

Editorial: Milksops, or Men

When told that the planks of his Social Democratic party are all reform planks, and that the old parties will steal them from him, Victor L. Berger is reported to have answered: "Let them steal them; we shall manufacture new planks faster than they can steal them."

There is some truth in this answer; also solid error; besides that, considerable misprision of Plutocratic interests.

The truth in Mr. Berger's answer lies in the fact that Reform is infinite, in distinction to Revolution, which is finite. There is no end to measures for the padding of the yoke of slavery. Clean streets, hygienic tenements, seats in cars, free music in parks—the list of these is endless. No doubt such paddings to the yoke of wage-slavery could be prolonged indefinitely, at least theoretically indefinitely. But does it follow that the paddings will bring Socialism one inch nearer? By no means.

The same "humanity" that taught our ancestral savages that it was less profitable to slaughter their conquered foes, eat a goodly number of them, and leave the rest to rot, than it was, for themselves to let up on work, and turn their captives into slaves to do the toiling; the identical "humanity" that taught our nearer predecessors that kind treatment to animals paid, and that blossomed into institutions for the prevention of cruelty to animals; the identi-

Daniel De Leon

cal “light” that only yesterday fell upon the mind’s eye of the Kaiser when he turned over a new leaf in the matter of open air meetings, called off his police, and allowed the masses to give vent to the pent up steam of their resentment;—that identical “humanity” will teach and that identical “light” will enlighten the minds of the employing class to the effect that a well-fed, well-housed, and musically-entertained wage slave yields more wool than an underfed, badly housed and unentertained ones. The lesson once taught, the light once seen, the tables will instanter be turned upon the Socialist manufacturer of Reform planks. From being the manufacturers, and the employers’ parties the “ultimate consumers” of these planks, the employers’ parties will become the manufacturers, outstrip the Socialist Reformer, and turn the latter into the “ultimate consumer” of the output. It is in the cards that the day is bound to come when what Mr. Berger now says of his party, the employers will confidently say of their own: “We shall manufacture new planks faster than the S. D. P. can steal them.” When that day comes, the Bergers will find themselves in the plight of the deserted Gaius Gracchus. A following trained at the milk-bottle of reform is the shiftiest of popular sandbanks.

There is but one plank for the Socialist to manufacture that the capitalist could no more steal than a mouse can steal a cat—except she be of gingerbread with rosin eyes—the Abolition of Wage Slavery. There is but one plank that trains men and not milksops—Unconditional Surrender of the Capitalist Class.

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