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EDITORIAL

## DEMOCRATIC BLUNDERING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“Every corporation should have a definite period of existence and the right of renewal should rest with the State and not with those in interest.”—Bird S. Coler.

**M**r. Coler is not quite clear either in words or intention. What he says, however, is more or less a negation of the rights of property, and the fact that he was turned down was reasonable and just enough. He should have stood, without faltering, by those whom he has assisted, and who in turn have assisted him, during his whole life. In so far as he is anything, he is a resurrected Populist who at once strikes at private property, when efficient, militant private property in the form of a trust, pinches him, and who then fondles and beslavers private property when he gets enough to pinch some one else.

The trumpet-blarney against the trusts, the nonsensical moonshine that they have brought forth, the phrase-spinning, the declamation, the long-winded historical dissertations, and the denunciation do not at all lessen the fact that the trusts can produce more cheaply, better, and that they are simply a thorough and scientific organization of industry. Were they not that, they could be swept aside at the first breath, Democratic, Republican, or Populist, breathed against them. The trust is here to stay, but it is not here to stay in its present form, or under its present ownership.

The phenomenon of the trust is no terrible apparition to the Socialist. He knows its origin, and he knows its sequential history. He knows also, what Mr. Coler implies, that the State is the absolute authority on the matter of its continuance in the hands of private individuals. While Coler says that it should have a definite existence, and that its life should be based upon the will of the State, he at once knocks his own argument out by insisting upon the rights of private property.

It is no more just to touch the machinery of production, when it is insignificant in its value, than it is to touch it, to limit the duration of its ownership, when it

evolves, and becomes the gigantic and complicated trust. The middle class, the owners of the machinery of production on a small scale, vitiate the basis of their ownership by denying the ownership of machinery on a large scale, that is, when the machinery of production develops into a trust.

The Socialist takes an entirely different view of the matter. Society has a right to all social wealth whether on a great or a small scale, and he consistently defends that position, and proves the logic of it by reverting to the source of social wealth, that is, its production by the expenditure of social energy. Hitherto, when wealth has been socially produced, it has been appropriated by individuals. We seek to end that, and our strife shall not cease until we do end it. We are simply consistent and honest, we simply study the matter and adduce just and sufficient reasons, where Mr. Coler evades, contradicts, and equivocates.

His fear of the trust is the fear of a man who sees his source of existence threatened. His remedy is that of a man who trembles before the consequences of right thinking. His whole attitude is strictly that of a Democratic small trader who has seen the world sweep by him, and who can no longer command the labor of others because his capital is insufficient, and because the march of industry has left him in the rear. It is the duty of every intelligent workingman to help sweep such impotents aside, and give the control of government into the hands of the Socialist Labor Party.

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