

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 3, NO. 165.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1902.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

TYPICAL HEARST.

By DANIEL DE LEON

THE New York *Journal* or *American*, Wm. R. Hearst's paper, of the 11th instant, has an article entitled: "How do you like the Consequences of Private Ownership of the Mines?" It enumerates these consequences. They are:

- A six months' strike of 147,000 miners;
- The quadrupling of the price of coal;
- Widespread business depression;
- Women and men and children dying of cold.

The article closes with a positive disclaimer that the Democratic party's plank is Socialism; and the disclaimer, in itself, is just. Nevertheless, the merest fool can see that, positive as the disclaimer is, it has all the ear-marks of a dodge.

It evidently is intended, on the one hand, to disarm opposition from the side of anti-Socialists, and on the other to rope in the Socialists, at least to capture the floating Socialistic sentiment. As to the Socialists, they will see through the fraud. The vast masses of the working class, just now inclining towards Socialism, may, however, be caught in the trap. To them a word of warning is needed.

In the first place, where, among the "consequences of private ownership," above recited is found "wage slavery"? It is not there. Not being there, the conclusion is that "wage slavery" is not an "evil consequence," and that Mr. Hearst's nationalization plank will preserve it. And this is the fact.

Wage slavery is the condition under which the capitalist system holds the working class. Capitalism makes of the worker a merchandise, bought and sold in the Labor market. Socialism aims at the emancipation of Labor, Hearst nationalization does not; on the contrary, it proposes to keep the workingman right there. How capitalist governments treat their Working Class employees need not here be rehearsed.

By the light of this fact, the first of the “consequences” recited above as evil, and to be eliminated by the Hearst method, acquires special significance. It is an evil to have 147,000 miners go out and stay on strike six months, and truly the fact is a direct result of private ownership: under capitalist Government ownership the thing would be impossible. Why? Because the workers would be so much better off and disinclined to strike? A thousand times no. He would not go on strike for the reason that over and above the yoke of wage-slavery, there would be another holding him down, to wit, the yoke of the armed power of his employer, the capitalist Government. A strike against the Government is easily construed into rebellion and treason, and treated as such. As in Glasgow, employees of capitalist Government-owned industries are submissively meek.

In line with this first “consequence” that the Hearst method would remove, are the two following ones,—higher prices and business depression. Being a wage slave, the employee of the Hearst or capitalist Government-owned industry is no better off under low prices or brisk business. He is a merchandise and the lower the prices of his necessaries to life sink, all the lower sinks his own price in the Labor Market, regardless of brisk business or otherwise. He to profit is the Hearst class of idle capitalists.

Finally, the point is accentuated by the fourth of the evil “consequences” of private ownership. As shown under the head of the preceding three, the scheme is truly capitalistic, with the workingman there to pay the piper. The fourth “consequence” enumerated brings out capitalist hypocrisy. “Women and men and children dying of cold” sounds kind. But the fact remains that not a winter passes over the heads of the Working Class without women and men and children dying of cold, when they did not die directly mangled in the capitalists’ shop, or indirectly through disease, brought on by long undermining of their health by the Hearst class through its capitalist system.

When the Hearst class now take the shoot they are taking, they but seek to profit by their own wrong; they but seek to ride into greater safety on the crest of discontent that tops the wave of misery raised by their own felonious system of capitalism.

What Humanity is demanding through the Working Class is not the transfer of ownership from the individual capitalist to the capitalist government. What it demands is not the “Communism of Capitalist Pelf.” What it demands is the overthrow of Capitalism, that is the overthrow of wage-slavery, and the resulting system of ownership

by the Working Class of the land on and the tool with which to work.—This is Socialism.

Humanity demands Socialism.

The Capitalist Class is seeking asylum in Hearstism.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official Web site of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded October 2006