

EDITORIAL

A QUESTION OF SPECTACLES.

By DANIEL DE LEON

SPECTACLES of colored glass are proverbially distorting to the vision of the wearer. The glasses of capitalist training partake of the quality in no slight degree.

“Poverty-stricken and ignorant, poor because of their ignorance,” is Senator Tillman’s description of the poor whites of the South—and there are millions of them, he says.

Tillman’s capitalist glasses so distort his sight that he sees exactly back end to. He has taken cause for effect and effect for cause.

The time has long gone by when ignorance can be said to be the cause of poverty.

To the proof: If ignorance is the cause of poverty, then learning must be the antidote therefor. The wise man must be the rich man, and the more knowledge he has, the higher must his wealth pile in proportion. If all the “ignorant” ones were made “learned” ones, all would be rich.

The absurdity of the idea is now plain. The great barons of finance, the Rothschilds, Morgans, and Rockefellers are markedly not the most learned men of the world. Knowledge and ownership of industry may both be desirable things to have; but it is the latter, not the former, which determines wealth. It is as sole controllers of the means of production that the capitalist class are the wealthy class. Whatever culture or learning they may have had is a side issue. They are not rich because they are educated; but they are educated because they are rich.

This fact, on its obverse side, explains the condition of the millions of poor whites of whom Senator Tillman speaks. The rich could not be rich without their employes to live on. Being robbed of the bulk of their produce to swell the fortunes of the employer, the wage workers must remain poor. Being poor, they can not buy

an education. They are not poor because they are uneducated; they are uneducated because they are poor.

That Senator Tillman, a profiter by the system which robs the producer of the necessities of life to provide luxuries for the non-producer, should cling to his distorting capitalist glasses, is not strange. What is strange, and sad withal, is that the producers themselves, the victims of the Tillmans should also, in such large numbers, wear the identical spectacles. Speed the day when the fraud will be discovered, and the clear crystal of Socialist thought be the only aid to vision used by the working class of the world.

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