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EDITORIAL

ANOTHER DISCOVERY BY FATHER POLAND.

By DANIEL DE LEON

WE have on a previous occasion¹ pointed out a bizarre discovery made in Socialism by the Rev. William Poland, S.J., of the St. Louis University, in his much-praised pamphlet entitled *Socialism*. There is another discovery, no less startling, made by the Jesuit Father. It occurs in the same pamphlet.

On pages 11–12 the following passage occurs:

“Private producers will be privileged to transfer their plants to the collective State, and they will receive in return an annuity for a number of years, to be fixed according to the value of what they have transferred. This annuity will be in the form of labor certificates. With these certificates the common produce can be obtained and the common service can be utilized, so that the heretofore capitalist, and perhaps his descendants, may live in luxury for ten, or twenty, or forty years.”

This, certainly, is a startling discovery. Father Poland seems to be so proud of having made it that he keeps locked up in his bosom the source of his information. Fact is, Socialism proposes no such thing, and any such proposition is repellant as immoral, illogical, and historically false.

The proposition would be illogical on the same principle that to furnish an annuity to Tweed and his descendants “for a number of years” so that he and they “may live in luxury for ten, or twenty, or forty years,” would have been illogical. Tweed was indicted and convicted of plundering the treasury of New York City, being a plunderer the whole theory of “annuity” fell. Socialism proves mathematically that the holdings of the capitalist class are plunder. Even if his “original accumulation” be legitimate, instead of being what it usually is, the fruit of

¹ [“Father Poland’s Discovery,” *Daily People*, August 8, 1911.—R.B.]

swindle and rapine, even then that original accumulation has long since been consumed by the capitalist. All that he holds to-day is “unpaid wages.” Even then, Socialism declares, the Movement might let the thief go with his pack and not bother about it, were it not for the circumstance that his “pack” fills the role of the pistol with which the highwayman covers the wayfarer. That pistol must be wrenched from the felon’s hand; ditto, ditto, the “pack” of the capitalist. To convert that “pack” into an annuity would be to legalize the theft. That is illogical. Socialism may not leave a good taste in the mouth of the blessers of Usurpation, they may charge Socialism with being unpalatable—with being illogical, never. The logic of Socialism cracks every bone in the body of Error.

The annuity notion would also be immoral. To compromise with sin is an act condemned by all the codes of religion. Here also Socialism, being the filtered morality and charity of all Ages, holds that considering the capitalist himself is very much the product of environment, it would be uncharitable to the capitalist, as a human being, and inconsiderate towards society to strip him of the pistol, that, as a social highwayman, he has been earning his living with, and leave him to starve, and pollute the atmosphere with the stench of his carcass. Both charity, and self-protection from impure air, would keep Socialism from such a policy. Socialism, however, obviates the danger. The Socialist Republic knows no pariahs. While it liberates the wage slave, it, with the same hand, opens free the field for the capitalist to earn his living, like everybody else. Socialism, accordingly, puts the heretofore capitalist on the par with the heretofore wage slave—both equal shareholders in the Co-operative Commonwealth, with themselves as the architects of their own welfare, themselves as the ones to decide by their thrift and industry the amount of worldly goods that they are to be blessed with.—That should be annuity enough.

Finally, the annuity notion is utterly unhistoric, and history never goes back upon itself. No “annuity” did the theretofore slave-holders receive to keep them and their descendants in luxury ten, or twenty, or forty years; no “annuity” did the British Crown and Parliament receive when the Colonies tore themselves loose. No “annuity” did the Christian Church provide for the priesthood of Jupiter or Thor, when it supplanted them, or did the Jewish Church, before that, set aside for the

priests of Baal when it smote them. In all these instances the supplanted class was left shorn, to shift for itself as best it could in the cold into which it was thrust. Socialism, true to history, neither could nor would raise the present Usurpers to the dignity of annuitants on its back.

This is what Socialism teaches. The Father Poland “tenet of Socialism” is a discovery of Father Poland himself. If these “gentlemen of the cloth” betray so crassly their unfamiliarity with things close by, terrestrial, fear they not they may arouse suspicion concerning their reliability on matters far-off, celestial?

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