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EDITORIAL

TRAINING THE LAMBS.

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THE President of the Public Savings Bank of Dayton, O., has undertaken the task of supplementing the exploitation of the workingman's family, carried on in the factory, by twisting awry the child's mind outside of the factory. His plan is simple; it is as subtle as it is simple; and it is as fiendish as it is subtle.

It is well known that what the capitalist lives on is the lion's share of the wealth, produced by his workingmen, but appropriated by himself under the name of "profits." It is well known that the volume of his plunder depends upon the perfection of the privately owned machinery of production, which the capitalist class manages to bring into operation: the more perfect that club is, the harder are the workingmen hit, and, accordingly, all the more plunder ("profits"), do they yield. It is also well known, and goes without saying, that it is out of this plunder, perpetrated upon the working class, that the capitalist class raises the money, whereby to procure improved machinery and ever more improved machinery, wherewith to be able to hit the working class all the harder; and thus to secure all the more plunder.

Not quite so well known is another set of facts, that, however{,} is being perceived ever more clearly. It is this: The capitalist is not satisfied with what he plunders his workingmen of in the shop; he seeks to get at their wages too, and the way he goes about it is to set up "savings banks." By inducing his workingmen to drop in there their individual pennies, the aggregate of their pinchings named "savings," rises to considerable figures, and he thus finds ready the sums that he can lay hands on as "loans," whereby to procure still better machinery, whereby to plunder the workingmen still more. The "savings bank" dodge is being quite widely seen through as a scheme whereby to knock down the workingmen with their own little earnings.

There is still a third set of facts that here comes into play. It, like the previous set, is also not as widely perceived as the welfare of the workingman requires. Nevertheless, that set of facts also, and also thanks to S.L.P. education, is slowly

but steadily breaking through. It is not enough to plunder the working class in the shop; it is not enough to inveigle the working class into pinching itself and depositing its savings in banks, something else is needed. All these other conditions are like sails to help the capitalist ship forward; there is also needed the ballast to keep the ship steady and safe. The ballast in this case is the “delusion of property” that savings in bank{s} are expected to raise in the workingman’s mind. Wholly stripped of property the workingman might be set thinking upon the social mechanism that leaves him empty-handed despite all his toil, and lands all the wealth he produces into the idlers’ hands. That is a dangerous frame of mind for the worker to get into; it portends the downfall of the robber system of to-day. In order to guard against such danger the capitalist superinduces “saving” on the part of his workingmen. In that way he kills two flies with one slap. The savings of his workingmen furnish him with ready cash to plunder them ever more; while, all the while, holding before their eyes their bank deposit books, with their paltry little deposits entered, they imagine they are property-holders themselves, capitalists themselves.

It is these last two sets of facts that the Dayton Public Savings Bank President has started to improve upon. He has issued a letter to the “Boys and Girls who Deposited in the Public Savings Bank,” tickling them in all manner possible to keep on depositing, and thereby tickling other boys and girls to do likewise.

By stating the aggregate deposit, \$9,372.62, he superinduces the notion in each child’s mind that it is part-owner of the whole; he thereby aids them at an early age in the self-deception that they are property-holders, while in fact their little savings are only big enough to be swallowed up; and he finally attunes the “young idea” to the frame of mind required of it, when grown up, so as to be a blind and docile victim of the capitalist hyena.

Some people take “the bull by the horns;” children are hardly comparable to bulls; other people take the “right sow by the ear;” frolicsome, unsuspecting infancy lacks the glum pig qualities;—President Lewis B. Gunckel of the Dayton Public Savings Bank takes the lamb by the leg and trains it early for the slaughter house.

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