

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 6, NO. 78.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1905.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

PEACHES SERMONIZING.

By DANIEL DE LEON

“**J**UST as the offensive power of a squadron of cavalry,” says Marx, “or the defensive power of a regiment of infantry, is essentially different from the sum of the offensive or defensive powers of the individual cavalry, or infantry soldiers taken separately, so the sum total of the mechanical forces exerted by isolated workmen differs from the social force that is developed, when many hands take part simultaneously in one and the same individual operation. In such cases the effect of the combined labor could either not be produced at all by isolated individual labor, or it could only be produced by a great expenditure of time, or on a very dwarfed scale. Not only have we had an increase in the productive power of the individual, by means of co-operation, BUT THE CREATION OF A NEW POWER, NAMELY, THE COLLECTIVE POWER OF MASSES. . . . It is owing to this kind of co-operation that, in the western part of the United States, quantities of corn . . . are yearly wasted.”*

If Marx had lived to-day he could add, “and in the eastern part of the United States quantities of peaches are left to rot on the trees.” He might also add some of his satirical flings at the peach-raisers who denounce Labor for not being handy to take in the peach crop—and starve.

The peach industry is comparatively a new one in New York. Former apple orchards were rooted up and rows of peach trees put in their places. The crops are plentiful, especially this year; but the fruit is rotting on the trees: there are no hands to gather them. Once more individual production stands branded, and, along with it the morality of the individual producer.

Only co-operative labor could redeem those peach crops. Without such labor the

* [Marx, Karl. *Capital* (Swan Sonnenschein, Lowrey, & Co.: London, 1887) 311.]

crop is lost. To save the crops and yet preserve individual production, amounts to keeping a large body of men idle, hungry, generally pinched, and ever at hand for the short intervals when they are wanted. On the other hand, in order to have such masses of men ready to be turned into the peach orchards without their being taken off the shelves where they had been starving, in other words, to have these men available in happy, healthy condition, then individual production must be given up. It would have to be perceived that each necessary co-operator towards the production of wealth is equally entitled with all others to his share—in other words, Socialism would have to rule—each being entitled to his share of the product of the collective power of the masses.

Society faces on a broad scale the problem that confronts the peach raisers on a small scale—stick to individual production and then keep large layers of humanity in want for occasional use, or even then run the risk of seeing the crops rot; or drop individual production and save both crops and workers. The alternative draws the line between stupid conservation and enlightened revolution.

That is the sermon read by the rotting peach crop.

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

Uploaded March 2008

slpns@slp.org