

ROOSEVELT'S HEARTLESS TYRANNY.

By Eugene V. Debs.

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When Theodore Roosevelt was President and had the power to do something for labor he was a heartless tyrant in his treatment of the working class, and his whole record proves it. I shall not now go into his general record, but shall only point out that while President he issued an order against civil service employees of the government which should make his name odious to the working class forever.

This order literally gagged the hundreds of thousands of employees in the service, forbade them to speak of their grievances, denied them the right of petition, and reduced them to the level of helots.

“All officers and employees of the United States of every description, serving in or under any of the executive departments or independent government establishments, and whether so serving in or out of Washington, are hereby forbidden, either directly or indirectly, individually or through associations, to solicit an increase of pay or to influence or attempt to influence in their own interest any other legislation whatever, either before Congress or its committees, or in any way save through the heads of the departments, or independent gov-

ernment establishments in or under which they serve, on penalty of dismissal from the government service.

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

"January 25, 1906."

The Czar of Russia never issued an order more despotic in spirit or more enslaving in effect than this infamous order issued by Theodore Roosevelt gagging all the civil service employees of the government while he was President of the United States.

This order literally prohibited the postal clerks and all other civil service employees from speaking or writing about the conditions under which they worked, the long hours they had to put in, the low wages they were receiving, and the insanitary surroundings of their employment. I hold in my hand the report of an old postal employee who dares not allow his name to be known for fear of dismissal, from which I quote as follows:

"Since Roosevelt promulgated that order without authority from Congress, hundreds of clerks have been killed by insanitary conditions and the dreadfully long hours of work. Hundreds who have dared to speak against these conditions have been discharged from the postal service. Urban Walter, editor of the Harpoon, was hounded for publishing the truth regarding the murderous treatment of the postal employees under Roosevelt and the gag he put on their lips so that no one should know of his brutality."

There are over two hundred thousand gagged postal clerks in the United States to-day, thanks to the outrageous order promulgated and enforced by Theodore Roosevelt. They have been shorn of their constitutional rights and compelled to remain mute and speechless in their humiliation. To

voice a complaint is to invite instant dismissal. This is the very quintessence of slavery and for this the employees of the Federal government are indebted to none other than to Theodore Roosevelt.

And now this same Roosevelt, under whose heartless order hundreds have been killed by their employment, and hundreds of others for seeking by complaint to avoid the same fate have been discharged, is racing around over the country telling the workers what he is going to do for them in the way of shortening their hours and bettering their condition when they make him once more President of the United States.

Beyond this gall and impudence could not go.

If, after what Roosevelt has done to labor when he was in power, he can bunco the workers he has insulted and enslaved into believing what he now says he will do for labor if they will only put him back in the White House, then, indeed, are the workers willing slaves, and Theodore Roosevelt should be their President for life.

When the order gagging the postal clerks and other employees was issued by Roosevelt he was careful to see to it that it did not apply to his own political appointees to office. From the members of his Cabinet down they were all free to go out and make speeches, and whoop it up for the Roosevelt machine, to have their own pay raised and to do as they pleased, provided only they were loyal to the Roosevelt dynasty.

It was only the fettered civil service employees, the wage slaves of the government, who were bound and gagged, insulted and humiliated. The politicians under the administration were unmolested. Only the working class were put under the iron heel.

If this does not reveal Roosevelt's real spirit and attitude toward the working class, then the workers are stone blind and all appeal to them is vain and hopeless.

The despotic order of Roosevelt while President above quoted should be posted conspicuously where workmen can see it all over the country. It should be repeated by every Socialist orator through the whole campaign. It speaks so brutally plain for itself that even Roosevelt cannot explain it away.

He is now dishing out platitudes about "liberty," "social justice," "the interests of labor" and "the rights of the people," but when he was in office he crushed the liberty of every postal employee and discharged every man among them who dared to protest against long hours, small wages and foul, sanitary conditions which carried hundreds to their graves.

To all of these gagged and outraged workers Roosevelt must appear as a charlatan, mountebank and fraud, and his Progressive promises and pledges as the mouthings of a low and utterly unprincipled self-seeker and demagogue.

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