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EDITORIAL

TRY ANOTHER BAIT.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IT surely takes the mercurial vivacity of the French to discover things. Now it is a Monsieur Ribot who has discovered, and announced his discovery before the annual *Congres des Classes Moyennes*, that class spirit is a detestable thing—that it is, in fact, nothing short of “organized egotism.”

Human beings are not plaster casts. They have eyes to see and brains to think. Only if no classes existed, could there be any excuse for classes not being recognized. The employer who lives in idleness on the labor of a thousand mill operatives, the mine owner whose dividends roll on uninterruptedly while a hundred men die of black damp in his shafts, know that they are not of the same class as those whom they exploit, and the exploited ones know that they are not of the class of their exploiters. Into whatever country one may go, the workers toil while the employers loaf. The working class hungers while the employing class surfeits. The working class lacks the leisure to improve its mind, while the capitalist class has so much leisure it must plunge into brutishness to consume it. Only the cranium of a plaster cast could fail to be penetrated by so sharp a distinction. Human society is not a homogeneous whole. Classes exist, and wide and deep gulfs divide them. Then why not admit them.

Where inequalities exist, it does not, indeed, necessarily follow that hostility must also reign. No one, for instance, would think of organizing the Arctic Zonists as against the Torrid Zonists, to abolish differences of climate. But in human economic society, where not only do the inequalities that obtain translate themselves into comfort and plenty for a few together with bitter misery for the many, but where that comfort and that misery are the deliberate result of usurpation practiced by the class of the few upon the class of the many, there is every reason for organized hostility on the part of the despoiled to recover their

rights from the clutches of the despoilers.

That is the situation to-day. “Organized egotism” or not, the despoilers grasp the fact, and jealously guard their every trifling privilege. The only purpose of Monsieur Ribot’s discovery can be to wheedle the workers into disorganization, that they may be the longer exploited. He would better try another bait.

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