But, perhaps, all his ability to the contrary, the Adam Smith of the eighteenth is a back-number in the nineteenth century, especially in America. Let us then turn to Justice Brewer of the Supreme Court of the United States. Speaking before the Albany Law School in this century, not quite two years ago, on June 1, Justice Brewer expressed himself as follows:

“No one can be blind to the fact that these mighty corporations are holding out most tempting inducements to lawmakers to regard in their lawmaking those interests rather than the welfare of the nation.

“Senators and Representatives have owed their places to corporate influence, and that influence has been exerted under an expectation, if not

---

<sup>1</sup> [To be appended at a later date.—R.B.]

an understanding, that as lawmakers the corporate interests shall be subserved.

“The danger lies in the fact that they are so powerful and that the pressure of so much power upon the individual lawmaker tempts him to forget the nation and remember the corporation. And the danger is greater because it is insidious.

“There may be no written agreement. There may be, in fact, no agreement at all, and yet, when the lawmaker understands that the power exists which may make for his advancement or otherwise and that it will be exerted according to the pliancy with which he yields to its solicitations, it lifts the corporation into a position of constant danger and menace to Republican institutions.”

The opinion of Justice Brewer fits in exactly with that of Adam Smith. Capitalist political government is a junk shop. Only manikins of the Capitalist Class are the incumbents. The industrially-economically organized Capitalist Class makes and unmakes them. As it breathes do they speak; as it points the way do they trot.

In the seclusion of his cell, Wm. D. Haywood summed up in three words the observations of every day, observations that great minds such as Smith and Brewer have recorded in successive ages. The difference between the observations of these men and the observations of the prisoner of Ada County Jail is that the former simply photographed the situation, whereas the latter supplements social photography with the direction that society must travel in order to pull itself out of the domination of the class that requires a political junk shop to steady its reign of despotism and rapine.

The POLITICAL JUNK SHOP will continue in force until it shall have become superfluous. It can become superfluous, and ready to be cast off like a slough, only when the Working Class shall have organized the country and its government into an INDUSTRIAL WORKSHOP.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.  
Uploaded March 2009

[slpns@slp.org](mailto:slpns@slp.org)