
Walter Thomas Mills — His Record

by Thomas J. Morgan

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Mills has deluded the party membership in so many sections of the country and disrupted the party so often that it becomes the duty of every loyal Socialist to enlighten his comrades as to his record. In pursuit of this purpose The Socialist requested Thomas J. Morgan of Chicago to present a succinct account of Mills' career. Comrade Morgan is one of the oldest and most active party members in Chicago. He has never been accused of being an "impossibilist." He belongs rather to that Opportunist wing where Mills himself is supposed to shine. But Morgan is a pretty levelheaded lawyer and will hardly write anything of a personal nature which he cannot be responsible for.

This account of a career thick with "busted schemes will be a revelation to many devout hero-worshippers in the Socialist ranks. [—E.B. "Harry" Ault]

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Mr. E.B. Ault.

Dear Comrade:—

In reply to yours of the 16th, I submit the following:

In the winter of 1905 Mills originated a scheme for a lecture course in the Loop District of this city [Chicago] independent of the party, yet with the aid of its name, headquarters, weekly paper, editors, manager, and county secretary. I as Executive Committeeman protested and was forced to present Mills' public record as a menace to the party. We defeated his scheme and here is a brief statement of his public record at that time as I presented it:

Mills was a minister, an evangelist, temperance lecturer, etc. In 1892 he was appointed by the [Chicago] World's Fair directorate to have charge of World's Labor Congress. Using his prominence in the above matter he built a dormitory (hotel) in Harvey, nigh 20 miles from the World's Fair, for visitors to that exhibit, made contracts in advance, etc., and when the people came and found where and what it was there was a public scandal and the place was finally burned down before the end of the fair.

Next he organized a colony scheme up in Michigan, got a lot of people up there, who put in their money, and that busted.

Next he organized a school near Kankakee in Illinois, got a lot of people interested financially, and that busted.

Next organized some cooperative scheme, near stockyards, this city; that busted.

Next organized People's University or Institute in Berrien Springs, Michigan, got a lot more people to invest their money and property and from there stepped into the Socialist Party because, as he publicly asserted, his Berrien Springs enterprise was on a solid financial basis, needed his assistance no more, and he could see a wider field for his activities in the Socialist Party. A few days after he made this declaration the Berrien Springs enterprise busted all to pieces and Mills was in a fair way to be put through the courts for his share in it.

With this public record salted in the files of our daily papers I insisted it was dangerous to set him up as the representative of Socialism in Chicago.

When I set this up, of course he made a fuss, and we had it out face to face, and I called his attention to the fact that from the day he entered the party

he had by one scheme or another fed on the organization and its members.

Since then I have learned more, which I now refer to briefly:

His immoral conduct in New York state has excluded him from party affairs there. To save the good names of the two families of comrades who were victims, no official action was taken to punish. Information obtained from State Secretary [John C.] Chase.

His book, *The Struggle for Existence*, was mainly written by another comrade and credit denied. Information, Comrades Benton and G.R. Kirkpatrick.

As lecturer at \$10 per lecture he used the opportunity to work each place for sale of book and left each place financially dry.

His Kansas City scheme was interesting: A school for Socialists paid for by Socialists. A barn-like structure on a bleak bluff back of the stockyards, reached by worst car line in the city.

Rented for one year; \$2,000 spent in furnishing it; the school term three months.

Reports of school doctored by Mills to read good and draw comrades on.

Side lines to school, a publication, *The Socialist Teacher*, got subs for one year from all over US; died in three months.

Colony scheme located on Comrade Yates' farm; some money made and Yates and other comrades fooled.

Socialist settlement on Rosedale Hill, Kansas City. Building sites blasted into side of hill. Houses to be built like old Mexican missions. Got comrades to labor in hopes of pay. Never realized, as scheme busted.

How Mills got a new typewriter for his school Told a hard luck story to Judge Crosby, no money, etc., etc. The judge gave him a new \$110 machine.

He then surprised the judge by paying \$100 for photograph camera. Got an outfit for visit of himself and family to the Yosemite Valley, Cal.

In this Kansas school enterprise Stitt Wilson, [John] Spargo, and other names were used on bill heads without authority.

Information relative to Kansas enterprise may be had from Farmer Yates, known to State Secretary Palmer of Nebraska; Emil Schultz, 1612 N. Main St., Kansas City; C.C. Tyler, Highlands, Cal.; Frank and Kate Richards O'Hare, Miles, I.T.

Next, a scheme to supply matter for insertion in Capitalist papers at \$2 per month to comrades and Branches. Comrades to get matter inserted in their local papers.

The last enterprise, his present paper [Seattle *Saturday Evening Tribune*].

Another scheme overlooked: a colony and school in Colorado. This scheme was advertised in the *Alliance of the Rockies*. Editor: Southworth.

Information on this: Louis Dalgaard, manager advertising *Chicago Daily Socialist*.

The ability of Mills to continue in his peculiar work in the party is due to the silence of those whom he has bitten and fooled, and while he is under expulsion from your organization, comrades ignorant of his record are ready to welcome him here because of his ability to talk.

Fraternally yours,

Thomas J. Morgan.

I hope that when you are through with him some means will be adopted to make his exclusion from the party permanent.

Edited by Tim Davenport.

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