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EDITORIAL

## LIVING IN A FOOL'S PARADISE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**T**HE Rockland, Mass., *Independent* of a recent issue gives a leading place to nearly a column letter from Comrade Jeremiah O'Fihelly of Abington, Mass., in which the firm, sound, aggressive, and intrepid policy of the Socialist Labor Party is well contrasted with the vacillating, unsound, pusillanimous, and truckling policy of the Social Democracy, alias "Socialist" party. To that communication the *Independent* attaches the following short editorial comment.

"Mr. O'Fihelly evidently is not working for office. He has a clear, well-defined principle before him, by which he has stood for many years with a heroism that would do honor to the early Abolitionists. BUT HIS VISION IS LIMITED IN THAT HE SEES ONLY THE WAGE LABORER."

With this short observation the *Independent* evidently thinks it has punctured the Comrade's arguments; in point of fact the observation materially helps out the Comrade. It does so by calling to mind that the same objection was made against the Abolitionists, and was shown by sad and bitter experience to be unsound.

The essence of the *Independent's* objection is a denial of the Class Struggle, and the consequent insinuation that, whereas Socialism would be a public blessing, it concerns all people and, therefore, the Socialists err, and fatally so, in "limiting their vision to the wage laborer": they ought to take in the employing class also. Not otherwise argued the sentimentalists in the Abolition days. They also pointed out that slavery "brutalized the slave-holder," and, consequently, that "Abolitionism would be a blessing to all concerned." From these general and abstract premises the sentimentalists concluded that the Abolitionists erred "in limiting their vision to the chattel slave": they ought to embrace in their philanthropic embrace the slave-holders too.

That the sentimentalists were in error experience has proved. They lived in a fool's paradise when they expected the slave-holding class would be an exception in the history of classes, and itself decapitate itself by virtue of sweet words. Individual slave-holders here and there gave a patient ear to the advantages to be derived from Abolitionism; but when the day of the supreme crisis arrived, these individuals were either swept out of sight or were absorbed in the camps in which the slave-holder class gathered itself, arms in hand, to "uphold the institutions of the land," by setting up a new republic "with slavery as its cornerstone."

"Wage laborer" sounds better, but "wage-slave" is the more accurate term. No doubt, wage-slavery brutalizes both the wage-slave and the wage-slave-holder (the capitalist employer). One need but to think of the Wanamakers, the Flowers, the Roosevelts, the Depews, the Goulds, and he will have a complete picture of brutality. No doubt Socialism would purify these individuals and all the other individual members of the capitalist class. Nevertheless, he who would "extend his vision" so as to take in, consider and build upon these gentry will find himself in the identical stranded condition of the sentimentalists who did not "limit their vision to the chattel slaves." His labor would be lost; and his heart would be broken when the crisis of the conflict arrived.

The wholly unfeudalized class of the Northern capitalists was the class whose reign was next in the order of succession; it was, accordingly, the class called upon to overthrow the Southern slave-holder class of semi-feudal lords. No "extent of visions" could upturn this social law. No more to-day. The class next in order of succession is the wage-slave; it is that class alone that is called upon to overthrow the capitalist class. He who lives in a fool's paradise will most assuredly "limit his vision" to that class.

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

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