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EDITORIAL

“THE CONSUMERS.”

By DANIEL DE LEON

IF statistics were taken on the subject, the probability is that the word “Consumer” will be found to occur more frequently than any other noun in the speeches that are being made in Congress on the several propositions to lower the tariff.

Republicans, both of the “Stalwart” and the “Insurgent” variety, along with Democrats of all varieties,—the Socialist Berger, after one splutter, has relapsed into silence—vie with one another in solicitude for the “Consumer.” All else, it would seem, may go to wreck and ruin, the “Consumer” must be saved; all other things and persons can take care of themselves. The “Consumer” needs the combined assistance of the bourgeois parties.

A “Traveler from Mars,” green to our terrestrial conditions, would be justified to conclude from the speeches that the country is divided into two sets of anatomical creations—one that consumes, and one that does not. So soon, however, as our Traveler would discover that the anatomical requirements of our population are identical with all; that, consequently, all must consume, or die, hence, all are consumers—just so soon will he begin to shed his greenness. From the moment the shedding process begins, will the Traveler’s mind’s eye begin to open.

When entirely open he will discover that, indeed, although not anatomically, yet economically, our population is divided into two sets of people—one that consumes, and one that does not:

One set, it is usually called the Capitalist, consumes more liquor at one of its debauches, euphonicly called “banquets,” than the other set, usually called Worker, consumes in ten years or twenty; the former set consumes at one sitting more meat than the latter does in a lifetime; the former set consumes more shoes in one month than the latter does in several years; the former set consumes more

clothing in one season than would clothe the latter into all eternity. And, after having compared the consumption of the two sets in matters consumed by both, the Traveler will discover that there is a large category of goods that the former only can consume, while the latter does not come "within a forty-foot pole" of them. The conclusions arrived at by our Traveler are obvious:

The Worker class consumes only theoretically. Its consumption is a negligible quantity when compared with the Capitalist's. So omnivorous is the consumption of the Capitalist that HE is a Consumer; he is THE Consumer.

Arrived at this point the Traveler from Mars will cease to wonder. The Capitalist politicians' solicitude for the Consumer is no longer a puzzle.

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