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EDITORIAL

DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH.

By DANIEL DE LEON

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Evening Post* is indignant because the present distribution of wealth is questioned. He declares wealth to be a God-given thing, that we all can get if we only try. Then he continues:

“The trouble with most of us is that we don’t try. We loaf; we patronize football; we go to races; we spend our evenings in the saloons or at the vaudeville shows; we wait for the wealth that we see around us to be ‘distributed,’ and when that is not done promptly * * * we grumble and complain * * * ”

The author of these words should be advised to take a dip into the census reports. He would there find three salient facts, viz., (1) from 1890 to 1900 the value of manufactures increased 10 per cent.; (2) despite this increase in values, wages declined 2 per cent.; (3) the death rate increased from 13.8 to 15.0 per cent. in all occupations. In other words, he would find that the more the wage earners—not the loafers—of the country apply themselves to land and machinery, i.e., try to get wealth, the less they receive of the greater wealth produced. A HIGHER MORTALITY IS THEIR ONLY REWARD.

In view of these facts, so indicative of the decreased wages and excessive toil of the workers, it will not do to attribute the present unequal distribution of wealth to loafing. The present unequal distribution of wealth is due to the system of capitalism. By means of this system, a few men, called capitalists, are enabled to own and control the land and machinery, or capital, necessary to wealth production, thus compelling the many, known as the working class, to permit these few to exploit them of all the wealth produced in excess of their wages, while operating the land and machinery.

A corporation, composed of a comparatively few capitalists, and employing from

1,000 to 10,000 men, from each of whom is extracted, in the form of profit, an amount of wealth averaging \$6 a day is bound, under this system, to become enormously wealthy, while its overworked and underpaid wage earners barely subsist, and fill untimely graves in increasing numbers.

Therein lies the secret of the unequal distribution of wealth. The cessation of loafing will not stop it. Nothing but the overthrow of capitalism and the inauguration of Socialism will suffice for that.

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

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