

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 1. NO. 78.

NEW YORK, SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1900.

TWO CENTS.

EDITORIAL

EFFECTS OF EXPANSION.

By DANIEL DE LEON

England, as the greatest commercial and manufacturing nation, has been expanding, and acquiring new possessions for the last three hundred years. Her colonies are the most extensive ever held by a nation, and beyond anything dreamed of in the days when Rome was the world. The new worlds for which Alexander sighed have been found by England, and she holds them absolutely, and rules them for the sake of the Capitalist Class.

Manchester, Leeds and Nottingham, with their mills, supply cotton and woollens. In the towns devoted to steel and iron, the material for ships, railroads, bridges and buildings are made. The major portion of the cutlery used by the colonies is manufactured in Sheffield. Birmingham even makes little iron and brass gods for the Eastern trade, and manufactures crowns and diadems in large lots for the petty monarchs whom the English nation is pleased to allow to remain under the delusion that they still reign.

England with her necessarily small territory, manufactures for many people, and yet her working population is not satisfied. She has a market that, in extent, more than triples the area of the United States. She supplies a population nearly twelve times as large as that of the United States. She expands at a rate unprecedented in the history of nations. Yet, her working class cries for bread. Her factories and mills close down, and her artisans and her operatives walk the streets hungry. Is this condition due to the fact that she expanded? Is it due to the fact that she has not yet included within her limits every square mile of the globe? Or is it due to the fact that England, like the United States, as a capitalist country, oppresses her people, drives them to an early and fearful death, herds them like wild beasts, treats them in a cruel and inhuman fashion, simply because she is a capitalist country?

Each worker in the cotton mills of Manchester produces for over six-hundred people. The number has increased by over four-hundred in the last sixty years. Sixty years ago, although oppressed and often starved, the worker had a chance to

work the year round, and was not confronted at all times with the possibility of losing his job. Now he produces for more people, the number of men in the trade has not materially increased, but yet he cannot work during the whole year, and when he does work he receives less wages, as far as wages are expressed in dollars and cents, and he furthermore receives a relatively smaller proportion of the product of his labor. Added to this we have the fact that he is thrown out of employment at an early age, and if he strikes he knows full well that unskilled men stand ready and willing to take his place.

England has expanded in the size of her possessions: England has expanded in wealth: England has expanded in power; and England has also expanded in the misery inflicted upon the working class, in the uncertainty of their existence, and in the difficulty of obtain{ing} work. It has contracted in the wages paid, and in the mercy shown to the workers. The history of England's commerce, her foreign invasions, the growth to power of her capitalist class, are accompanied by the degradation of the men who produced all the wealth, and without whom it would have been impossible to accomplish anything.

We can look for no different state of affairs here. The price of our commodities will be fixed by the cost of producing them. Our own workers are sunken eyed, hollow cheeked, and worn out physically and mentally. We cannot expect them to become healthy and robust when we "expand," because England, the great prototype of expansion, has workers who present the same features, and who are subjected to the same features, and who are subjected to the {same} endless tortures.

We are confronted with a state of affairs that at first seems to have no solution, but that phase is only a seeming one. Unless we find a market for our goods, the mills and factories close down. If we reach out for markets, the constant improvement of machinery soon overcomes the advantage, and we merely produce for the sake of giving more profits to the capitalist.

The difficulty here is only an imaginary one. The present system of ownership will produce misery no matter what is done to nullify, in some measure, its evil results. The overproduction does not mean that the people have an over-supply. On the contrary, the cry of over-production is often raised when there is absolute want. It is impossible to lessen production by destroying the advantage gained by the use of improved machines. It is not a right, or a sane frame of mind to believe any ground is gained by making an operation more difficult. The aim of the Socialist

Labor Party is to utilize all advantages gained in methods of production, and at the same time give to those who produce that which they produce.

Expansion cannot do this. Exclusion at home cannot do that. We must look at the matter from the very beginning. Here we find that the trouble starts and continues to grow more disastrous as time proceeds. The ownership of the machinery and the control of the property give into the hands of a small class a power that tends to render it vicious, and irresponsible. To obviate this it is necessary to place the ownership in the hands of the class that produces. In such a case, there will be production for judicious use, and production in order to force goods upon people who do not want them will be eliminated. There will be a regulation of quantity, and therefore there will be no waste, and there can be no wild talk of over-production. It will also give to the class that produces sufficient to supply all its wants and if a class that does not produce should rise, it can no longer live on the labor of others.

Expansion is but the last resort of a class which has performed its mission, and now must pass out of existence. It is a mad move, but in the present development in manufacturing it could not be avoided. It draws nearer and nearer together the working class(es) of different countries, and as it does so it makes more plain the identity of interests of the working class of the whole world.

There is not a move that is made by society to-day that does not lead to the point where the social revolution must occur. That revolution followed slowly the industrial revolution, but it must supplement it. When the task is accomplished, the working class will claim its own, and will prove that the expansion with which the capitalist class sought to protect itself was only another element in its doom.

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

Uploaded August 2005