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EDITORIAL

## AN ANTI-SOCIALIST.

By DANIEL DE LEON

**A** WEEKLY printed leaflet, issued from Los Angeles by G. Major Taber, is the latest sermon preached to the Socialist and Labor Movement urging it to be good.

The sermonizer is no visionary. He does not preach goodness to men, as though, despite the world-wide and ages-long experience that “hunger turns men into wolves,” were a closed book to him. He understands that material ease is a prerequisite for goodness. The evidence of the understanding is found in one of the paragraphs of the sermon, hence, what we consider the pivot of the sermon. It is this:

“There was nothing to hinder the Labor Unions from becoming Capitalists had they embraced their opportunities and not allowed their graft leaders to squander their hard earnings.”

Who is a capitalist? What is it that constitutes the capitalist?

For a person to be a capitalist requires a combination of circumstances that dovetail with one another.

The first circumstance is his private ownership of instruments of production, or distribution, necessary for production and distribution.

The second circumstance is that he lives in a community where there is a large number of people without the said necessities for production. In a community, where there are no such toolless people, not all the instruments of production and distribution that a man may own could make him a capitalist; he will himself have to work the tools that he can operate; the rest would lie idle.

The third circumstance flows from the first two—that the toolless population submits to wage-slavery for bread. Unable to work without the requisites for production owned by another, they submit to be exploited.

To sum up—the capitalist is one whose ownership of the necessities for production and distribution enables him to make others work for him, to exploit them, to live upon the sweat of their brow.

Accordingly he who says “Capitalist” says: “A person whose ownership of the necessities for production and distribution, coupled with the available existence of a proletariat (toolless class) enables him to operate his necessities for production by the exploitation of the proletariat.

The thing may be summarized in still fewer words—

“No Proletariat, no Capitalist.”

We are now enabled to appreciate the sermon.

If “there was nothing to hinder the Labor Unions from becoming capitalists,” then the Labor Unions could have become capitalists. If the Labor Unions could have become capitalists, then they must have exploited a proletariat. If the Labor Unions exploited a proletariat, then these proletarians would have had to organize themselves into a Labor Union;—and our sermonizer would land just where he started from.

We have called G.M. Taber’s circular a sermon. We know not whether he is a parson or not. This we know, whatever he be individually, the gentleman belongs to that large category of people who go off half-cocked. And of such the anti-Socialists are made up.

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