

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 8, NO. 295.

NEW YORK, MONDAY, APRIL 20, 1908.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

TIMELY SHAFTS.

By DANIEL DE LEON

SHOULD any man search on the map of California for “Ciudad de Dinero” (City of Money), his search would be fruitless; yet from this mythical city has issued a publication which marks the breaking of a new day in the Labor Movement of America.

The *Western Capitalist* is the new paper called, and it states that “Subscriptions will only be acceptable from those able to furnish acceptable references.” Trim and petite in get up, it professes to be a private organ of the Western capitalist class; and in every line it lays the lash of class-conscious proletarian sarcasm across the back of that same capitalist class.

For instance, its leading editorial begins: “While our spellbinders and organs (those defenders of the people) are so loyally, successfully confusing the herd, let us not deceive ourselves.

“Our system is collapsing. The situation grows worse daily. . . . True, we have full and plenty, but hundreds of thousands of hungry men is a danger we can not ignore.”

Diagnosing the causes of this serious state of things, it goes on:

“We own the natural resources and machinery of production, and thus stand between the workers and their means of life. We permit them the use of these essentials on condition that all the wealth they produce becomes our own.”

Describing an address by the Hon. N.G. Parasite before the Capitalists’ Protective Association, the *Western Capitalist* says:

“Here the speaker convulsed his hearers with his comical portrayal of the antics of the ‘good’ and ‘conservative’ worker, who so diligently hugs his

chains, apes his masters, and does not know where his own interests lie.”

And under the head of Lightning Rods the same speaker refers to the growing spirit of vigorous revolt among the subject class, which, however,

“We can safely depend on being smothered by those of our class who so successfully pose as ‘friends of labor’ on the political field, while as to industrial activity, the ‘pure and simple’ labor union bureaucracy with its arbitration agreements and Civic Federation affiliations, will hold it well in leash.”

The paper further exposes craft disruption and sketches with well simulated terror the rising idea of Industrialism; and though it is an aside, no description of the *Western Capitalist* could be complete without notice of the following ad from its “Classified” corner:

“EXCLUSIVE CAPES—Made from the skins of unborn baby lambs and lavishly trimmed with hand-made lace, requiring the labor of hundreds of women and children. Quality that will defy imitation. . . . \$1,245.00”

These are timely shafts into the rhinoceros hide of Capitalism. Whether or no Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* actually rang the knell of knight errantry; whether the work was the cause of the collapse of the feudal mummery of the times, or whether, as the materialist conception of history would teach, it was but the literary culmination of an economic and industrial development which would anyhow, without Cervantes, have overwhelmed the outgrown hypocrisy in the ruins of its own extravagance, the fact remains that the absurd-grotesque Knight of La Mancha served to escort to their grave the last of his counterparts in flesh and blood, and contributed no little share in hurrying them thither.

Sarcasm, bitter, scathing, relentless, has always been a powerful weapon in the hand of progress against her enemies. The American Labor Movement, heretofore struggling to establish its principles, battling its above-board and below-board enemies, striving with facts and logic to kindle a gleam of hope and activity in the reluctant minds of the very men, the workingmen, whom its mission it is to emancipate, has been on the whole too grimly in earnest in the fight to find time for this other potent arm, sarcasm. When the day arrives that the Movement feels the

logic of its position well enough established to afford it leisure to forge the darts of sarcasm and satire with which to drive home that logic, then the swell of the wave will have been reached, the victory can not be far. The *Western Capitalist* shows that the dawn of that day is now breaking.

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Uploaded January 2010

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